

Children Above Politics

An Advocacy Guide for the Community



I will support our schools.

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Dear Friend,

When I was a high school principal, I knew my most important job was to find the best teachers—and then hold onto them. Nothing makes a greater impact on a child's success in school than an outstanding teacher.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege to attend the Emerging Issues Forum in Raleigh, which focused on Teachers and the Great Economic Debate. During one presentation, we heard from six teachers who had left, or were leaving, the profession. These were talented, dedicated educators who chose to quit teaching because they were not able to support themselves financially. I was struck by how critical it is for North Carolina to value the teaching profession, so we can keep these talented teachers in our classrooms.

The governor and legislative leaders have unveiled a proposal to increase the salaries for some of North Carolina's teachers. The plan would provide a meaningful salary increase for about a third of our state's educators—teachers with fewer than 10 years of experience. This proposal is a laudable first step. But it cannot be the only step. It is critical for the legislature to increase teacher salaries this year, to show our educators that we value the role they play in the lives of North Carolina's children.

We believe North Carolina must do more to value and respect its teachers in order to recruit and retain the best educators for our next generation. MeckEd's goal is to immediately raise the average North Carolina teacher salary to match that of our neighboring states, and raise it to the national average by 2019.

In order to reach these targets, we need your support.

The information compiled in this packet is a guide to help you advocate for public education. You can find fast facts on teacher compensation, helpful tips, and contact information for our elected leaders. We hope you'll use these resources—and then share them with your friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

Thank you for showing your support for public education.

Sincerely,

Bill Anderson, Ed.D.
Executive Director
MeckEd

MeckEd

2014 Public Policy Agenda

MeckEd believes all children, regardless of neighborhood or zip code, deserve a quality education to prepare them as contributors in our local and global economies. In 2014, we support two policy goals that go to the heart of our children's success: great teachers and access to high-quality Pre-K programs.

Teachers

- ✓ Raise the average North Carolina teacher salary to the national average by 2019, demonstrating incremental progress with an increase to the average of our neighboring states.

It is critical to elevate and enhance the teaching profession in North Carolina by valuing the work our teachers do every day, and by rewarding them with competitive salaries. We support a phased, multi-year approach to financial investments in North Carolina's teachers.

Currently, the average North Carolina teacher makes \$45,947—lower than the average teacher salary in Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. Although we support an increase to the national average within five years, quickly raising the average North Carolina teacher salary to that of our neighboring states (currently \$49,740) will make North Carolina more competitive. This will help stem the tide of educators leaving the state or leaving the profession altogether.

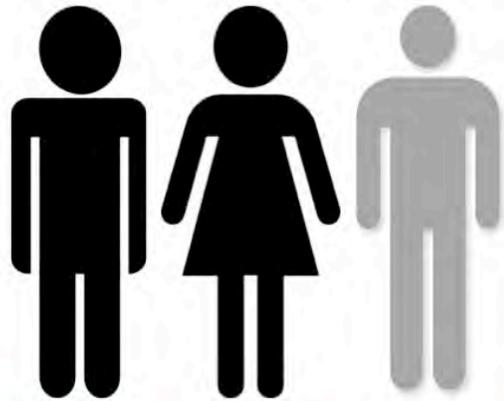
Early Learning

- ✓ Fully fund "NC Pre-K" to guarantee enrollment for all at-risk children

High quality Pre-Kindergarten education programs are critical to closing the achievement gap between affluent and low-income students, and to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed in elementary school and beyond. Participating in high quality Pre-K education programs results in a 50% increase in high school graduation rates and offers a \$7 return for every \$1 invested. Moreover, a 2010 evaluation of North Carolina's Pre-K education program found the initiative improves school readiness for at-risk children by building critical language, literacy and math skills.

Fast Facts – Teacher Compensation

- 2008 Average North Carolina Teacher Salary: **\$47,354 (25th)**
- 2013 Average North Carolina Teacher Salary: **\$45,737 (46th)**
- 2013 Average Neighboring State Teacher Salary: **\$49,372**
- 2013 National Average: **\$56,103**



Roughly two out of every three teachers work outside the classroom to make ends meet.

94

Percent of N.C. parents believe raising teacher salaries should be a top priority in 2014.

The
Numbers
Say It All



The average teacher salary in North Carolina is **lower** than in **any** of our neighboring states.

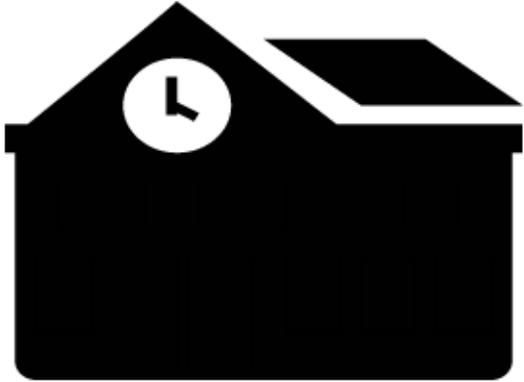
Source: NEA

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Fast Facts – Teacher Compensation

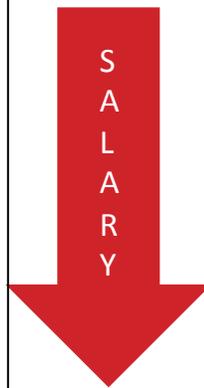


Teachers make 14% less than professionals with similar levels of education.



