



neimand collaborative



Supporting NC Public Education

Research Findings

May 2013

Prepared for Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation



Research Objective

Understand why North Carolinians value public education—including expectations and perceptions of strengths, challenges and opportunities.



Methodology

- Qualitative research to explore themes and issues.
December 2012
 - Focus groups with parents and non-parents (4).
 - Small groups with education policy advocates (2).
 - Phone interviews with local business leaders (10).
- Statewide survey of 1,519 NC citizens.
January 28 – February 6, 2013
 - 100% voted in 2012 elections, 85% voted in 2010 elections.
 - Not work in education or sensitive industry (news, advertising, etc.).
 - Representative of the state in terms of race, urban/rural residence, and presence of school-aged children.



Audience

Number of Children by Age

Base: Have children, n=1127

| | Under 5 | 5 to 12 | 13 to 18 | 19 to 25 | 26 or older |
|------|---------|---------|----------|----------|-------------|
| None | 85% | 67% | 71% | 79% | 57% |
| 1 | 12% | 23% | 20% | 14% | 12% |
| 2 | 3% | 9% | 8% | 5% | 19% |
| 3 | <1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 8% |
| 4 | - | - | - | - | 2% |
| 5 | <1% | - | - | <1% | 1% |
| 6+ | - | <1% | - | - | 1% |

Voted in Last Presidential Election

Yes 100%

Voted in 2010 Elections for US and State Congress

Yes 85%

No 11%

Not sure/can't recall 4%

Views on Economic Issues

Conservative 40%

Moderate 44%

Liberal 17%

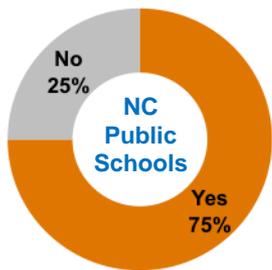
Views on Social Issues

Conservative 34%

Moderate 39%

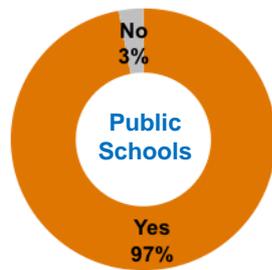
Liberal 28%

Currently Attend NC Public Schools

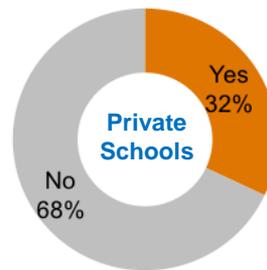


Base: Have children under 19, n=638

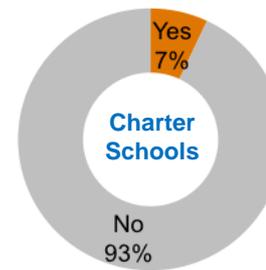
Types of Schools Children Have Ever Attended



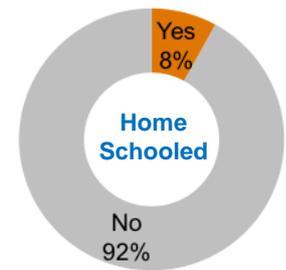
Base: Have children ALL over 18, n=625



Base: Have children 5 years and older, n=1063



Base: Have children 5 years and older, n=1063



Base: Have children 5 years and older, n=1063



Audience

Gender

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Female | 49% |
| Male | 51% |

Age

| | |
|-------|-----|
| 18-24 | 4% |
| 25-34 | 17% |
| 35-44 | 23% |
| 45-54 | 23% |
| 55-64 | 18% |
| 65-69 | 9% |
| 70+ | 6% |

Current Employment Status

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Employed full-time | 51% |
| Self-employed | 6% |
| Employed part-time | 7% |
| Student | 3% |
| Full-time homemaker | 7% |
| Not employed but looking for work | 4% |
| Not employed and not looking for work | 1% |
| Retired | 21% |

Marital Status

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Married | 68% |
| Living with partner | 5% |
| Single, never married | 15% |
| Divorced | 9% |
| Separated | 2% |
| Widowed | 2% |
| Prefer not to answer | <1% |

Highest Level of Educ. Completed

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Less than high school | <1% |
| High school graduate | 7% |
| Some college or trade school | 24% |
| College graduate | 44% |
| Post graduate | 25% |

Race

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Asian/Asian-American | 2% |
| Black/African-American | 20% |
| White/Caucasian | 76% |
| Some other race | 1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | |
| Yes | 2% |
| No | 98% |

Total Annual HH Income Before Taxes

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Less than or equal to \$50K | 24% |
| At least \$50K but less than \$75K | 22% |
| At least \$75K but less than \$100K | 19% |
| At least \$100K but less than \$150K | 16% |
| At least \$150K but less than \$200K | 6% |
| \$200K or more | 3% |
| Don't know / Prefer not to say | 9% |

Length NC Resident

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Less than 1 year | 2% |
| 1 to 5 years | 12% |
| 6 to 10 years | 16% |
| 11 years or more | 43% |
| All of my life | 28% |

Type of Area Live In

| | |
|----------|-----|
| Urban | 16% |
| Suburban | 53% |
| Rural | 30% |

Children

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 74% |
| No | 26% |



Summary Observations

- NC Public K-12 education receives modest ratings.
 - Stronger ratings for local schools, teachers and administrators.
 - District and state level ratings decline.
- Vast majority see public education as very important and very beneficial to the state and its future.
 - Some believe private schools add value by creating competition.
- Private schools appeal to some, but most have very little experience with them (a third have had children who attended).



Summary Observations

- Most important areas for public school improvement are all seen as the responsibility of the state system and state government or parents—not local schools.
 - Underpaid teachers
 - Class sizes are too large
 - Lack of student discipline
- Greatest potential improvements focus on teachers.
 - Investing in training, compensation, teaching conditions.
 - Increased accountability and ability to dismiss poor performers.
- A solid majority (68%) feel the new academic standards will make K-12 public education in North Carolina better.



Summary Observations

- Motivating values for K-12 education are shared across demographic, ideological and behavioral sub-groups.
 - Individual outcomes for parents and students are the most powerful.
 - Societal outcomes are desirable, but less powerful.
 - North Carolinians associate public education more strongly with societal outcomes than with individual outcomes.

