

**Union County Board of Education  
Resolution on Legislative Priorities**

WHEREAS, Union County Board of Education (UCBOE) is the sixth largest school district in the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) represents all 115 school boards across the state, including Union County Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the NCSBA legislative agenda is developed after input from school board members across the state through a survey process and district meetings, consideration by the NCSBA Legislative Committee comprised of school board members and is ultimately adopted by school board members comprising the NCSBA Delegate Assembly ; and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2014, the NCSBA Delegate Assembly adopted the NCSBA Legislative Agenda for the 2015-2016 legislative session; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 2015, the UCBOE affirmed the NCSBA Legislative Agenda, attached hereto as Attachment 1, and adopted the UCBOE Legislative Agenda, attached hereto as Attachment 2; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2015, the UCBOE adopted a Resolution on Drivers' Education, seeking reinstatement of the General Assembly revisit its decision to sunset driver education program funding on July 1, 2015, and either restore the full Highway Trust Fund allocation or establish another funding source that does not cut into other education allotments ; and

WHEREAS, the legislative issues set out in the NCSBA Legislative Agenda for 2015-2016, and further prioritized in the UCBOE Legislative Agenda, have been identified by the UCBOE as essential to enhancing the exercise of their school district control and supervisory powers and to improving the quality of K-12 education provided in Union County and the State of North Carolina.

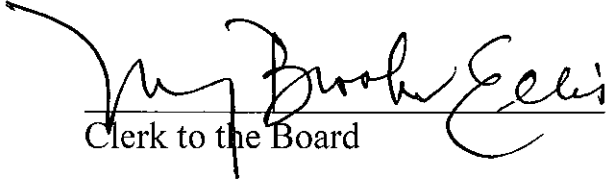
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Union County Board of Education supports the NCSBA Legislative Agenda and hereby adopts the UCBOE Legislative Agenda.

Adopted by the Union County Board of Education this 3rd day of February, 2015.

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

By   
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

  
Clerk to the Board

# Attachment 1

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## **NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION 2015-16 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

The North Carolina School Boards Association is the professional membership association representing North Carolina's 115 local school boards and the Cherokee Central School as the unified voice for all school districts across the state. North Carolina has long recognized the essential nature of public education by providing an opportunity for a sound, basic education. Legislative and policy making bodies must dedicate themselves to maintaining the common system of public education available to all children from all walks of life and socioeconomic backgrounds. For the general improvement and betterment of public education in North Carolina, NCSBA will advocate for the following items during the 2015-16 legislative session.

### **Guiding Principles**

During each legislative session there are always unanticipated bills introduced that affect public schools. The following are guiding principles NCSBA will use to evaluate legislation that is introduced during the legislative session.

- NCSBA opposes any legislation that would violate federal laws or the state constitution.
- NCSBA opposes any legislation that would require school systems to expend additional financial resources without the State providing those necessary resources. NCSBA also will continue to advocate for funding for currently existing mandates.
- NCSBA opposes any legislation that attempts to diminish or take away local control and supports legislation that provides additional local control and decision making.
- NCSBA supports legislation that creates safe environments for students and staff as long as it is consistent with the aforementioned principles.
- The General Assembly should provide funds sufficient to guarantee full funding of all funding formulas.

### **Ensuring Student Success**

#### ***Reduce Testing and Assessing***

While it is important to know how much students have learned and identify areas of remediation, too much instructional time is being diverted to test and assess our students. *The State should conduct a complete overhaul of testing and assessing of students with a goal of maximizing instructional time, deriving the necessary information, and minimizing stress on students and teachers.*

#### ***Read to Achieve***

While reading at grade level by the end of third grade is important educationally, the implementation of Read to Achieve has caused undue stress on students, teachers, and parents. *Sufficient resources, including remediation opportunities, need to be provided in order for this goal to be successfully accomplished. Additionally, too much time is being diverted from*

*instruction for assessing and testing. The addition of the portfolio has significantly added to this problem. Grade retention should also be reexamined in light of the significant amount of research about the effectiveness of this practice.*

### ***NC Pre-K Program***

*For over a decade the State-funded NC Pre-K program, formerly known as More at Four, has been providing high-quality early educational opportunities to North Carolina's at-risk children. Yet current funding levels provide for only 27,000 slots for the roughly 67,000 eligible children. Funding for a meaningful level of additional slots is necessary to ensure an equal start for at-risk children. This program should be returned to be part of the Department of Public Instruction, not Health and Human Services.*