46% of teachers leave the profession each year, costing the U.S. **\$7.34 billion** annually

In the past five years, North Carolina teachers have received just one raise—1.2% in 2012.



Over the 2002-03 to 2012-13 decade, North Carolina teacher salaries fell 15% when adjusted for inflation, and nearly 8% using today's dollars, ranking our state **last in the nation.**

Our State Ranks:

46th in Average Teacher Salary

48th in Starting Teacher Salary

51st in Teacher Salary Growth

A Dozen DOs and DON'Ts of Advocacy

DO: Tell personal stories and use examples from your own experiences.

DON'T: Forget to thank lawmakers for their consideration.

DO: Restrict yourself to one or two topics.

DON'T: Throw in the kitchen sink.

DO: Follow up, follow up, follow up!

DON'T: Assume a lawmaker “got it” the first time.

DO: Be accurate and use supporting facts.

DON'T: Be afraid to say, “I don’t know” to a legislator’s questions.

DO: Be polite and ask for the elected official’s support.

DON'T: Threaten political retribution for opposing our proposals.

DO: Seek to establish a long-term partnership with your elected officials.

DON'T: Quit! Persistence pays off. Community advocacy works!

Sample Social Media Posts

Make sure to use #onthebusNC in your posts!



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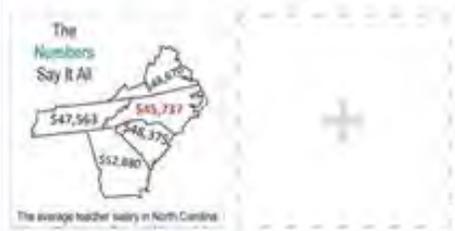
TWEETS **3,114** FOLLOWING **457** FOLLOWERS **1,835**

I hope @PatMcCrolyNC will support a pay raise for all teachers this year! My child's teacher at @MyersParkHS has to work 2 jobs! #onthebusNC

  0 

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

Did you know that North Carolina pays the average teacher less than all of our neighboring states? I'm #onthebusNC! It's time to raise teacher pay!



The average teacher salary in North Carolina

 Boost Post 



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TWEETS **3,114** FOLLOWING **457** FOLLOWERS **1,835**

.@rob_bryan Did you know 94% of NC parents support a teacher pay raise this year? #onthebusNC

  46 

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

North Carolina's average teacher salary dropped 15% from 2002-03 to 2012-13. That's more than any other state in the country! I'm contacting my legislators to tell them to support a teacher pay raise this year! #onthebusNC



NCGA - Representation
www.ncleg.net

All residents of North Carolina are represented in the United States Senate by both Senators Kay Hagan and Richard Burr. Representation in the NC House, the NC Senate, and the US House is determined by district. Each resident of the state has one representative in each of those legislative bodies, d...

1 of 3 Choose a Thumbnail
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 Boost Post 

Sample Social Media Posts

Make sure to use #onthebusNC in your posts!

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TWEETS **3,114** FOLLOWING **457** FOLLOWERS **1,835**

NC's average teacher salary is lower than all of our neighboring states. It's time to change that! #onthebusNC

Image will appear as a link

6 **Tweet**

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

My daughter's teacher at Myers Park High School has to work two after-school jobs to pay back her student loans. She's a great teacher, but I'm scared she's going to have to find a new job that pays a higher salary. Teachers shouldn't have to make those choices. I'm #onthebusNC to secure a meaningful raise for all teachers this year! Send me a message if you'd like information about joining our movement!

Boost Post Post

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

Great insights about the high costs of low teacher salaries. #onthebusNC

The High Cost of Low Teacher Salaries
www.nytimes.com
To revamp our education system, blame teachers less and pay them more.

2 of 3 Choose a Thumbnail
 No Thumbnail

Upload Image

Boost Post Post

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TWEETS **3,114** FOLLOWING **457** FOLLOWERS **1,835**

In 2008, NC's average teacher salary ranked 25th in the nation. Today it ranks 46th. Time for a change! #onthebusNC

24 **Tweet**

Sample Email to Legislators

Dear Rep. Bryan,

I am writing you to support investments in public education, including increasing the salaries of all North Carolina teachers. Governor McCrory's plan to increase the starting salary for teachers is a great first step, but North Carolina needs to do more to recruit and retain the best teachers.

My daughter attends Park Road Montessori School. I'm thrilled with the education she is getting there, but it breaks my heart to hear her teachers talk about the need to work second and third jobs in order to support their families.

