



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Public School Forum of North Carolina Shares 2025-26 Top Education Issues at Eggs & Issues Breakfast**

**RALEIGH, NC (January 28, 2025)** - The Public School Forum of North Carolina shared the 2025-26 Top Education Issues today during the tenth Eggs & Issues breakfast event. The Top Education Issues brief outlines the Forum's priorities for what should be at the forefront of education policy decision-making in the coming legislative biennium to ensure that every child in NC has access to a high-quality, equitable education to prepare them for success in life.

#### **2025-26 Top Education Issues**

The next legislative biennium presents a critical moment to serve and equip our students, their families, and their communities for all that lies ahead as we enter into the second quarter of the 21st century. Today, over 400 education, business, and community leaders and policymakers gathered to explore the issues facing North Carolina's local public schools heading into the biennium with the hope that we can overcome those issues through collaboration, innovation, and commitment to serving our children. The Top Education Issues focus on our children and what they need to reach their potential:

1. Ensure our school funding system is equitable, adequate and flexible to meet students' unique needs

North Carolina's low per-student spending, inadequate funding effort, and inequitable distribution of resources — compounded by nearly \$1 billion allocated to private school vouchers that often exclude many students — highlight the urgent need for an equitable, adequate, and flexible school funding system to address students' diverse needs.

2. Make educator pay competitive in North Carolina

North Carolina's low teacher pay and increasing educator attrition and burnout — driven by inadequate compensation and unstable principal pay — underscore the urgent need to make educator salaries competitive to retain and attract qualified professionals.

3. Address critical needs to support child well-being and success both in and outside of school

The rise in mental health challenges, chronic absenteeism, and lack of access to high-quality out-of-school programs — disproportionately affecting children of color and LGBTQ+ youth in North Carolina — highlights the critical need for comprehensive support systems to promote student well-being and success both in and outside of school.

4. Adopt assessment and accountability policies that are fair and effective

North Carolina's reliance on flawed school grading formulas, ineffective educator entry exams, and minimal accountability for voucher-funded private schools undermines fair assessment and accountability.

You can view the full brief including the policy action items and background on each issue at [ncforum.org/topissues](https://ncforum.org/topissues).

“The next legislative biennium presents a critical moment to serve and equip our students, their families, and their communities for all that lies ahead as we enter into the second quarter of the 21st century,” said Dr. Lauren Fox, Sr. Director of Policy and Research at the Public School Forum of NC. “The Top Education Issues represent the investments needed for children to ensure our educators and local public schools can provide the opportunities and education they deserve and that the future of our state is strong.”

This year's Eggs & Issues also included presentations on exciting initiatives happening in local public schools from Wilson County Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ben Williams, 2022 NC Charter School Teacher of the Year Keegan Storrs and Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Keith Parker who was accompanied by student ECPPS Board of Education members.

Following the presentations NC Senate Democratic Leader Sydney Batch, Senator Kevin Corbin, Caldwell County Schools Superintendent Dr. Don Phipps, 2023 NC Beginning Teacher of the Year Natalia Mejia, Clarke Elementary School Principal Dr. C'Monee' Wilkins, former Wake County Public School System Superintendent Catty Moore and NC Superintendent of Public Instruction Mo Green took part in discussions of potential strategies and challenges for the Top Issues.

“We are reminded every day about the importance of local public schools and how they prepare our children for life. Our local public schools provide opportunities that prepare young people for civic life through a solid foundation of coursework and experiences that develop their empathy and critical thinking. Our educators show up every day to help students achieve excellence for what they need in life,” said Dr. Mary Ann Wolf, President and Executive Director at the Public School Forum of NC. “We must invest in strengthening our local public schools because every child deserves a high quality and equitable education and because the future of our state depends on it.”

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## **About the Public School Forum of North Carolina**

*Since our founding in 1986 as a nonpartisan “think and do tank,” the Public School Forum of North Carolina has been a champion of better schools and one of the most trusted sources in the state for research and analysis on vital education issues. In order to provide meaningful action on our state’s most important public education issues, we bring together leaders from business, education and government to study education issues, develop ideas, and ultimately inform and shape education policy. We do this through research, policy work, innovative programs, advocacy, and continuing education for educators and policymakers. Follow us on social media at @theNCForum and visit our website at <http://www.ncforum.org/>*