- Confidence, hope and optimism are the most powerful emotional states sought by adults when considering K-12 education.
 - Parents seek confidence they are doing well in their role.
 - Adults seek confidence that educational investments are preparing individuals for success in real life.



Summary Observations

- Personal outcomes predominate—social outcomes subordinated if forced to choose—but public schools perform best on social outcomes.
- Adults do not want to have to choose between individual and societal outcomes—but when they lack confidence in public education, that creates anxiety.
- Perceptions are consistent and shared across demographic, ideological and behavioral subgroups.



neimand collaborative



Results



Report Card on North Carolina K-12 Public Education



Private schools have similar local grades, better state grades and high numbers (35-39%) that don't know.

| Report Card Mean Rating | Public School(s) | K-12 Teachers | Public Education Leaders/Admin. |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Where child attends | B+ (3.3) | B+ (3.3) | B (3.1) |
| In district | B- (2.8) | B (2.9) | B-/C+ (2.5) |
| In state of NC as a whole | C+ (2.4) | B- (2.6) | C+ (2.3) |

Base: Children attend public schools (N=479)

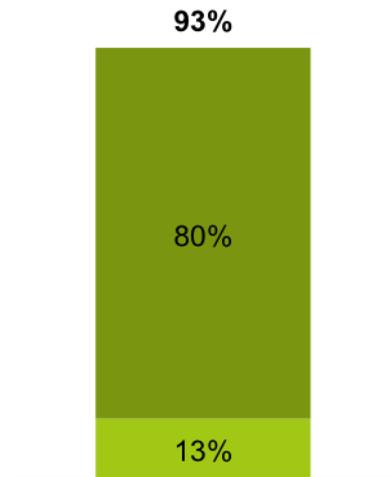
Q2. Thinking about K-12 public education, what grade would you give each of the following?



Important to the state

Importance of the state K-12 public education system overall

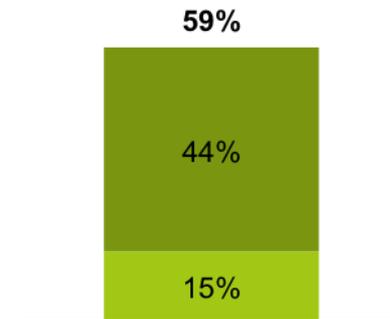
Top 2 Box (rated 6 / 7)



- Rated 7 Extremely important
- Rated 6

Importance of the state K-12 private education overall

Top 2 Box (rated 6 / 7)



- Rated 7 Extremely important
- Rated 6

Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

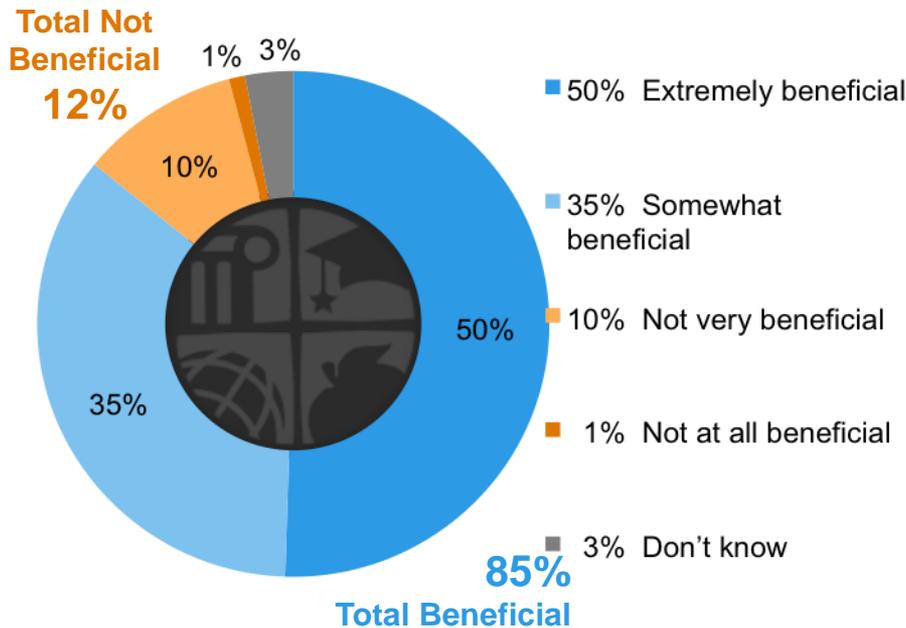
Q3. How important is the state K-12 public education system overall? (7pt. scale: 1= Not at all important, 7= Extremely important; DK)



Benefits to the state

K-12 public education

Top 2 Box (extremely/somewhat beneficial)



Bold font indicates statistically significant difference

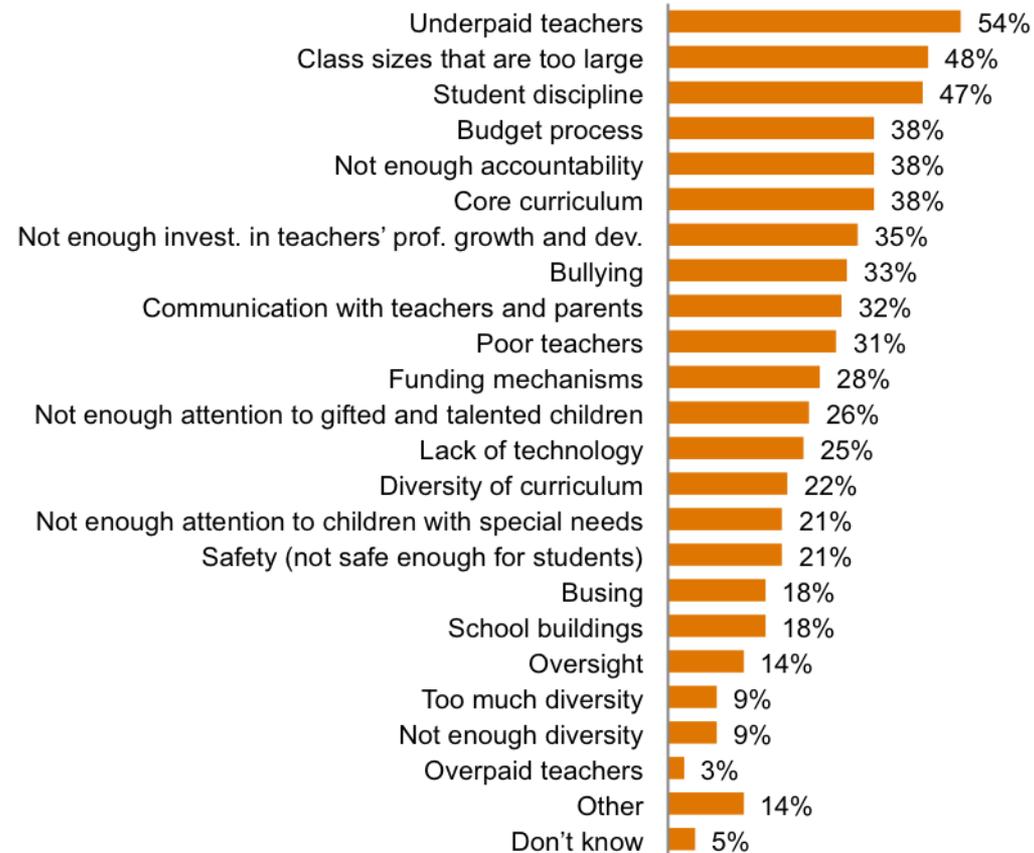
Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q3. How important is the state K-12 public education system overall? (7pt. scale: 1= Not at all important, 7= Extremely important; DK)