Increasing teacher salary is a crucial first step to strengthening public education in North Carolina's. North Carolina's average teacher salary is nearly \$4,000 lower than the average teacher salary in our neighboring states and nearly \$8,000 lower than the national average teacher salary. North Carolina teacher salaries are so low that it is hard for educators to raise a family, forcing too many great teachers leave the profession or leave the state. North Carolina teachers deserve our respect.

Our students and our state need great teachers. I urge you to work with Gov. McCrory and your colleagues in both parties to increase the base salary for all teachers, and to support smart investments in our public schools. Taking these steps will elevate North Carolina public education, help our students succeed, and benefit our state for years to come. Please let me know what actions you will take this year to support our teachers.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith
Charlotte, N.C.
janesmith@gmail.com

Sample Letter to the Editor

As a parent of a child at Park Road Montessori School I was pleased to see Gov. McCrory's plan to increase the starting salary for some of North Carolina's teachers. This is a good first step, but North Carolina needs to do more to recruit and retain the best teachers. Increasing teacher pay is essential to strengthening public education in our state and increasing our children's ability to learn. Raising the starting salary is a great first step, but we need to respect all teachers across the state and raise the average N.C. teacher salary to match the national average. I encourage the governor and legislators to work together to make smart, long-lasting investments in public education that will benefit all North Carolinians.

Jane Smith
Charlotte



2014 Elected Officials

N.C. Senate

Name	Affil.	District	Raleigh Phone	Meck. Phone	Email
Phil Berger, Senate President Pro Tem	R	26	919-733-5708	N/A	phil.berger@ncleg.net
Daniel Clodfelter	D	37	919-715-8331	704-331-1041	daniel.clodfelter@ncleg.net
Joel Ford	D	38	919-733-5955		joel.ford@ncleg.net
Malcolm Graham	D	40	919-733-5650	704-547-1193	malcolm.graham@ncleg.net
Bob Rucho	R	39	919-733-5655		bob.rucho@ncleg.net
Jeff Tarte	R	41	919-715-3050	704-765-6167	jeff.tarte@ncleg.net

N.C. House

Name	Affil.	District	Raleigh Phone	Meck. Phone	Email
Thom Tillis, House Speaker	R	98	919-733-3451	704-248-2980	thom.tillis@ncleg.net
Kelly Alexander	D	107	919-733-5778	704-333-1167	kelly.alexander@ncleg.net
Bill Brawley	R	103	919-733-	704-574-0894	bill.brawley@ncleg.net
Rob Bryan	R	88	919-733-5607	704-331-4995	rob.bryan@ncleg.net
Becky Carney	D	102	919-733-5827	704-332-1893	becky.carney@ncleg.net
Tricia Cotham	D	100	919-715-0706	980-343-6430	tricia.cotham@ncleg.net
Carla Cunningham	D	106	919-733-5807	704-509-2939	carla.cunningham@ncleg.net
Beverly Earle	D	101	919-715-2530	704-333-7180	beverly.earle@ncleg.net
Charlie Jeter	R	92	919-733-5654	704-895-4884	charles.jeter@ncleg.net
Rodney Moore	D	99	919-733-5606	704-449-6201	rodney.moore@ncleg.net
Ruth Samuelson	R	104	919-715-3009	704-366-8748	ruth.samuelson@ncleg.net
Jacqueline Shaffer	R	105	919-733-5886	704-968-8820	jacqueline.schaffer@ncleg.net

Mecklenburg County Commission

Name	Affil.	District	Phone	Email
Pat Cotham	D	At Large	704-336-3866	pat.cotham@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Kim Ratliff	D	At Large	704-336-2641	kim.ratliff@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Trevor Fuller, Chair	D	At Large	704-724-5831	trevor.fuller@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Karen Bentley	R	1	704-432-3997	karen.bentley@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Vilma Leake	D	2	704-336-2088	vilma.leake@mecklenburgcountync.gov
George Dunlap	D	3	704-336-4119	george.dunlap@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Dumont Clarke, Vice Chair	D	4	704-331-1051	dumont.clarke@mvalaw.com
Matthew Ridenhour	R	5	N/A	matthew.ridenhour@mecklenburgcountync.gov
Bill James	R	6	N/A	wjames@carolina.rr.com

Resources

MeckEd

<http://www.mecked.org/>

N.C. General Assembly – Who Represents Me?

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

Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners

<http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/BOCC/Pages/default.aspx>

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/boe/Pages/default.aspx>

National Education Association Rankings 2013-14

<http://www.nea.org/home/rankings-and-estimates-2013-2014.html>

UNC-Wilmington Survey of North Carolina Parents

http://people.uncw.edu/imigs/documents/NCReact_ImigSmith.pdf



MeckEd

**In order to successfully advocate for public education,
MeckEd needs your support!**

Name:

Email Address:

I will make a difference by...

- Contacting my legislator**
- Sharing messages on social media**
- Writing a letter to the editor**
- Attending an advocacy training session**
- Supporting MeckEd through a financial contribution**
 - \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____