

Investing in our children today creates a better tomorrow for North Carolina.

Public Schools First NC supports an inclusive, fair, innovative and accountable public education system that nurtures and prepares each child for success in school and life.

Now more than ever, it is imperative to remember that education is essential to democracy, and public schools are the foundation of the American dream and the core of America's strength. Public schools must provide all children with an education, regardless of their race, their parents' income, or where they live. With adequate resources and excellent teachers, public schools are the best places to promote student growth and academic achievement. They also bring communities together and are one of the only remaining places where different kinds of people come together with a shared purpose.

Public schools benefit *everyone*—from the students they serve to the businesses that recruit well-educated graduates to the taxpayers who benefit when those graduates give back to the community. Education creates knowledgeable and engaged citizens, nourishing our civic life and fueling a vibrant economy.

Public Schools First NC is committed to the passage of child-centric legislation based on these critical priorities.

Adequate, equitable funding that reflects the national average by 2020.

North Carolina ranks 44th in the nation for per pupil funding according to the NEA, while Education Week ranks NC 47th, with a letter grade of F. This is unacceptable and cannot create the schools our students deserve. Adequate, equitable funding ensures the optimal classroom environment and learning resources so all children can succeed. Public Schools First NC supports legislation that fully funds:

- **Principal pay** at or near the national average. Principals and assistant principals are critical to the culture of our schools. They all deserve pay that ranks higher than 49th in the nation, not just those in districts that can afford large supplements.
- **Textbook** spending at 2008 levels (at least \$67.15 per student).
- **Teacher assistants** in all K-3 classrooms.
- **Full and flexible services for low-income students, schools, and districts.**

Programs and compensation that encourage recruitment, preparation, support and retention of professional, experienced educators.

North Carolina's long reputation as an educational leader, and the quality of our public schools has made it attractive to new families and businesses. A successful public school education depends on quality public school teachers. Enrollment in the UNC system's teacher prep programs has dropped 30% since 2010. North Carolina must strive to:

- **Pay all teachers** and other education professionals at the national average by 2020.
- **End pay for performance strategies** – teachers should not receive bonuses in certain grades based on certain tests when all students' scores reflect their cumulative experiences throughout their school careers.

- **Restore multi-year teacher contracts and Master's pay** so that districts can improve stability and reduce turnover while supporting committed teachers.
- **Evaluate teachers fairly** using a variety of tools not just student test scores.

Universal access to high-quality pre-school, so each child comes to school "Kindergarten ready."

Research overwhelmingly supports high-quality pre-Kindergarten programs as a means of preparing the highest-risk children for success in grades K -12. A November 2016 report from researchers at Duke showed that advantages from attending pre-K last throughout elementary school, holding steady or growing at each grade level, for both high- and low-income students! Yet, approximately 7,000 children remain on our pre-K waiting lists annually, and many more eligible children do not even apply.

Public Schools First NC believes that fully funding universal pre-Kindergarten reduces disparities in student achievement tied to socioeconomic status. Universal pre-K will provide lifelong, positive results for children, their communities, and our state.

Exclusive use of public funds for public education.

Public Schools First NC believes taxpayers' education dollars belong in properly accountable and transparent public institutions, not delivered by disparate mechanisms to private and for-profit entities that do not guarantee adequate educational outcomes for children. Therefore, North Carolina should:

- **Place a moratorium on funding vouchers** that give taxpayer money directly to private schools without appropriately ensuring student safety and educational achievement while documenting that these tax dollars are used appropriately.
- **Allow local education authorities to create and administer charter schools**, rather than requiring that they be run by private boards. If charters are meant to develop and disseminate best practices, districts should have the freedom to create and run them to serve the unique needs of their student base and communities.
- **Institute accountability measures for charter and voucher schools** so that taxpayers can see where and how their money is used, as well as how successful these schools are for the students they serve.
- **Reject Education Savings Accounts** proposals in any form. These accounts take money directly from public schools and give it to parents who opt out of the system with no real control over how they spend it or assurances of educational quality for students.