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January 9, 2014 e-Newsletter: Local, State, and National Education News

MeckEd



Dear Steve,

Welcome to 2014! I hope you had a restful holiday season and were able to spend quality time with family and friends. We are excited about the opportunities this new year brings to educate, engage and impact our community about the critical issues facing public education. In fact, we believe 2014 will be a pivotal year for the future of public education in North Carolina.

This year, for the first time, MeckEd will be pursuing specific public policy goals. Our hope is to positively impact the lives of children here in Mecklenburg County. First, we will be asking our lawmakers to raise the average North Carolina teacher salary to be competitive with our neighboring states. One of the things I learned as a principal was to hire the very best teachers -- and do all I could to hold onto them. Unfortunately, many of these exceptional teachers are choosing to leave the profession because it is simply financially impossible to continue in the classroom. I recently heard a story about a teacher in Charlotte who was distraught because she was forced to choose between offering after-school tutoring sessions for her students and showing up for her second job, which is necessary to pay her bills. As a state, we can and must do better.

Our second policy goal for 2014 is to fully-fund the NC Pre-K program so all at-risk children have the opportunity to access high-quality early learning curriculums and not show up in kindergarten already behind their peers. Research shows that children who participate in high-quality Pre-K programs are more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, get a job and own a home than children who do not. Early learning programs are a smart investment -- offering a 7:1 return according to recent studies. Most important, there are nearly 12,000 at-risk kids on the waiting list for NC Pre-K. These are children who need access to the language, literacy and math skills taught in early learning programs.

We need your help to advance these goals. In the early months of this year we will launch MeckEd Impact Councils -- groups of parents and members of our business community eager to advocate for public education. Stay tuned for more ways you can get involved in this important work. MeckEd cannot do this important work alone. We need your time and talents as we develop an effective grassroots strategy to ensure North Carolina is once again an educational leader in the Southeast.

Thank you for all you do to support public education. Here's to a productive 2014 together.

Sincerely,

Bill

Advocating for Our Children



In this week's e-Newsletter:

[MeckEd's 2014 Public Policy Agenda](#)

[The Math of Today's Jammed Classrooms](#)

[State to Approve New Charter Applications](#)

[MeckEd Welcomes New Directors](#)



MeckEd's 2014 Public Policy Agenda

MeckEd believes all children, regardless of neighborhood or zip code, deserve a quality education to prepare them as contributors in our local and global economies. In 2014, we support two policy goals that go to the heart of our children's success: great teachers and access to high-quality Pre-K programs.

Teachers

- Raise the average North Carolina teacher salary to at least the average of our neighboring states by 2019

It is critical to elevate and enhance the teaching profession in North Carolina by valuing the work our teachers do every day, and by rewarding them with competitive salaries. We support a phased, multi-year approach to financial investments in North Carolina's teachers.

Currently, the average North Carolina teacher makes \$45,947—lower than the average teacher salary in Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. Raising the average North Carolina teacher salary to the average in neighboring states, currently \$49,740 would help stem the tide of educators leaving the state or leaving the profession altogether.

Early Learning

- Fully fund NC Pre-K to guarantee enrollment for all at-risk children

High quality Pre-Kindergarten programs are critical to closing the achievement gap between affluent and low-income students, and to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed in elementary school and beyond.

A 2010 evaluation of North Carolina's Pre-K program found that the initiative improves school readiness for at-risk children by building critical language, literacy and math skills.

The Math of Today's Jammed Classrooms



Despite the economic recovery, many of our nation's school districts have yet to replenish their ranks, leading to crowded classrooms and frustrated teachers. According to an analysis by *The New York Times*, only Maryland has seen a bigger drop in the ratio of employees per 100 students from 2008 to 2013 than North Carolina. The article specifically mentions the growing class sizes here, as well as the challenges guidance counselors face in serving as many as 500 students each.
-*The New York Times*

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State to Approve More Charter Applications

The State Board of Education will vote today on 26 charter school applications, including 11 in the Charlotte area, for programs that plan to

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[For Your Consideration](#)

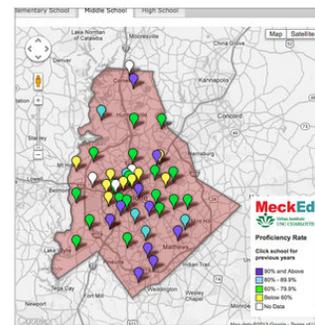
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2013 Annual Community Breakfast

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View Interactive Data Maps of CMS



[View Interactive Data Maps of Mecklenburg County Charter Schools](#)

For Your Consideration

For Your Consideration provides an open forum for individuals to voice their opinions on various public education issues. The views expressed in *For Your Consideration* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of MeckEd.

Pay Our Teachers or Lose Your Job By Deborah R. Gerhardt

This article was originally published in *Slate*



My son Ben's language arts teacher emailed one morning this winter to tell me she is leaving Ben's school. I feel sick, but I don't blame her. Three of Ben's middle

school teachers have left in the past year. North Carolina's intentional assault on public

open in time for the 2014-15 school year. If the board approves all of those applications, it would be the largest single-year expansion of charter schools in North Carolina since the 1990s.

-*The Charlotte Observer*

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MeckEd Welcomes New Board Members

We are excited to welcome several new members to our Board of Directors this year. These dedicated volunteers are critical to our success as an organization, and we thank them for their service.

- Marinn Bengel -- Community volunteer
- Wes Jones -- ai Design Group
- Erik Lioy -- Grant Thornton
- Curt Shaw -- Novant Health
- Clifton Vann -- Livingston & Haven

Thank You to Our Donors!



Thank you to the [organizations](#) and [individuals](#) who supported MeckEd in October and November. We are grateful for your support!

Thank you for your support of MeckEd as we champion for excellent public schools for all children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Bill Anderson, Ed. D. | Executive Director

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education is working. It is pushing our best teachers out.

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About the Author: Deborah R. Gerhardt is a professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law and the mother of three boys in public school.

Education Briefs

Emerging Issues Forum: Teachers and the Great Economic Debate

Feb. 10-11 | Raleigh

This year's Emerging Issues Forum focuses on the critical issue of teachers. The event will include thought leaders in education, politics and business discussing the importance of attracting and keeping world class teachers in North Carolina. [More information and registration](#)

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