### ***School Calendar***

*Students need an instructional calendar that optimizes retention, minimizes disruption, and allows concepts and ideas to be fully developed and absorbed. The world is rapidly changing, and our students are being negatively impacted by already low seat time and summer learning loss as compared to students from other industrialized nations. School board members are greatly concerned that North Carolina's school calendar law is educationally unsound and places unnecessary burdens on school districts. NCSBA requests that the General Assembly revisit and revise the current school calendar law.*

### ***School Technology – Fines and Forfeitures***

*North Carolina's Constitution requires the clear proceeds of all civil penalties, fines and forfeitures collected by State agencies to be distributed to the public schools. In August, 2008, a court found that the State has consistently failed to fulfill this constitutional obligation and owes public schools \$747 million in school technology funding. An arrangement for settling the full debt has still not been established. NCSBA is committed to working with the General Assembly to find an incremental debt repayment method that allows for a fiscally responsible fulfillment of the State's obligations.*

### ***Staffing for Student Success***

#### ***Protection of Retirees***

*State retirees serving as long-term substitutes should retain their existing retiree health coverage. A new law forcing State retirees to give up their existing coverage if they work 30 or more hours per week is discouraging this needed talent pool from working in schools as long-term substitutes.*

#### ***Teacher Pay***

*Although we commend the General Assembly for the meaningful pay increases to certain groups of teachers in 2014-15, all teachers should be at least at the level they would have been had they*

*moved up the pay schedules since the freeze in 2008. North Carolina's teacher pay has continually slid in comparison with the region and country. The new pay scale creates five-year plateaus that are a great disincentive for teachers to be attracted to and retained in the profession. Master's and Advanced Degree and National Board Certification supplements are of utmost importance and should be continually funded. NCSBA also firmly believes that our teachers should be above national average, and thus should be paid above national average as well.*

### ***Teacher Assistant Funding***

The role of a teacher assistant has greatly transformed in recent years, with increased education requirements, and has become an essential component of student learning in the early years. With increased focus on early grades and more attention to reading by the third grade, the assistance these individuals provide to classroom teachers has become an invaluable part of accomplishing these goals. *Not only does funding for teacher assistants need to be increased, they should be allocated by position ratios in K-3 in the same manner as classroom teachers. School districts should maintain the flexibility to spend the money as they see fit.*

### ***Principal/Assistant Principal Compensation***

Historically, the principal/assistant principal salary schedule has financially incentivized teachers to become principals and assistant principals. *The General Assembly should reinstate a salary schedule system for individuals who choose a school leadership path that provides additional compensation beyond which the employee would have made as a teacher.*

### ***Ensuring Efficient Operations***

#### ***ADM Funding/Continuation Budget***

*The General Assembly should reinstate the K-12 enrollment growth (ADM funding) as part of the Continuation budget as it has been since the 1930's. This is an essential tool for school districts to successfully plan for the next school year.*

#### ***A-F Grading of Schools***

The 2014 school grades are based upon a split of 80% performance/20% growth and a 15-point scale. The scale is scheduled to become a more restrictive 10-point scale in 2015. School leaders feel that the current grading formula does not accurately reflect the learning in many of their schools. The current grading scale will lead to decreased economic activity, including home sales, in many communities across NC. *The current grading system for schools should be revamped to accurately reflect what is occurring in schools across the state. Several factors that should be considered in rewriting the grading structure are a 50-50 split between performance and growth and making permanent the 2014 15- point grading scale.*

#### ***Sales Tax Refund/Exemption***

From 1998 until 2005, local boards of education were able to provide additional educational opportunities with savings from a sales tax refund. Currently, cities, counties, public universities, charter schools, private schools, and countless other entities either receive a sales tax refund or are exempt from ever paying sales tax. *If North Carolina's tax code is going to continue to allow some governmental entities and others to not pay sales tax to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, then local boards of education should either be granted a sales tax exemption or have its sales tax refund reinstated.*

### ***School Construction/Capital Funding***

School environment and infrastructure are strongly linked to student outcomes. There is a staggering backlog of school construction, upgrades, additions, and repair needs spread across the state. The most recent survey of five-year public school capital infrastructure needs conducted by the Department of Public Instruction in 2010-11 estimated the aggregate backlog at \$8.17 billion. Yet we have seen a decline in funds given to local districts for school construction. *We ask that the General Assembly find ways to increase this funding in order to be able to better serve our students.*

### ***School Board Fiscal Accountability***

NCSBA supports making school boards fiscally accountable. While over 90 percent of the 15,000 school boards in the nation are fiscally autonomous from other local governments, North Carolina school boards remain in the small minority of those who must rely upon another local government for local public education funds. *The General Assembly should enact legislation for requesting school boards that would allow a transfer of public school fiscal accountability to the requesting school board. In such instances, school boards will be held directly accountable for all aspects of public education in that service area.*

### ***Inter-/Intra-District Open Enrollment***

*School systems should not be mandated to provide inter- or intra-district open enrollment.* Currently, school districts already have the authority to allow intra-district open enrollment but due to availability of seats and transportation costs it may not be feasible. Inter-district open enrollment poses many issues including funding and long-term capacity.