Q4. How beneficial would you say the K-12 public education system is to the state of North Carolina? (4pt. scale: 1= Not at all beneficial, 4 = Extremely beneficial; DK)



Most critical areas for improvement in public schools



Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q8. What are the most critical areas for improvement in the K-12 public education system? Select all that apply.



Who should address critical problems

| Critical Areas | The Community | Churches | Local Businesses | Students | Parents | Teachers | Principals | Super-intendents | Local School Board | NC State Board of Education | State Government | NC Dept of Public Instruction | Governor | Someone Else/ Other | Don't Know |
|---|---------------|----------|------------------|----------|---------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------|------------|
| 54% Underpaid teachers | 2% | <1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 2% | 1% | 4% | 8% | 22% | 35% | 10% | 10% | 1% | 3% |
| 48% Class sizes that are too large | 3% | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% | 2% | 7% | 14% | 16% | 26% | 12% | 11% | 3% | 1% | 3% |
| 47% Student discipline | 2% | 1% | - | 3% | 38% | 12% | 23% | 4% | 5% | 5% | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 2% |
| 38% Budget Process | 5% | <1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | 6% | 16% | 24% | 22% | 8% | 10% | 1% | 4% |
| 38% Not enough accountability | 4% | 1% | <1% | 4% | 8% | 6% | 11% | 14% | 13% | 17% | 8% | 7% | 4% | - | 2% |
| 38% Core curriculum | 2% | 1% | <1% | 1% | 4% | 11% | 4% | 7% | 10% | 30% | 4% | 24% | 1% | <1% | 1% |
| 33% Bullying | 8% | 2% | <1% | 11% | 18% | 14% | 23% | 5% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 3% |
| 32% Communication with teachers and parents | 3% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 21% | 33% | 19% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 2% | 1% | <1% | 1% | 2% |
| 31% Poor teachers | 3% | - | <1% | <1% | 2% | 4% | 18% | 12% | 13% | 25% | 6% | 12% | 3% | 1% | 2% |
| 28% Funding mechanisms | 6% | 1% | 3% | <1% | 1% | 1% | <1% | 2% | 6% | 18% | 37% | 9% | 11% | 1% | 3% |
| 26% Not enough attention to gifted and talented children | 2% | <1% | <1% | 1% | 3% | 16% | 6% | 9% | 15% | 25% | 5% | 13% | 2% | 1% | 3% |
| 25% Lack of technology | 3% | 1% | 6% | <1% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 7% | 9% | 25% | 22% | 14% | 5% | 1% | 2% |
| 22% Diversity of curriculum | 2% | <1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 8% | 4% | 6% | 11% | 30% | 6% | 24% | 2% | <1% | 3% |
| 21% Not enough attention to children with special needs | 3% | 1% | <1% | 2% | 4% | 11% | 8% | 6% | 13% | 25% | 6% | 12% | 4% | 1% | 4% |
| 21% Safety (not safe enough for students) | 7% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 8% | 11% | 12% | 15% | 19% | 8% | 9% | 1% | 3% |
| 18% Busing | 6% | - | <1% | 1% | 5% | <1% | 2% | 13% | 30% | 16% | 8% | 10% | 2% | 2% | 4% |
| 18% School buildings | 9% | 1% | 1% | - | - | <1% | 1% | 10% | 19% | 18% | 23% | 8% | 6% | 2% | 3% |
| 14% Oversight | 6% | 1% | 1% | - | 2% | 5% | 7% | 15% | 13% | 19% | 6% | 12% | 8% | 2% | 4% |
| 9% Too much diversity | 8% | 3% | - | 2% | 1% | 1% | 4% | 8% | 20% | 27% | 9% | 10% | 3% | 1% | 4% |
| 9% Not enough diversity | 8% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 9% | 20% | 22% | 6% | 12% | 4% | 1% | 6% |
| 3% Overpaid teachers | 6% | - | 2% | - | 8% | 4% | 2% | 6% | 18% | 16% | 18% | 4% | 14% | - | - |

Base: Total Respondents (bases vary)

