



Public Schools First NC

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To Superintendent Truitt and the NC State Board of Education,

Can we please cut to the chase? I'm heading into my 17th year in the classroom and 15th in NC, and I have a few things I'd like to share regarding the new licensure/merit pay model. In short, it is a counterintuitive approach wherein you listen to corporations instead of actual teachers and administrators. To state it bluntly, NCDPI got in business with SAS and got mud on their face when testing and EVAAS were railroaded by parents demanding less testing. When it all came out in the wash, the parents were right. Now, you're unwilling to take ownership of this failure because of the money that went into it and the contracts you have with private stakeholders. I also think it's fair to presume you are unwilling to take the political loss that will come with it as well. So, what does that leave us with? Instead of doing what's right by our students and working with the actual educators of this state to come up with a workable solution, you'll make up for that shortage by introducing a convoluted, tiered system of peer evals, student evals, admin evals, and extra duties to "balance" this issue.

Balance it or make it even more cumbersome and problematic? Administrative evaluations and longevity pay work when teachers are compensated fairly. This is a proven step when needing to address high teacher turnover. Go ahead and take a look at the state budgets that Alabama and Mississippi just passed. They listened to their constituents and are on the road to addressing teacher shortages in their state; unfortunately, that's not the case in North Carolina—a former leader in education for Southern states.

You wouldn't have teacher shortages if the state legislature adequately funded our schools, our students, and our educators. You wouldn't have teacher shortages if tenured teachers actually received a legitimate pay increase in the last 15 years of their careers. It's hard to ignore that this disincentivizes career teachers in favor of cheaper, inexperienced new ones. While that saves you money in the short term, what will that look like long term? Who's going to go to college to barely reach a \$50k salary after 10 years on the job? Who's going to go to college for teaching when there is no master's pay for career growth? Who's going to become a teacher when no health care is provided at retirement? Would you? Would you want your children to? This model will only worsen the teacher

shortage we face, and it will also put a chokehold on career teachers. Who's going to serve our children for 30 years when there's no health care and a significantly reduced pension at the end of the tunnel?

Instead of demanding from our state legislature some sort of compromise to solve this serious issue, you're choosing this widely unpopular option that is only going to make teachers more burned out and more enraged over the lack of respect we receive.

And last of all, looking at this from a macro perspective doesn't help much either. Since I came to NC in 2008, corporate tax cuts have won EVERY year of EVERY budget, leaving the fireman, policeman, teachers, and state employees to have had to take it on the chin. Let me tell you from experience, carrying the burden on our shoulders and in our wallets to make up for these tax cuts gets old and degrading. Perhaps you could start there and see if positive changes come. I'd put money down that it would. We are the only state that will have a 0% corporate tax rate (when fully established in a few years). I'm all for bringing jobs here, but what's wrong with 1 or 2%? It would go a long, long way in funding our schools at the state level.

Please look in the mirror and do better!

Sincerely,

A Wake County Teacher

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