

## **EDUCATOR COMPENSATION PROPOSALS for 2014-2015**

Ensuring North Carolina students are receiving a high quality education is impossible without simultaneously attracting some of the state's best and brightest individuals to enter the teaching profession, stay in the classroom, and influence the learning experience in a positive way. Current North Carolina teacher salaries are deterring, rather than attracting and retaining, dedicated professionals needed as educators. A recent proposal for raising early-career teachers' salaries is a necessary component of a larger educator compensation plan. Equally important and time-sensitive for 2014 is improving compensation for all teachers. Together these components provide a viable first step in a larger plan for addressing teacher compensation for all of North Carolina's teachers. To get teacher compensation headed in the right direction, the General Assembly and Governor are respectfully requested to consider the following for 2014-2015:

- 1) **Invest In All Teachers; Make Teachers Whole** - The pay for current teachers has been frozen since 2008, with the exception of a 1.2 percent across-the-board increase in 2012. This means a sixth-year teacher is still earning the same pay as a first-year teacher, with similar scenarios for teachers of all experience levels. This salary compression is deflating morale and causing problems for attracting and retaining the best individuals for classrooms statewide. Funding salaries for teachers to reflect their differing levels of experience, and thereby making them whole for their investment in the classroom in recent years, is critical and time-sensitive. Additionally, this change would boost teacher morale by ensuring that all are provided a fair and equitable increase that expresses appreciation for the dedication to their profession demonstrated during the state's economic downturn.
- 2) **Reinstate Master's Pay and Other Advanced Degree Supplements** - Since advanced degrees are valued in the business community and reflected in higher pay, those same advanced degrees should be supported and rewarded in the education arena. Recent studies indicate that advanced degrees, including master's and doctoral, hold a positive impact for student achievement. A restoration of the state-supported supplements for all teachers and instructional support personnel who now hold, or are working toward, an advanced degree is another critical and time-sensitive issue to be addressed in 2014-2015.
- 3) **Protect Public School Resources** - It is vital for any compensation plan enacted during the upcoming 2014 legislative session to be funded independently of, and in addition to, fully funding all other aspects of the state budget for North Carolina public schools and the 1.5 million students they serve. School personnel must have resources necessary to meet all students' needs, which include access to instructional materials, digital tools, transportation, healthy meals and many other support services.
- 4) **Continue Educator Compensation Reform** - The above-mentioned proposals, combined with increasing pay for early-career teachers, are only the beginning steps in a comprehensive compensation reform plan that is needed soon for all educators. The General Assembly is to be applauded for starting this work with the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness and Compensation Task Force and is encouraged to allow that work to continue through the extension of the task force. In addition, the task force and all lawmakers are encouraged to include all facets of the public education community in the compensation reform discussion and process.

These proposals as beginning steps for improving educator compensation are supported by the following organizations on behalf of the majority of their individual members:

- **North Carolina Parent Teacher Association**
- **Professional Educators of North Carolina**
- **North Carolina Association of Educators**
- **North Carolina Association of School Administrators**
- **North Carolina School Boards Association**
- **North Carolina Justice Center - Education and Law Project**
- **Public School Forum of North Carolina**