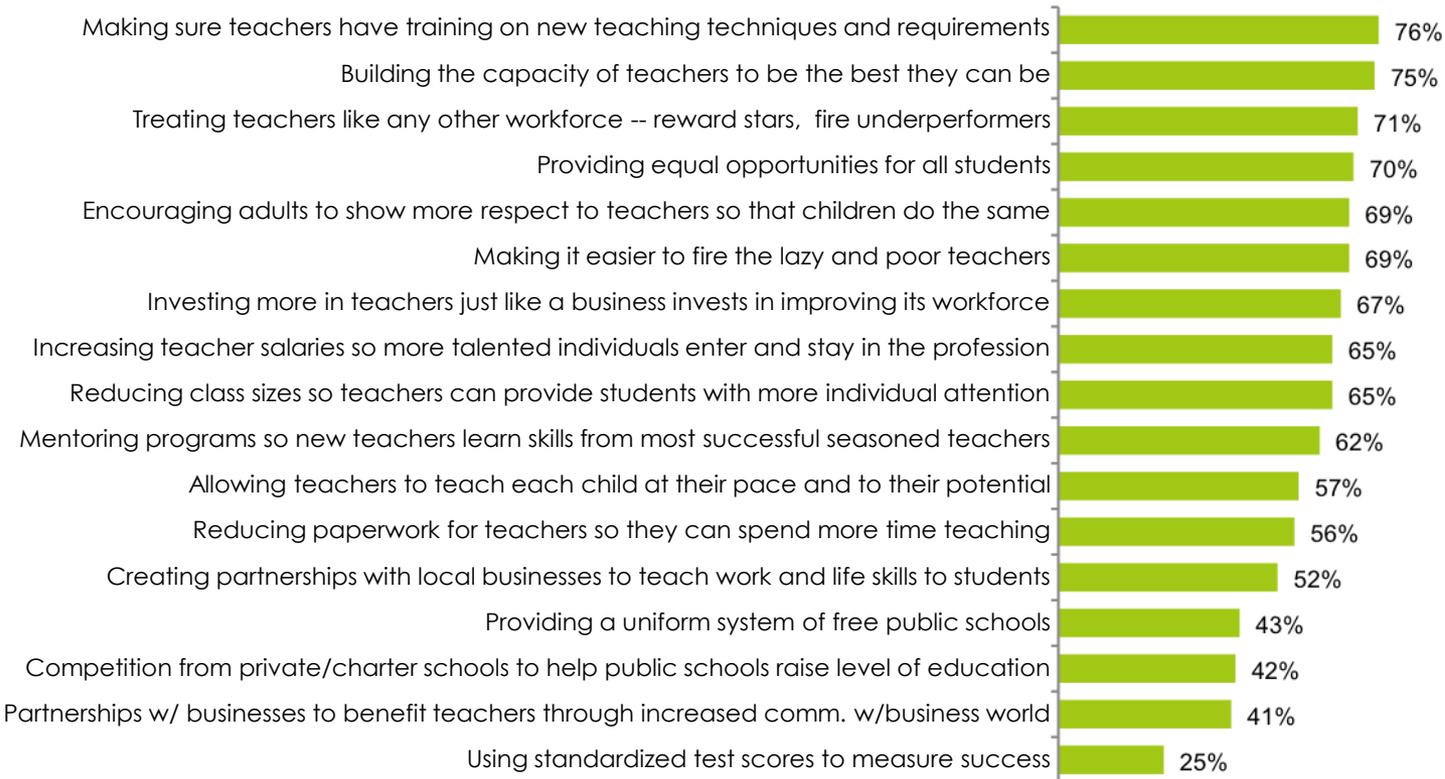
Q9. Who should play the lead role in addressing this critical area for improvement in the K-12 public education system? Select one response.



Importance Rankings – Teachers at the top

Top 2 Box Importance

Rated 6 /7



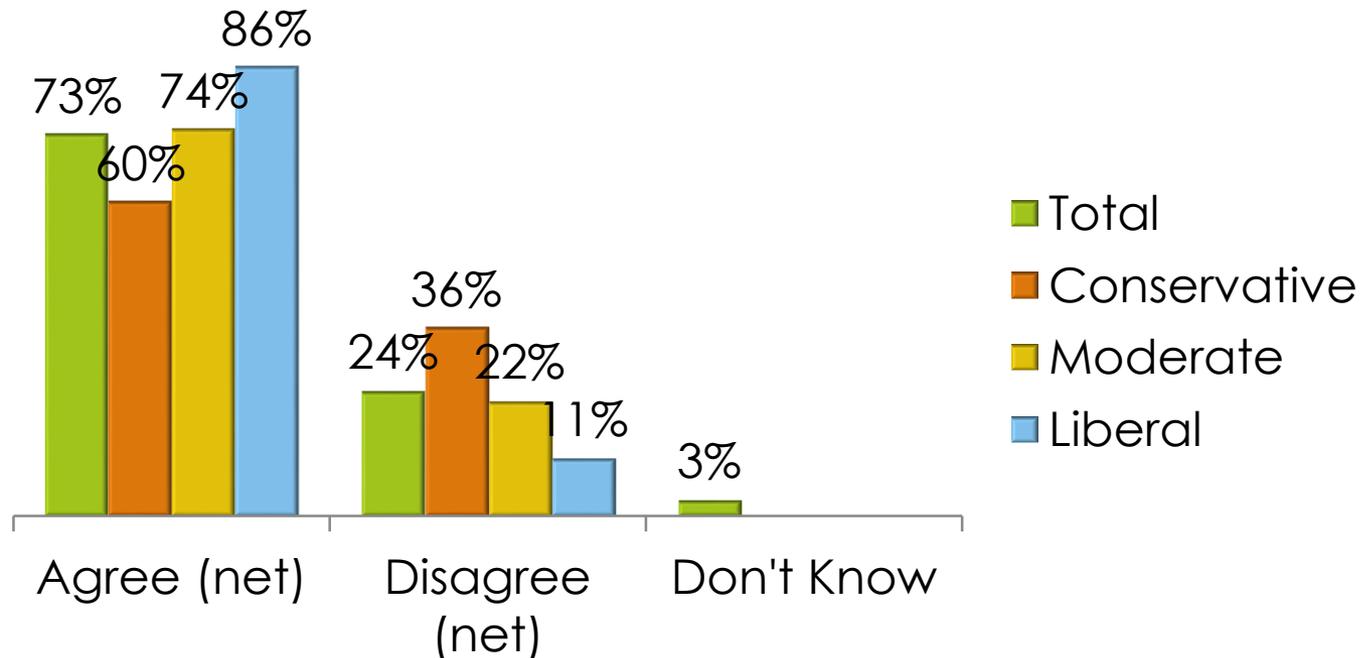
Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q10. In North Carolina's K-12 public schools, how important are each of the following. (7pt. scale: 1= Not at all important, 7= Extremely important)



Public tax dollars for private schools

Public tax dollars should not be used to pay for exclusive private schools.



