

## **Resolution to Prioritize Public Schools in 2023-25 Biennial Budget**

**WHEREAS**, the state of North Carolina is consistently ranked high nationally for its healthy business climate and was recently ranked the #1 state for business; and

**WHEREAS**, to maintain North Carolina's economic competitiveness, our state needs a well-educated workforce that can fill the jobs available today and the ones created tomorrow; and

**WHEREAS**, a strong K-12 public education system is the key to North Carolina's continued success and to ensuring our students are fully prepared to participate in that workforce and are well-informed, contributing members of their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina's constitution requires that the state ensures that all children have the opportunity to receive a sound, basic education; and

**WHEREAS**, public education is the most important investment the state makes; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly is currently finalizing a state budget for the 2023-25 biennium; and

**WHEREAS**, study after study confirms that the most important factor in student success is the classroom teacher; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina is currently facing a teacher shortage crisis with more than 5,000 teacher vacancies, leaving tens of thousands of students without a qualified teacher and putting those students' success at risk; and

**WHEREAS**, neighboring states have passed us in teacher pay, leaving North Carolina ranked 32nd nationally in average teacher pay and 46th nationally and 11th in the Southeast in beginning teacher pay, which is causing teachers to leave for other states and other jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Senate's budget proposal includes a 4.5% salary increase for teachers over the biennium, including only \$250 over two years for veteran teachers, and the House budget proposal includes a 10% salary increase for teachers over the biennium; and

**WHEREAS**, our public schools need significant increases in funding to provide competitive pay to successfully recruit and retain qualified teachers; and

**WHEREAS**, investments in early childhood education and child care helps to set young children on a path to success in school, allows parents to go to work, and helps businesses find and keep employees; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent NC Chamber Foundation survey found that 80% of North Carolina voters say the lack of child care is a problem that will not solve itself and that improving quality and making child care more affordable is a good use of taxpayer money, and that 87% of voters say taking action to ensure more working families have access to affordable, quality child care should be an important priority for North Carolina this year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Senate budget proposal includes no state funding for child care stabilization grants or the expansion of Smart Start or NC Pre-K, and the House budget proposal includes only minimal funding to increase the childcare subsidy rate and for expansion of Smart Start; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina parents already have great choices when it comes to their child's K-12 education, whether that's public schools, public charter schools, or private schools; and

**WHEREAS**, parents have shown their appreciation for our public schools by "voting with their feet;" nearly 8 in 10 of North Carolina's school-aged children attend public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the state's private school voucher program, the Opportunity Scholarship program, currently provides taxpayer funding to students from low- to moderate-income families to attend a K-12 private school; and

**WHEREAS**, bills in the House and Senate and the Senate's budget proposal are seeking to radically expand the private school voucher program by opening eligibility for the program to all students, regardless of family income or if the student currently attends a private school; and

**WHEREAS**, expanding the private school voucher program in this extreme way will result in steep cuts to our public schools, harming the educational opportunities students, especially in rural and lower wealth counties; and

**WHEREAS**, research on private school voucher programs in other states demonstrates that students who moved to private schools fell academically behind their peers who stayed in public school; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina has zero evidence of student outcomes for those enrolled in the Opportunity Scholarship Program—the only program of its kind in the nation that doesn't require rigorous evaluation of student performance.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**

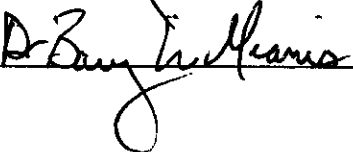
That the Gates County Board of Education requests that the North Carolina General Assembly prioritize our public schools by

1. Making significant investments in teacher salary increases of at least 18% over the next two years to make North Carolina 1<sup>st</sup> in the Southeast in average teacher pay; and
2. Making significant investments in early childhood education and child care through more funding for child care stabilization grants, child care subsidies, and NC Pre-K and Smart Start; and
3. Stopping the unlimited expansion of the state's private school voucher program that drains money from public education and increasing accountability for private schools participating in the program.

Adopted by the Gates County Board of Education/County Commission/Chamber of Commerce this 5th day of June, 2023.

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman of the Board of Education

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent of Gates County Schools