

YOU CAN BE AN ADVOCATE!



A Toolkit for Supporting Public Education

Dear Friend of Education,

We focus first and foremost on providing the most recent information about public education to North Carolinians. We hope that this toolkit will help you better understand current policy and give you ways to make your voice heard in communities across the state and in local government.

The information provided is a suggested guide to help you advocate for public education. You can find fast facts on teacher compensation and impacts of the state budget; helpful tips for communicating your views; and information on how to contact elected leaders. Please visit our website (publicschoolsfirstnc.org) for more research and fact sheets on key education issues.

Public Schools First NC is happy to work with you and help you connect with other individuals or groups in your area that are engaged in supporting our public schools. You can reach us using our contact information on the last slide of the presentation.

Linking up with other individuals or groups who share your values can be an invigorating, uplifting, and effective way to advocate for policy changes that support strong public schools.

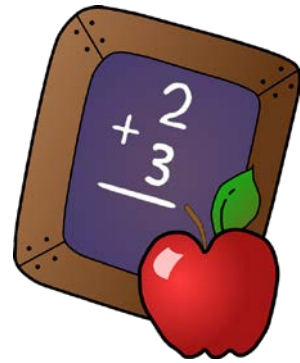
We hope that you'll use these resources and share them with other citizens concerned and invested in the future of public education.

Sincerely,
Yevonne Brannon, PhD
Board of Directors





NORTH CAROLINA'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS



- **94,000+** Teachers in more than **2,400** public schools
- **10th largest** K-12 enrollment in the country
- **1.55 million+** students in public schools
- Overall student enrollment is **majority minority**

- Local school systems have enrollments from **607 to 162,698** students
- Over last decade, significant improvements annually in overall graduation rate (**86.5%** in 2017)
- Dropout rate decreased more than half over past decade (**2.39% in 2017**)



LOSS OF EDUCATION FUNDING



Since 2008:

Student population has **increased by ~90,000 (6%)**

- **Approximately 8,000** teacher assistants were cut
- **\$1 Billion** lost for classroom resources such as Teacher Assistants, Supplies, Technology, Textbooks, etc.

According to **NCDPI's** February 2018 report to the General Assembly:

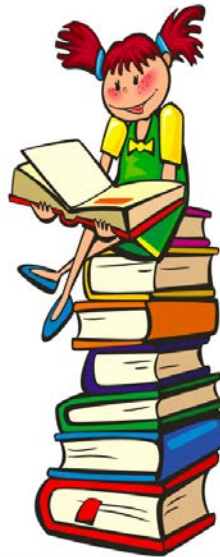
- Public schools' share of the General Fund **decreased by 13.5%** since 1970
- If we maintained the 1969-70 level of funding, we would have **\$3 billion more** for our public school students



PER-PUPIL, TEXTBOOK, & CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Between 2008-09 & 2017-18:

- Per-pupil funding went from \$8,867 (\$10,483 in today's dollars) to **\$9,528**
- Textbook funds reduced from **\$76** to **\$42** per pupil
- Classroom supplies funding reduced from **\$66** to **\$30**



In school year 2017-2018:

- NC Spent **\$2,406 less** than national average per student
- Per-pupil funding is **9th in Southeast**
- National per-pupil average is **\$11,934**

North Carolina ranks 39th in U.S. in per-pupil funding



AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY

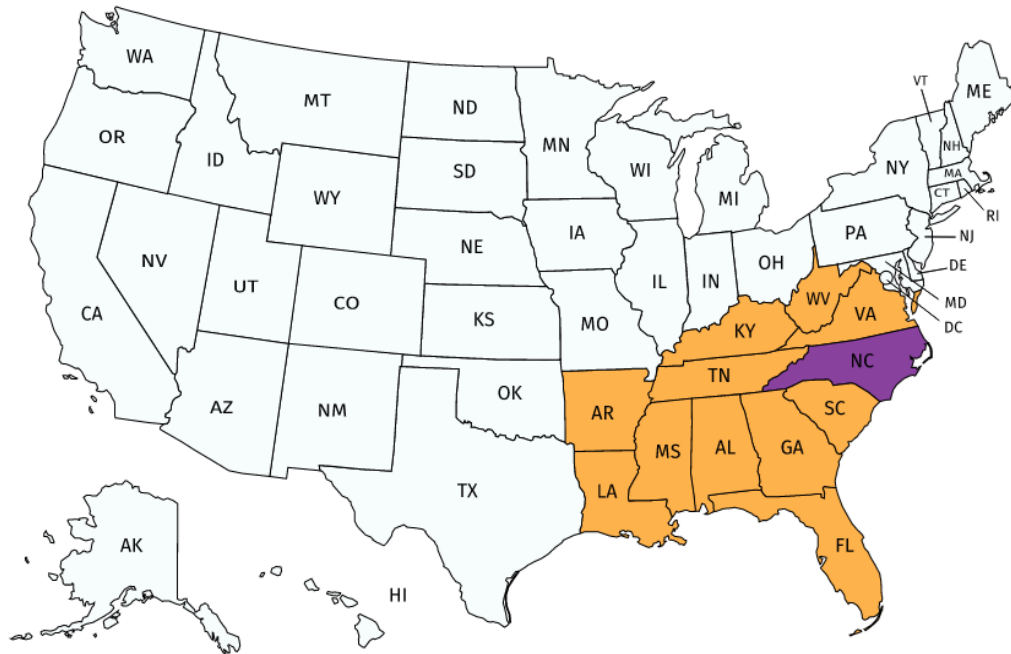
	2007-2008	2017-2018
US	\$52,308	\$60,483
NC	\$48,454	\$50,861

