

## **Increase Salaries and Compensation for Teachers**

Cumberland County Democratic Party Resolution **Number 02-2014**

**Whereas**, the most important task handed any generation is education of the next; and

**Whereas**, students will learn if they have a competent, dedicated, talented professional as their teacher, but cannot, if they do not; and

**Whereas**, the teaching profession is the one profession that improves our society every day, one student at a time, one class at a time, one school at a time; and

**Whereas**, North Carolina's public school system is one of the most under-funded in the nation, ranking 48<sup>th</sup> among the states in per pupil spending; and

**Whereas**, Cumberland County values its teachers and believes they are deserving of a professional compensation package; and

**Whereas**, North Carolina pays its teachers on a salary schedule set by the state and has also traditionally enhanced that base salary if a teacher has earned an advanced degree, thereby encouraging professional growth and development; and

**Whereas**, until the last three years, North Carolina has been committed over the last three decades to increasing teacher compensation in order to be competitive with other states throughout the nation in recruiting and retaining the best teachers, with the result being North Carolina students had achieved remarkable academic growth, as compared to nearly all of the states, by all objective measures; and

**Whereas**, compensation of North Carolina teachers had reached as high as 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation, and before the Global Recession, were approaching the national average; and

**Whereas**, due to the freezing of teacher step increases and the lack of any salary increase aside from a minor 1.2% increase in 2012 over the last five years; and among the states in per pupil spending; and

**Whereas**, the North Carolina General Assembly has also repealed any supplement for teachers earning any advanced degree; and

**Whereas**, it now takes a teacher with a Bachelor's Degree 16 years to earn a base salary in excess of \$40,000; and

**Whereas**; North Carolina now ranks 46<sup>th</sup> on 2012-13 data and likely lower when viewed with 2013-14 data not yet fully available since last year the General Assembly refused to authorize any salary increase; and

**Whereas**, North Carolina teacher salaries have declined in value, as adjusted for inflation, by 15.7% over the last decade, with most of that decline in the last three years, ranking North Carolina last (51<sup>st</sup> in the nation); and

**Whereas**, this now woeful compensation scheme has rendered it extraordinarily difficult for teachers to make a living by earning a livable, let alone professional, wage and made it equally difficult for school systems to recruit and retain outstanding teachers, which will soon have a profound effect on student achievement; and

**Whereas**, this woeful compensation, in combination with repeated draconian cuts to public education positions over the last three years, including cuts to thousands of teacher assistant positions, diversion of public funds to an unconstitutional voucher program, elimination of Masters and advanced degree supplements for teachers, elimination of basic career status protection for any teacher, elimination of all state professional development and mentoring funds, and elimination of the nationally renowned Teaching Fellows scholarship on purely partisan grounds has made it exceptionally difficult to recruit and retain good teachers in North Carolina; and

**Whereas**, this year, for the first time in North Carolina's history, applications to enter Schools of Education are down 5-15% at every public North Carolina university and most of the private universities as well; and

**Whereas**, North Carolina school districts have lost hundreds of teachers throughout this school year to resignations as teachers have financially simply had to leave the profession or have moved to other states, rendering North Carolina no longer competitive in teacher recruitment compensation

**Therefore**, Be It Resolved, that the Democratic Party of North Carolina implores the North Carolina General Assembly to alleviate some of the destructive harm it has inflicted on the public school students and families of North Carolina and their teachers, by substantially increasing the base salary of public school teachers of this state to provide a competitive, professional compensation package for all teachers, reinstate the heretofore frozen salary steps for teachers, and restore the supplement for achieving advanced degrees, all with the goal of achieving the national average for teacher pay in 4 years.

**Resolved**, this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2014 in Fayetteville, North Carolina.