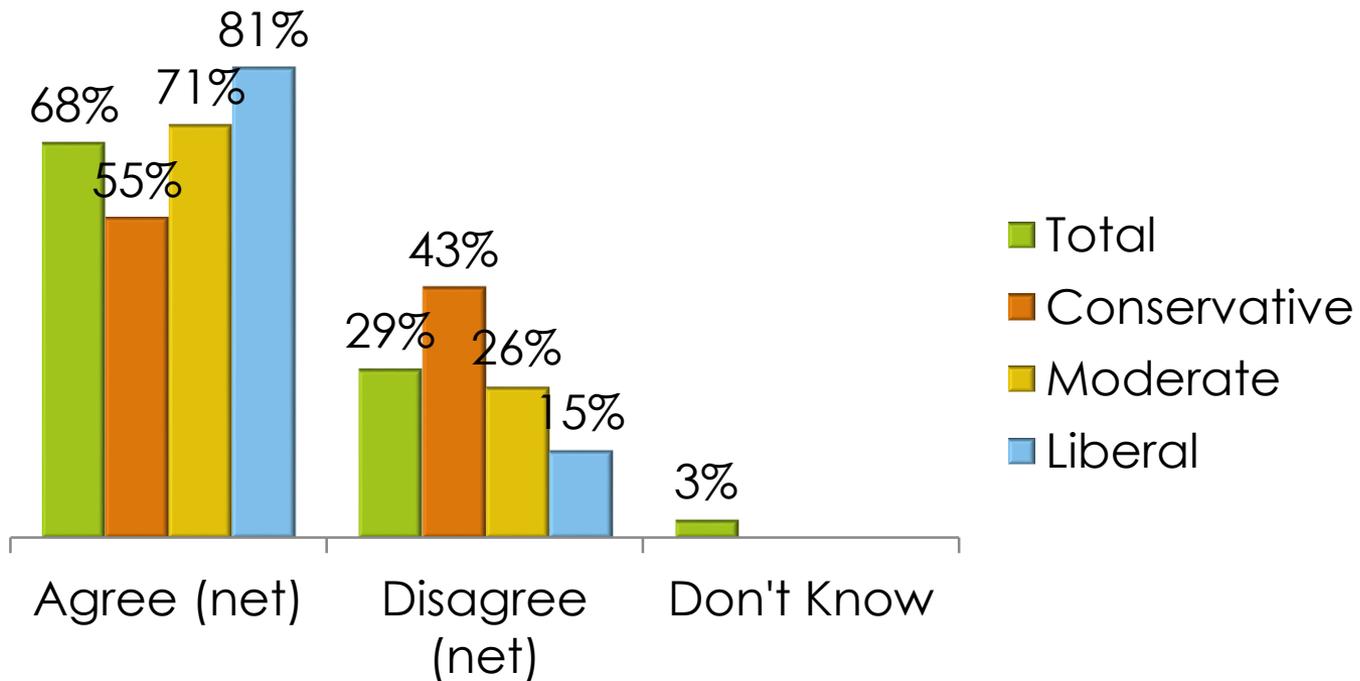
Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement. Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.



Public money to private schools

Public money should not go to private schools. If parents choose to send their children to private schools, they should pay for it.

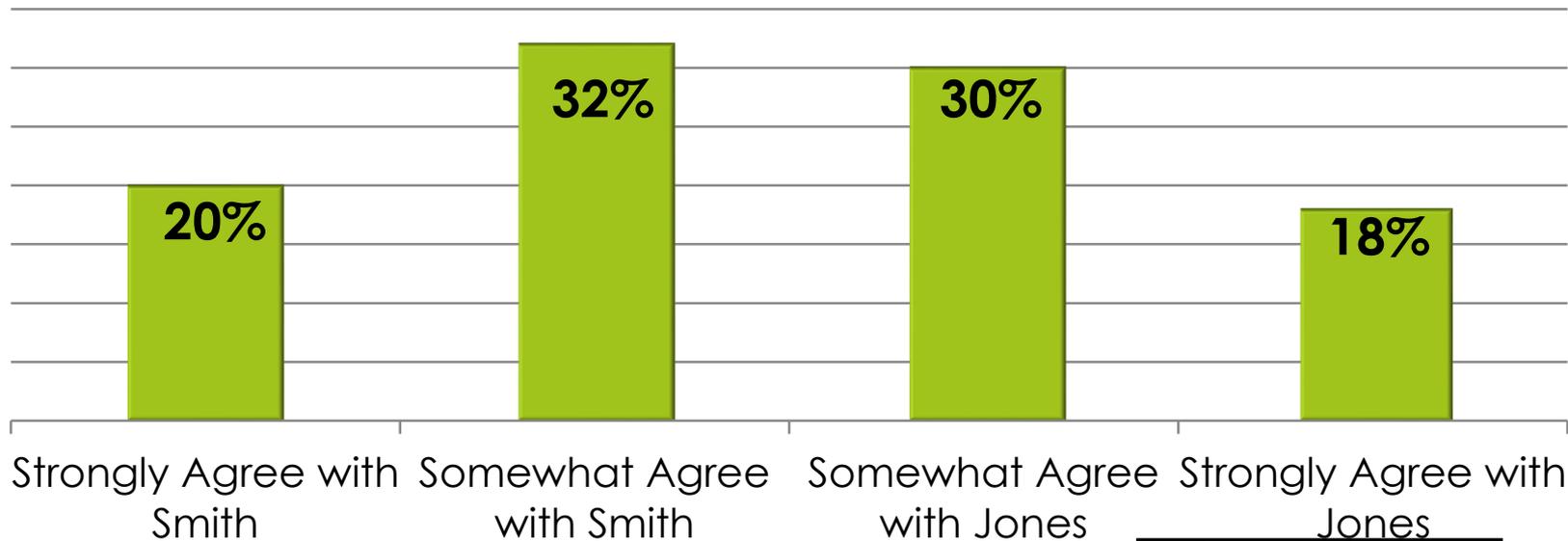


Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement. Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.



Confidence: Public and private schools



I'm confident that K-12 public education and public schools provide the best option to prepare our children for success in life. This is the best place for all of us to focus our energy and attention when it comes to education.