### **Other**

#### ***Driver's Education Funding***

Historically, driver education costs have been covered by the Highway Trust Fund. In recent years some school districts have charged a nominal fee to students. The 2014-15 budget stated that the Highway Fund appropriation for Driver Education will be eliminated July 1, 2015. This would shift the costs of the program to local school districts and only allow a minimum increase in the fee students pay to sixty-five dollars, leaving a large discrepancy in funding the actual cost of the course. This unfunded mandate puts another burden on already tight local budgets. *NCSBA asks that funding be continued going forward from the Highway Trust Fund and not placed on*

*the local level, or in the alternative give school districts the authority to charge a fee commiserate to the cost of the program.*

### ***School Vouchers***

*Until the constitutional questions have been resolved, no further action should be taken on school vouchers.*

### ***Charter Schools***

*Local boards of education should have the power to approve charters and to keep them under their governance, thus allowing local boards an opportunity to experiment with different educational practices. The system for the allotment funding for charter schools needs to be reevaluated, so that money will follow a student that returns to the school district mid-year. In order for all students to have an opportunity to choose amongst the different publicly-funded and accountable schools, charter schools should also be required to provide transportation to those students who live in a certain radius, and provide lunches for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. A mechanism needs to be established for charter schools to share their innovative practices with the schools.*

Please go to the Governmental Relations section at [www.ncsba.org](http://www.ncsba.org) for Issue Briefs on each of these items. For more information, please contact:

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# Attachment 2

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**Union County Board of Education  
Legislative Agenda 2015-2016**

The Union County Board of Education (UCBOE) is the sixth largest school district in the State of North Carolina, serving approximately 42,000 students in 53 schools and having approximately 5,000 employees; and

The Union County Board of Education supports the NCSBA Legislative Agenda as written on many issues, but is identifying the following issues as priorities:

1. **Driver's Education** – UCBOE supports the language proposed by Wake County Board of Education as follows: “Restore G.S. 20-88.1(c) that was repealed by SB 744, Session Law 2014-100 to restore funding for Drivers' Education or allow LEAs to charge a fee that covers the full cost of the training. The \$65 student fee that may be charged covers only a small portion of the actual cost of providing this service. Repeal of G.S. 20-88.1(c) has created a largely unfunded mandate.” *Please also see the Resolution adopted by the UCBOE on January 6, 2015, attached at Attachment 3.*
2. **School Calendar** - UCBOE supports the language proposed by Wake County Board of Education as follows: “Amend the Calendar Law to provide greater flexibility for LEAs to create school calendars that meet the needs of students. In the alternative, allow school boards to open at least three weeks earlier than the current school calendar law allows so that students can take their exams prior to winter break.”
3. **A-F Grading of Schools** – UCBOE supports the language proposed by Wake County Board of Education as follows: “Abolish the current A-F grading system for schools, scheduled to be released for the first time in February of 2015. The current school report card, collected and managed by the Department of Public Instruction, is more than sufficient to provide the public with successes and challenges of all the schools in North Carolina. The School Report Card includes information about school size, student performance by sub-groups, safety, discipline, textbooks and technology, and teacher quality and demographics. A single grade for a school is not as revealing as the current abundance of data provided for each school on the report cards. The report cards already allow for comparisons across schools and across school districts in North Carolina. The [UCBOE] believes that the current state report card for schools not only provides sufficient data to grade schools and report out school specific outcomes, but actually far exceeds what would be a single data point under the current legislation.” Furthermore, for the 2013-14 school year, the General Assembly used a 15-point scale. A 10-point scale is projected for the 2014-15 school year as mandated by the General Assembly. That scale change will result in 44 of our schools dropping a letter grade. In addition, the formula of 20% growth and 80% performance needs to be retooled to better reflect growth in schools.

