

According to the Center for Public Education, “Having an **effective** teacher consistently rises to the top as the most important factor in learning—more so than student ethnicity or family income, school attended, or class size.” **Experience, advanced degrees, and subject-specific certification** are among many teacher credentials that contribute to student achievement.

**The good news for North Carolina:** **96%** of public school teachers have earned a *proficient* rating and NC has more national board certified teachers than any state in the nation.

#### **Factors that impact attracting and retaining strong, permanent teacher workforce:**

- Paying all teachers and other education professionals at least at the national average
- Providing funding for ongoing professional development
- Restoring funding for the NC Teaching Fellows program
- Induction programs, mentoring and other support for beginning teachers
- Rewarding experience and restoring Masters pay
- Reasonable class size; adequate quality and quantity of instructional supplier
- Evaluating teachers fairly using a variety of tools, not just student test scores
- Placing teachers in out-of-field assignments vs. in their field(s) of expertise
- Including teachers in school-based policy decisions
- Allowing teachers greater autonomy in the classroom

#### **How did 2013-15 state budget cuts impact the teaching profession?**

- **Per pupil expenditures decreased** (\$5,896 in 2008-09 to \$5,766 in 2014-15)
- **Reduced funding for instructional textbooks, instructional supplies, technology, literacy coaches, mentor teachers, staff development**
- **9,306.5 education positions cut** — 5,184.5 teachers, 3,850 teacher assistants, and 272 support personnel (guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.)
- **Cuts to pre-K:** nearly 40,000 eligible children remain on a waiting list; children entering kindergarten unprepared
- **No limits on class size** in grades 4 – 12
- **Pay raises favored beginning over experienced teachers** and gave only an average 5.5% raise
- **Eliminated salary increases for earning a master’s degree** after 2014
- **Diverted all funding for the NC Teaching Fellows program** to Teach for America, which offers minimal (five weeks) training and has a lower teacher retention rate
- **Terminated teacher career status** for teachers who have yet to earn it. This forces teachers into temporary, year-to-year contracts without an opportunity for a hearing if demoted or dismissed

North Carolina is losing many teachers after the first three years of teaching, often to better paying jobs or less stressful working conditions. Turnover is at an all-time high in many districts, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg.



*Each child needs excellent, experienced, and caring teachers to succeed!*

### **North Carolinians value our public school teachers**

**54%** of North Carolinians think it's more important to raise teacher pay vs. cutting taxes\*

**56%** of voters think teachers should start at least \$40,000 a year\*

**76%** of North Carolinians think public school teachers are paid too little

**58%** of North Carolinians think the average 7% pay raises for public school teachers is too small\*\*

**83%** of North Carolinians think teachers should receive a pay increase for completing a master's degree

**71%** of North Carolinians think we cannot keep the best and most qualified teachers with the current pay scale

*Sources: \*Public Policy Polling, May 2014. \*\*High Point University/News Record Poll, September 22, 2014. All others Public Policy Polling, October 2013*

### **Who can you talk to?**

- **Contact your state representatives.** Gather your facts on how current legislation is impacting the teaching profession in your community. Present your view in a helpful way suggesting solutions.
- **Contact your local school board.** Encourage them to look for ways that they can locally support career status, master's pay and fair compensation.
- **Contact your county commission.** Ask them to look for ways to support local supplemental pay and master's pay for teachers along with other ways to retain the most experienced educators in your school district.
- **Contact your local PTA or civic organization.** Ask them to talk with their school board or community commissioners to find local solutions that support reasonable pay, money for advanced degrees and professional development, smaller class size, and teacher assistants in the lower grades.

### References

#### **The Influence of School Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions**

[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001287\\_calderworkingpaper25.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001287_calderworkingpaper25.pdf)

#### **NC lags the nation in teacher pay and is losing its best educators**

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/05/03/4883964/nc-lags-the-nation-in-teacher.html#.VOS3VFN4ris>

#### **Understanding and Responding to the Teacher Shortage**

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/may02/num29/toc.aspx>

#### **Why Do Teachers Quit?**

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/why-do-teachers-quit/280699/>

*Please see our website for more research, citations and information on this topic.*

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