Smith

Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q15. In this question there are two opinions listed. Please fully read the opinions before answering the question.

I lack confidence that K-12 public schools are the best option to prepare our children for success in life. I believe private schools and private education are a much more effective approach to education.

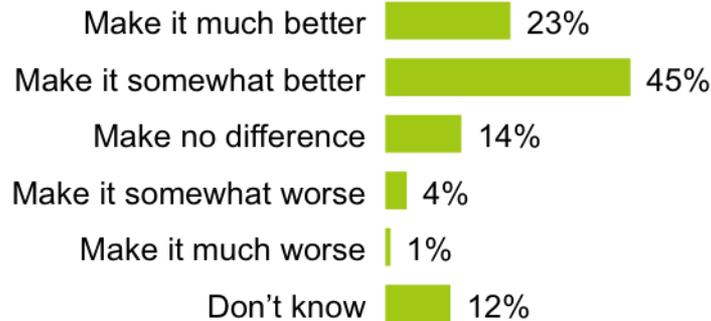


Jones

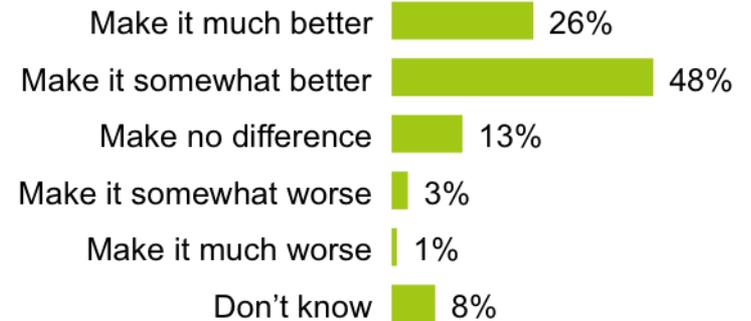


Impact of new academic standards – Common Core

North Carolina is raising the achievement bar with new academic standards that are strongly tied to both the knowledge and the skills students will need to be successful in college, career and life. These new standards will be put in place over the next year. They were developed by over 40 states working together and are based on the strengths and successes of the best schools across the United States and around the world.



The new academic standards will focus on content, but also on the skills it takes to compete and be successful coming out of high school and advancing to a four-year college, a two-year college or a career.



Base: Total Respondents (N=1519)

Q23/Q24. Which statement best describes how you feel implementing these new academic standards will impact K-12 education in North Carolina?



neimand collaborative

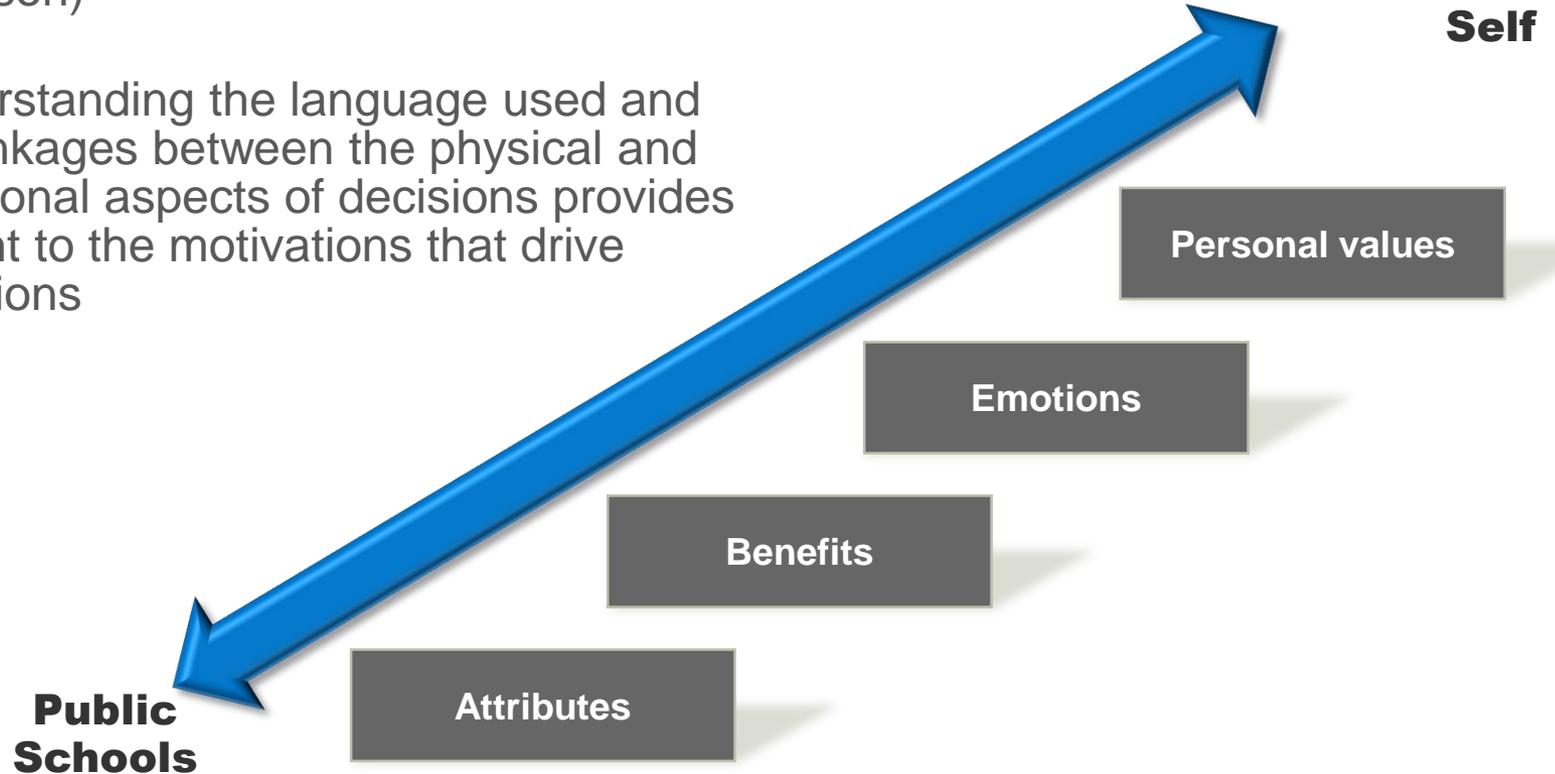


Decision Motivation Framework



Decision motivation research framework

- Means-end theory (people do things for a reason)
- Understanding the language used and the linkages between the physical and emotional aspects of decisions provides insight to the motivations that drive decisions