- 4. ADM Funding/Continuation Budget** – UCBOE supports the language proposed by Wake County Board of Education as follows: “Restore the definition of Continuation Budget that was repealed by SB 744, Session Law 2014-100 to include projected student growth in the continuation budget. The definition of the Continuation Budget that has been in place since the 1930’s has served local school systems well.” UCPS’ ADM is expected to grow approximately 1.5% or over 600 students. Therefore, if ADM funding is not appropriated by the General Assembly, UCPS will be underfunded approximately \$3,000,000. UCBOE requests that the General Assembly reinstate the K-12 enrollment growth as part of the Continuation budget as it has been since the 1930’s. The 2015 – 2016 school year is extremely difficult to plan for UCPS because of this ADM Funding/Continuation Budget omission.
- 5. Teacher Pay** - The National Education Association reports that the 2012-2013 Average Starting Teacher Salary was \$36,141. Although UCPS also commends the General Assembly for committing to increase the Starting Teacher Salary to \$35,000, teachers will still remain below the 2012-2013 Average Starting Teacher Salary until they reach five years of experience because of the pay scale plateaus. Therefore, the Union County BOE also firmly believes that our teachers should be above the national average at all levels of experience and be compensated for Master’s and Advanced Degree and National Board Certification.
- 6. Principal/Assistant Principal Compensation** - As stated in the NCSBA Legislative Agenda: “Historically, the principal/assistant principal salary schedule has financially incentivized teachers to become principals and assistant principals. *The General Assembly should reinstate a salary schedule system for individuals who choose a school leadership path that provides additional compensation beyond which the employee would have made as a teacher.*”
- 7. Teacher Assistant Funding**  
Since fiscal year 2013, UCPS has lost \$4,932,925 or 34.31% of Teacher Assistant funding. This equates to over 160 Teacher Assistants that has negatively impacted the K-3 learning environment. The UCBOE requests that the General Assembly restore full funding for Teacher Assistants for grades K-3.
- 8. Reduce Testing** - North Carolina requires many tests for students. Currently, North Carolina Final Exams (NCFEs) are given in 28 subjects. Career and Technical Education (CTE) has an exam for 90% of their courses and they cannot be waived (80 courses). There are three high schools End-of-Course (EOCs)-Math 1, Biology and English II. Elementary/middle schools give an End-of-Grade test in reading and math in grades 3-8. Science is given in grades 5 and 8. The national EXPLORE and ACT are administered to all 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders respectively to determine Career and College readiness. The UCBOE requests that the General Assembly reduce the number of assessments administered yearly to students.

9. **NC Pre-K Program** – As stated in the NCSBA Legislative Agenda “For over a decade the State-funded NC Pre-K program, formerly known as More at Four, has been providing high-quality early educational opportunities to North Carolina’s at-risk children. Yet current funding levels provide for only 27,000 slots for the roughly 67,000 eligible children. *Funding for a meaningful level of additional slots is necessary to ensure an equal start for at-risk children. This program should be returned to be part of the Department of Public Instruction, not Health and Human Services.*”

# Attachment 3

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**Union County Board of Education  
Resolution Concerning Driver Education Funding**

WHEREAS, local school districts in North Carolina are legally required to provide and operate driver education courses; and

WHEREAS, costs for operating driver education courses have historically been covered by earmarked appropriations from the Highway Trust Fund; and

WHEREAS, driver education is a key component of the graduated driver's license program, which has effectively helped reduce teen motor vehicle accidents and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, the 2014 State budget moved all Highway Trust Fund appropriations for the driver education program to non-recurring for 2014-15 and stated it was the State's intent to eliminate the funding in its entirety beginning July 1, 2015; and

WHEREAS, school districts have the authority to charge fees to Driver Education participants, but that fee is capped at \$65 per student while the estimated operational cost per student is estimated to be between \$170 and \$350; and

WHEREAS, if the State follows through on the elimination of funding for the driver education program, it would impose yet another unfunded mandate on local school systems, who would have to find a way to cover the substantial gap between the allowable maximum fee that can be charged and the actual cost of operating this required program; and

WHEREAS, an unfunded driver education mandate would force school districts to either take drastic cuts to instructional services, which would harm students in the classroom, or cut back access to the driver education program through reduced services, which would cause some students to be denied the invaluable and successful training of the graduated licensing program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Union County Board of Education strongly objects to an unfunded driver education mandate.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Union County Board of Education respectfully requests that the General Assembly revisit its decision to sunset driver education program funding on July 1, 2015, and either restore the full Highway Trust Fund allocation or establish another funding source that does not cut into other education allotments.

Adopted by the Union County Board of Education this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2015.

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

By   
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

  
Clerk to the Board