In North Carolina, teachers earn about \$9,600 less than national average

- **When adjusted for inflation, North Carolina's average teacher salary dropped more than 13 percent from 1999-2000 to 2015-16**
- **The U.S. average teacher salary dropped 1.8 percent in that same timeframe**



TEACHER SALARY: Ranks



North Carolina ranked
37th in the U.S. in
Teacher Pay in 2017-18

North Carolina ranked
6th in Southeast in
teacher pay in 2017-18



HOW DO OUR TEACHERS STACK UP?

- Board certified teachers: **21,451**
- NC has **more** National Board Certified teachers than **any other state**
- Majority of teachers earn **high proficient ratings** for teacher effectiveness
- About **1/3** of NC Teachers have Master's Degrees





DESTABILIZING THE TEACHING PROFESSION



LAWMAKERS HAVE:

1. Eliminated **career status protections** for teachers hired after 2013
2. Eliminated longevity pay
3. Eliminated Masters/Advanced degree pay unless required (e.g., psychologists)
4. Districts can only offer 1, 2 or 4 year contracts to teachers who have worked in the district for 3 or more years
5. If hired after Jan. 21, 2021, no health insurance for retirees
6. NC teachers earn just 65.4 cents on the dollar compared with other college graduates—the 3rd widest pay gap in the nation (U.S. is 77 cents on dollar)

The UNC system has had a **25% decline** in enrollment in teaching programs since 2010 as teachers choose other professions

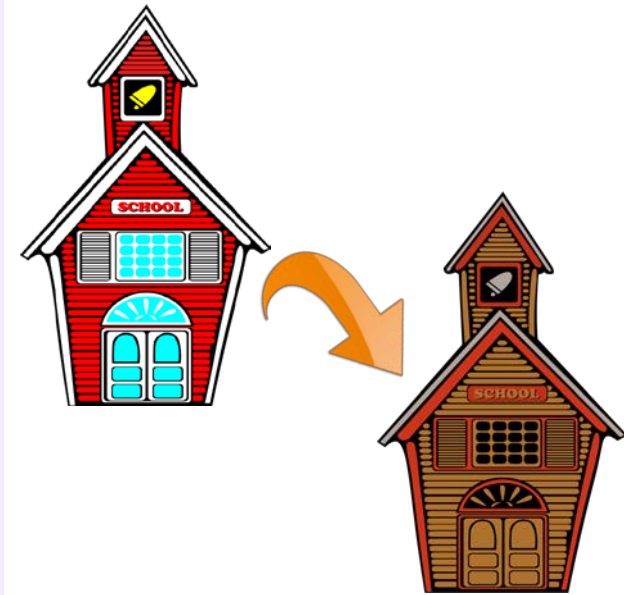
Some counties, especially high poverty areas, see turnover as high as **32%**



SCHOOL VOUCHERS

- Voucher funding increased to **\$44.8 million** for 2017-18
- More than **90%** of voucher monies in 2017 went to **religious schools**
- Voucher budget adds **\$10 million** annually until 2027-2028 when funding will cost taxpayers ~ **\$144 million** a year
- In July 2015, the NC Supreme Court **overruled** a lower court's decision and declared our voucher program **legal**

VOUCHERS:
PUBLIC \$\$\$ for
PRIVATE schools



61% of
North Carolinians
oppose school
vouchers



EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS



- **Taxpayer-funded spending accounts** for educational expenses of qualified children with disabilities
- ESAs help **fund separate and unequal** education without accountability
- **Tuition Gap** between private schools and ESA which only allocates \$9,000
- Early in 2017, there was a significant **expansion of the eligibility** rules for ESAs, now extends to **any student** who is eligible to attend public school in NC