Public School Nodes



neimand collaborative



Values

Accomplished
Parents

Better
Society

Successful
Individuals

Equal &
Fair Schools

Emotional Benefits

Empowered &
Excited

Confident

Hopeful &
Optimistic

Responsible

Securely
Content

Physical Benefits

Involved
Parents

Opportunity
to Excel

Prepared
for Productive
Life

Future
Opportunities

Equal Education
For All

Attributes

Excellence &
Interaction

Educational
Quality

Support
Programs

Standard
Curriculum

Specialized
Programs

Enhanced
Curriculum

Diversity

Free

Funding

School Pathways



neimand collaborative



Values

Accomplished Parents

Better Society

Successful Individuals

Equal & Fair Schools

Emotional Benefits

Empowered & Excited

Confident

Hopeful & Optimistic

Responsible

Securely Content

Physical Benefits

Involved Parents

Opportunity to Excel

Prepared for Productive Life

Future Opportunities

Equal Education For All

Attributes

Excellence & Interaction

Educational Quality

Support Programs

Standard Curriculum

Specialized Programs

Enhanced Curriculum

Diversity

Free

Funding

Hybrid Pathway



neimand collaborative



Values

Accomplished Parents

Better Society

Successful Individuals

Equal & Fair Schools

Emotional Benefits

Empowered & Excited

Confident

Hopeful & Optimistic

Responsible

Securely Content

Physical Benefits

Involved Parents

Opportunity to Excel

Prepared for Productive Life

Future Opportunities

Equal Education For All

Attributes

Excellence & Interaction

Educational Quality

Support Programs

Standard Curriculum

Specialized Programs

Enhanced Curriculum

Diversity

Free

Funding



Hybrid Pathway for use in messaging to communicate the value of our public education system

- **Pathway Core:**

Excellent teachers, core curriculum and engaged parents create a school environment that produces successful individuals, stronger communities and a sense of satisfaction in parents and citizens through accomplishing the essential mission of K-12 education

Self

Because they feel they have helped schools to accomplish the critical mission of producing successful individuals, solid community citizens, future leaders and a better society.

Making parents and citizens view their schools with optimism and confidence...

Produces students who are well-rounded and self-sufficient young adults prepared for college or work and schools that are able to adapt to changing community needs...

Public Schools

Excellent teachers challenging all students around a set of core academic skills in a safe, nurturing environment where parents are encouraged to participate...

Communicating the Value of Public Education to North Carolina

Prepared for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
April 2013





This is not a matter of liberal versus conservative, urban versus rural; this is a conflict between individual and social aspirations—and the desire not to choose between them.



Public school advocates assume a strong connection between social value and individual value; the public clearly sees a conflict between the two—what is socially valued is perceived not to provide enough value to the individual.



Generating greater support for public schools depends on rebuilding the social contract by providing people with confidence that they don't have to choose between personal aspirations and social ones.



Talk about individual value first and social value as a result—focus on how public education actualizes the full potential of individuals, creating great social value through greater personal advancement.



Understand that people are more anxious about their role as parents and providers of competitive life advantages to their children than about the social and economic future of society—emphasizing the latter creates doubt about the former.



Parents want to create a well-rounded, highly adaptable adult who is able to succeed by seizing opportunities and overcoming adversities—the purpose of education is to actualize that aspiration.



Education is not an end, but a means to an end: a resource to help parents feel confident that they are preparing their children for success in life.



Education is not a system, it is a personal growth experience for parents and children that is made possible by smart and compassionate people working together to help actualize personal and social goals.



Whatever you do and whatever you say, think first how it will provide parents the greatest confidence that public education is providing the individual attention the child needs to be successful and thereby create a successful society.



Focus on delivering and communicating parental involvement, excellence and interaction, enhanced curriculum, educational quality and diversity—all of which provide each child with the opportunity to excel and be prepared for a successful and productive life.



Approach: You want parents to feel hopeful, optimistic, confident and excited that you are helping them create successful individuals and a better society—at the same time and without compromise.



Remember: You are as accountable for the metrics of emotional satisfaction as you are for the metrics of rational accountability—and the two cannot be in conflict.

Hybrid Pathway



neimand collaborative



Values

Accomplished Parents

Better Society

Successful Individuals

Equal & Fair Schools

Emotional Benefits

Empowered & Excited

Confident

Hopeful & Optimistic

Responsible

Securely Content

Physical Benefits

Involved Parents

Opportunity to Excel

Prepared for Productive Life

Future Opportunities

Equal Education For All

Attributes

Excellence & Interaction

Educational Quality

Support Programs

Standard Curriculum

Specialized Programs

Enhanced Curriculum

Diversity

Free

Funding



Delivering Involved Parents:

- Communication with teachers and parents
- Schools encourage parental involvement



Delivering Excellence & Interaction:

- Parental involvement
- Frequent communication with parents
- Good staff at the school
- Is a safe, nurturing environment
- Excellent teachers



Delivering Enhanced Curriculum:

- Diversity in the curriculum to meet the needs of each student – specialized electives, variety of course choices, range of interests, etc.
- Includes programs for gifted and talented students



Delivering Education Quality:

- Teaches children core academic skills like reading, writing and arithmetic
- Provides a complete education to students
- Prepares students for the workforce
- Each child is challenged to learn and grow to their full potential



Delivering Diversity:

- Cultural diversity in the student population
- Racial diversity in the student population
- Socio-economic diversity in the student population
- Political diversity in the student population
- Religious diversity in the student population
- Students get exposure to all kinds of people



Delivering Support Programs:

- Provides meals (subsidized or free for some students)
- Sports programs
- Transportation (busing)
- Provides a school nurse

Messaging Forward



First and foremost, you must instill confidence in parents that public education is the right choice for their children.



