

NCATA Legislative Alert
March 5, 2011

Dear NCATA Members,

I know I can count on the members of NCATA to respond to this request for action! We know what we do is valuable and we need to let our legislators know that a cut in teacher assistants will be detrimental to student learning!

This past week the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education discussed "teacher assistant turnover and effectiveness across K-4" and were presented information on the number of teacher assistants in North Carolina. The research presented on teacher assistant effectiveness was limited and outdated, dating back to a study done in Tennessee completed years ago.

The effectiveness of teacher assistants in North Carolina in 2011 should not be based on a study done in Tennessee years ago! The job description of a teacher assistant has changed dramatically since then. In the STAR report, teacher assistants are called teacher aides. We are not aides. *Our job title was changed years ago to reflect the professionals we strive to be!* Seventy percent of all school systems in North Carolina required that their teacher assistants be Highly Qualified under No Child Left Behind by 2006 whether or not they worked in a Title I school. A Highly Qualified Teacher Assistant is one that has met the requirements set forth by Federal Law. HQ teacher assistants must have an Associate's degree and/or two years of higher education or undergo a formal assessment of instructional abilities including a staff development component and work under direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. **HOW can highly qualified teacher assistants working in North Carolina in 2011 be compared to teacher aides working in Tennessee so many years ago? They cannot!** Also, Tennessee continues to employ certified teacher assistants.

Our primary duty as teacher assistants has changed to student instruction and continues to become more focused, requiring more professional development and preparation. We work with small groups in reading, writing, and mathematics and do 1:1 intervention with students. The other duties that fall under our job description have taken a back seat to student instruction and yet, we still manage to get these other things done in the time we have left in our work day! In addition, teacher assistants remain very important in maintaining safe and orderly schools, especially at the elementary level.

Please take a moment to review "About TAs" on the NCATA website. Teacher assistants benefit the entire school. Eliminating or drastically reducing the number of teacher assistants will have a detrimental effect on our students and our teachers!

We need to contact Chairs and Members of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. We need to tell them that what teacher assistants do now is very effective in increasing student learning! Please limit your conversations with these legislators to 5-10 minutes and, if you do not reach them, please leave a brief message or call them next week.

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Chairman	Rep. Blackwell, email: Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net , 919-733-5805
Chairman	Rep. Hilton, email: Mark.Hilton@ncleg.net , 919-733-5988
Chairman	Rep. Holloway, email: Bryan.Holloway@ncleg.net , 919-733-5609
Vice Chairman	Rep. Pridgen, email: Gaston.Pridgen@ncleg.net , 919-733-5821
Vice Chairman	Rep. Sanderson, email Norman.Sanderson@ncleg.net , 919-733-5853
Members	Rep. Avila, email Marilyn.Avila@ncleg.net , 919-733-5530 Rep. Bell, email Larry.Bell@ncleg.net , 919-733-5863

Rep. Blust, email John.Blust@ncleg.net, 919-733-5781
Rep. L. Brown, email Larry.Brown@ncleg.net, 919-733-5607
Rep. Glazier, email Rick.Glazier@ncleg.net, 919-733-5601
Rep. Jeffus, email Maggie.Jeffus@ncleg.net, 919-733-5191
Rep. Lucas, email Marvin.Lucas@ncleg.net, 919-733-5775
Rep. McLawhorn, email Marian.McLawhorn@ncleg.net, 919-733-5757
Rep. Michaux, email Mickey.Michaux@ncleg.net, 919-715-2528
Rep. Parmon, email Earline.Parmon@ncleg.net, 919-733-5829
Rep. Stam, email Paul.Stam@ncleg.net, 919-733-2962

Senate Appropriations on Education / Higher Education

Co-Chairman Sen. Tom Apodaca, email: Tom.Apodaca@ncleg.net, 919-733-5745
Co-Chairman Sen. Jean Preston, email: Jean.Preston@ncleg.net, 919- 733-5706
Co-Chairman Sen. Jerry W. Tillman, email: Jerry.Tillman@ncleg.net, 919-733-5870

Members Sen. Charlie S. Dannelly, email Charlie.Dannelly@ncleg.net, 919-733-5955
 Sen. Linda Garrou, email Linda.Garrou@ncleg.net, 919-733-5620
 Sen. Bob Rucho, email Bob.Rucho@ncleg.net, 919-733-5655
 Sen. Dan Soucek, email Dan.Soucek@ncleg.net, 919-733-5742

Thank you for what you do for our students, for our profession, and for our association!

Sincerely,
Melinda

Melinda K. Zarate
NCATA Legislative Chair