PUBLIC \$\$\$ for
PRIVATE schools

Lack of
FINANCIAL and
ACADEMIC
accountability



NORTH CAROLINA'S STATE BUDGET PROCESS



- **Constitution** requires balanced budget
- **Governor** presents a two-year biennial budget (odd-numbered years) around early March to start budgeting process
- **Senate & House** approve the final official state biennial budget

1. **Governor** proposes budget
2. **Senate** presents its budget
3. **House** accepts Senate budget or presents own
4. **Senate & House** work together to create conference budget
5. **Full Senate & House** vote on budget & send to **Governor**
6. **Governor** can sign, not sign, or veto



PRIVATIZING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



How are our schools privatized?

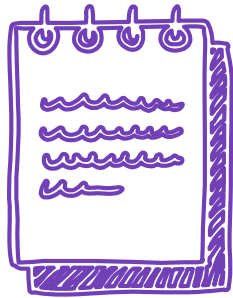
- The establishment of school voucher programs, majority are religious schools that do not accept all students
- The proliferation of charter schools (including for-profit and “online” virtual charter schools) that are not held to same standards as public schools
- Some charter schools, once opened with public funds, can convert to private schools
- The establishment of an Innovative School District (formerly known as Achievement School District) to take over struggling schools and let charter school operators run the public school

- A single A-F performance grade, which closely reflects the poverty level of a school, is used to assess a school’s effectiveness
- This unfair metric of school grades is used to take over low-wealth schools and group them into an Innovative School District (ISD) to be run by charter companies that can be out-of-state and even for-profit entities



ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN BE AN ADVOCATE!

Focus on a
specific
issue &
learn the
facts.



Find your
legislators.



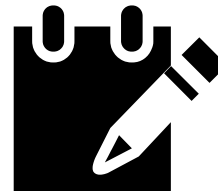
Set up an in-
person
meeting with
your
legislators.



Join others
to lobby
legislators!



Write a
letter to the
editor.



Call or write
your
legislators.





MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS



Before the Meeting

- Call to make an appointment either in your home district or Raleigh.
- If asked what you would like to discuss, give a short answer, like “school funding.”
- Know the issues! Visit our website for fact sheets on key education issues, but don’t get bogged down in details.

At the Meeting

- Arrive a little early, be polite, and professional at all times.
- Clearly state your issue, why it is important, and what you want your legislator to do about it. Use personal stories!
- Don’t get into a debate and don’t make things up. It’s okay not to know an answer to a question!

After the Meeting

- Follow up with a thank-you note summarizing what you discussed to remind them of commitments and deadlines for addressing your concerns.



CALLING LEGISLATORS



Before the Call

- Be sure that you know the details of the bill and the bill number.
- Write down one or two “talking points” about why you support or oppose a particular bill.
- Consider adding a brief personal story about how the bill would affect your family, school, or community.

Making the Call

- When staff answers, be pleasant! They are on the firing line all day. You probably won't be able to speak to your legislator, so developing a positive relationship with staff is important.
- Keep it short: introduce yourself and identify yourself as a constituent and briefly go through your “talking points.”
- Leave your contact information! Ask for a follow-up response.

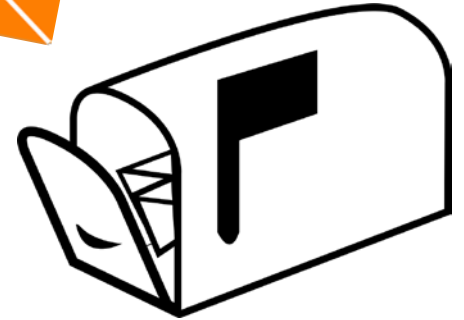
Example

The person answering explains that Rep. XYZ is not available, but they would be glad to take information:

“Thank you, I appreciate your time. I’m calling because I strongly support HB 123, which restores funding for textbooks and instructional supplies. At my son’s school, the algebra teacher has only one set of books for three classes, and no one can take the books home. Textbooks are not a frill; they are essential for all students! I’m asking Rep. XYZ to support this bill.”



WRITING LEGISLATORS



1. **Identify** yourself and **why** you are writing.
2. **Explain** your position and why you are **concerned**.
3. **Restate** what you're asking the legislator to do and **why**.
4. **Sign** the letter and **include** your address.



SAMPLE LETTER



Dear Senator _____,

I am the parent of two elementary school students in your district and I am deeply concerned about cuts to teacher assistants in grades K-3.