The mission of public education should be to assist parents in preparing their children for life as independent, productive and successful adults.



Message equal opportunity and individual value: “We advance everyone, from the top to the bottom and all those in between.”



The solution is to sell valued outcomes—in this case, preparing each child for life—and the resources and relationships that create the clearest path to achieving that.



Talk about the **needs of parents and children first**—not the needs of the system—then talk about the supports necessary to help each child and family achieve their goals.



Make quality teachers the center of public education and better outcomes, and message the wider system as a community that supports quality teachers in every student's classroom.



Emphasize local input, influence and control in choices so that they are seen as a reflection of community needs and desires.



Common Core—explained as new and improved curriculum that produces a well-rounded and prepared child—has strong traction and should be leveraged as a marketing tool to instill confidence.



Common Core must be sold as excellence for all and should be tied to the need for greater investment in supporting and building teachers' capacity.



Stay positive, talk about successes, illustrate them in human terms, acknowledge needs and concerns—explaining them as opportunities to provide greater success to each student at every level of ability.



It is impossible to fight the idea of choice, but you can fight against taxpayer education dollars being put into the private sector.

Messaging Framework



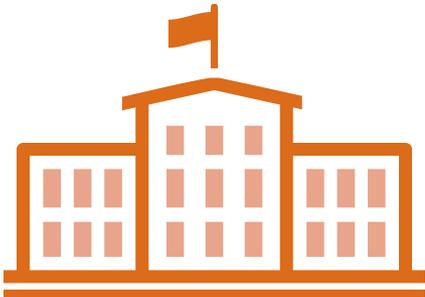
A message framework is the foundation and beams on which you build your own communications—it provides focus, structure and purpose that helps you craft more effective messages for your audiences and issues.



Public Education

Each child prepared for life.

MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS THE BEST CHOICE



Public schools are the best way to prepare children for life.

We take care of everyone, from the top to the bottom and everyone in between, to make sure that each child moves forward.

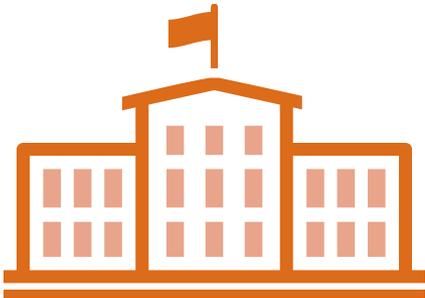
We are improving public education with new instruction and interaction that go beyond standards and rote learning to help teachers create well-rounded students who are prepared for life.

Public schools invest in committed and well-trained teachers who know how to help each child excel at every level.

The diversity of public schools provides the variety of experiences that are important for success in life—different people, cultures, sports, extra-curricular activities and a sense of community expand interests, developing the ability to succeed independently and with others.

Public schools come with a network of professional and community supports to assure parents that their child gets the instruction and attention he/she needs to succeed in school and life.

MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS BETTER



Public schools are the best choice for parents, children and North Carolina. They are by no means perfect. No school is.

We should work together to make sure every public school prepares each child for life.

There are some children and families who can be better served and we should work harder to make sure schools meet their needs.

Fortunately, public schools give parents and communities a voice in making school improvements—and that voice should be strong, loud and constructive until each child gets what he or she needs to excel and be prepared for life.

We can and should demand change when change is needed. This only strengthens our commitment to the value of strong public schools that meet the needs of each child and family.

INVESTING IN BETTER TEACHERS



Providing each child with a quality public education depends on each child having a quality public school teacher.

Building the capacity of teachers to be the best they can be will result in each of our children being fully prepared for life.

If we want teachers to be accountable for better student outcomes, we need to provide the professional development and support that helps teachers provide each student with the instruction they need to excel.

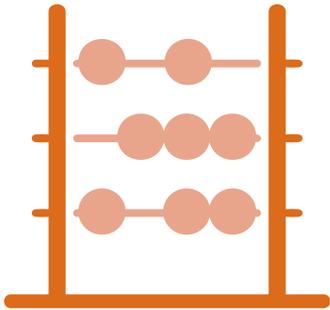
We need to increase teacher pay to attract, develop and retain the best teachers for our children.

We should invest more in quality teachers just like a business invests in its workforce to attract talent, increase quality, boost productivity and create better outcomes.

Mentoring programs, continuing education and professional development are critical to making sure each child has a great teacher.

Cutting funding for effective teacher development effectively cuts the educational development of our children—leaving them unprepared for life.

COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF FUNDING



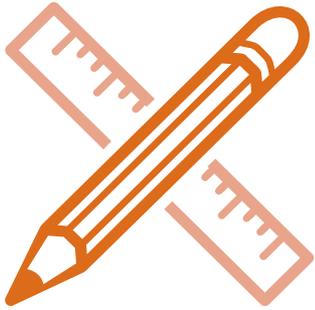
Funding public education is necessary to ensure each child gets the instruction and attention he/she needs to be fully prepared for success in life.

Cutting funding will place too much pressure on local teachers and schools, reducing education to the basics when we know that children need much more to reach their full potential.

Cutting funding will bleed life from our local public schools, reduce diversity, divide communities, force cutbacks in sports and enhanced instruction—and fail to provide each and every child with the education necessary for success in life.

North Carolina can't afford merely adequate public education; the future of our children and the state depends on consistent support for preparing each and every child for success in school, career, community and life.

FIGHTING PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS



Education Savings Accounts, Opportunity Scholarships or whatever anyone calls vouchers are just nice names for giving taxpayer money to private schools. Don't be misled—these voucher programs put public school money into private schools.

Vouchers will create chaos, an unaccountable mess and poor education outcomes.

Vouchers will create false choices and closed doors instead of opportunity. Vouchers don't provide enough money for the top private schools. Private schools in the middle will pick only the best students. Most families will only be able to afford low quality private schools that will take anyone and have no accountability for providing quality teachers and preparing children for life.

Vouchers will force taxpayers to hand out money to private schools with no accountability for preparing children for life and making sure they are ready, willing and able to contribute to their communities and the future of North Carolina.

Any private school—regardless of its standards, curriculum or quality—will be operating with a taxpayer investment. Public money is much better spent on local public schools that are accountable to help each and every child be prepared for life.