

*“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” - Benjamin Franklin*

### TEACHER PAY

- New beginning teachers will be paid \$35,000, an increase from \$33,000. NC continues to rank below the national average in teacher pay and now ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation.
- All state employees (includes school personnel, central office staff, and educational support professionals) will receive a one-time \$750 bonus.
- The salary steps (tiers) are the same as 2014-15 and will be funded for teachers and principals/assistant principals.
- There is no change to master's and other advanced degree pay. Teachers who had a master's or other advanced degree or had completed one class prior to August 1, 2013 are covered under rules in place prior 8/1/2013. Master's and other advanced degree pay will always be allowed if the job requires it.
- Nearly 70 percent of NC public school teachers will receive no salary increase in this budget.
- The budget maintains the 12 percent pay differential for National Board Certified teachers.

### TEACHER ASSISTANTS

- Fully funds teacher assistants at the 2014-15 levels; but funds must be used for teacher assistants only. All flexibility for the funds is eliminated effective this school year. LEAs will not have flexibility over how the funds are used.
- About 15,300 teacher assistants positions are funded, a decrease of about 7,000 compared to 2008.
- Teacher support will now be funded from general funds (not lottery funds) and non-instructional support personnel will be funded from lottery funds (no longer from general funds).

### VOUCHERS

- Increases the school voucher program (Opportunity Scholarship Program) by \$6.8 million in 2015-16 and \$14 million in 2016-17, a total increase of 129% over the 2014-15 funding level. Total dollars available for 2015-16 is \$17.6 million and \$24.8 million for 2016-17.
- Senate Bill 456, titled Charter School Modifications, was defeated in the House appropriations committee by a narrow vote of 24-26. The bill would have required the state to award more Opportunity Scholarships to kindergarteners and first graders.

### CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

- House Bill 539, titled Charter School Funding, was withdrawn but it remains alive for the legislature's short session in April 2016. If passed, it would have forced local school districts to share more revenue and federal funding with charter schools.
- Senate Bill 456, titled Charter School Modifications, was withdrawn but could come back next year. It would allow charter schools to receive more taxpayer dollars and grant funding for services they may not even provide, like school lunches.
- House Bill 535 titled Charter School Charter School Success Pilot proposed to appropriate \$1 million of taxpayers' money allocated for public schools for each of the 2015-2016 & 2016-2017 fiscal years to be used by Parents for Educational Freedom of North Carolina (PEFNC) to give grants to charter school participants for replication and expansion of up to four charter schools per fiscal year. If the grant monies are not used, they will not revert back to the public schools. Did not make it in the final budget, likely to reappear next year

### CLASS SIZE

- Class size for first grade is reduced to 1:16 for 2016-17; an additional \$27 million is allocated to hire additional teachers. Other class size limits remain the same, no limits on class size for grades 4-12.

### ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS (ASD)

- Senate Bill 95, titled Performance-Based RIF/School Policy, was withdrawn and will likely reappear in the short session which begins on April 25, 2016. The bill would create a charter-managed Achievement School District made up of some of the lowest performing schools.

### DRIVER EDUCATION

- Funds Driver Education for 2015-2016 (general fund) and 2016-2017 (civil penalty and forfeiture fund).
- School districts can charge up to \$65 per student to fund driver's education; school districts must reduce the fee for students who prove economic hardship.
- A study committee is established to determine how to lower the cost of the program and seek alternate providers such as private companies and community colleges.

### CLASSROOM RESOURCES

- \$2 Million this year for Wi-Fi networks to provide connectivity at the classroom level and another \$12 million next year.
- Funding for textbooks and digital resources is increased by \$21.8 million in 2015-16 and another \$31 million next year. This is about half of the amount spent on textbooks before the recession. This level is still substantially less than in 2009-10, when funding was at \$111 million.

### LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

- The State Board of Education must identify low-performing schools annually.
- Schools that are given a school performance grade of a D or F and have a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" are considered "low performing" schools.
- If a local school administrative unit is identified as low performing, they must:
  - Within 30 days of identification, the superintendent must submit to the local board of education a preliminary plan for improving both the school performance grade and school growth score of each low-performing school in the unit.
  - Within 30 days of its receipt of the preliminary plan, the local board shall vote to approve, modify, or reject this plan. Before the local board votes on the plan, it shall make the plan available to the public, including the personnel assigned to each low-performing school and the parents and guardians of the students who are assigned to each low performing school, and shall allow for written comments.
  - The local board shall submit a final plan to the State Board within five days of the local board's approval of the plan.
  - The local board of education shall provide access to the final plan on the local school administrative unit's Web site. The State Board of Education shall also provide access to each low-performing local school administrative unit plan on the Department of Public Instruction's Web site.
  - Within 30 days of identification, each local school administration unit identified as low performing shall provide written notification to the parents and guardians of students attending.