Last year, my older son was in first grade. He and another student were behind grade level in math and reading. However, my son's teacher was able to send my son and his classmate off for special help every day because there was a teacher assistant in their classroom. Thanks to the work of those dedicated educators, both students finished the school year with math and reading skills at grade level. Without that additional help, they would not have been able to progress to second grade.

Teacher assistants are educators who play a vital role in the classroom. I hope you actively champion restoring budget cuts that removed teacher assistants from classrooms in grades K-3.

Signed _____



WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Why write?



Decisions made by state legislators have a direct **impact** on the quality of public education in your local community.

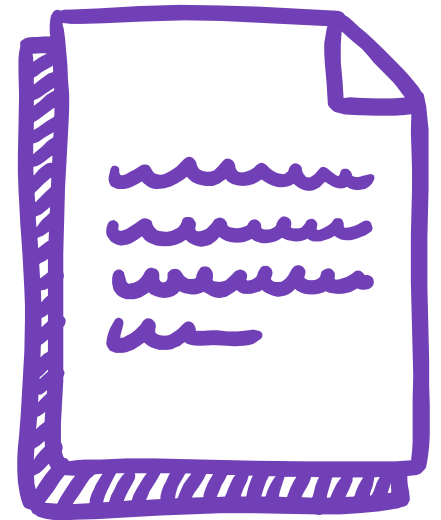
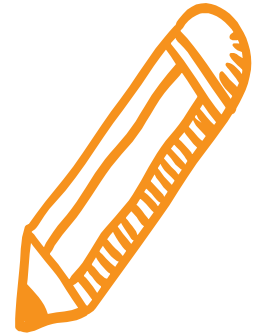
Letters to the Editor can help inform the public about a particular issue.

A great way to express your views is by writing a Letter to the Editor of your **local** newspaper.



TIPS & TRICKS FOR YOUR LETTER

1. Make your opening and ending sentence **compelling**.
2. Use **facts** and talking points from our website to help make your case.
3. Focus on one issue and use a local example to **illustrate** your point.
4. Keep your letter **short** and to the point (most newspapers have word count limits).





WRITE POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media can be an **effective** way to advocate for public education. Use facts and strong anecdotes to make short, but **powerful** posts on Facebook or Twitter.



Public Schools First NC

February 3 at 2:03pm · 🌐

Retired teacher speaks up.



Fund NC private schools with private funds

Taxes earmarked for public education should remain in the public school system. A Private School Opportunity Scholarship Program funded by businesses and corporations fortunate enough to earn huge profits in North Carolina thanks to the...

NEWSOBSERVER.COM



PublicSchoolsFirstNC @PS1NC · 21 Dec 2016

Read the Shanker blog on 3 aspects of #publiced segregation we need to talk about when we talk about segregation

ow.ly/paY5307iP1G



Public Schools First NC

January 14 at 1:24pm · 🌐

Great way to help students apply to college!



Text Your Way to College

Too many students from poor families get accepted to college, but never show up. This is a low-cost solution.

NYTIMES.COM | BY DAVID L. KIRP



PublicSchoolsFirstNC @PS1NC · Jan 6

In MS, more than 25% of school voucher recipients return to public schools #voucherfail #publicEd





RESOURCES



OUR WEBSITE

www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org

NC LEGISLATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

<http://www.ncleg.net/representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx>

NC GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/Committees.asp>

NORTH CAROLINA NEWSPAPERS

<http://www.usnpl.com/ncnews.php>

US CONGRESS CONTACT INFORMATION

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>
<https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>



CONTACT US!



EMAIL

info@publicschoolsfirstnc.org

CALL

919-576-0655

MAIL

Public Schools First NC
P.O. Box 37832
Raleigh, NC 27627



facebook.com/PublicSchoolsFirstNC



[@PS1NC](https://twitter.com/PS1NC)



REFERENCES



FACTS & FIGURES

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/resources/fact-sheets/>

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUDGET FEBRUARY 2009

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2009highlights.pdf>

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUDGET FEBRUARY 2018

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2018highlights.pdf>

NORTH CAROLINA'S STATE BUDGET

<http://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BTC-Advocate-Training-Session-Feb-11-2017.pdf>

TEACHER WAGES COMPARED TO OTHER COLLEGE GRADUATES

<https://www.epi.org/publication/teachers-across-the-country-have-finally-had-enough-of-the-teacher-pay-penalty/>

NEA RANKINGS & ESTIMATES 2017-2018

http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/180413-Rankings_And_Estimates_Report_2018.pdf