

**Union County Board of Education  
Legislative Agenda 2019-2020**

The Union County Board of Education (UCBOE) is the sixth largest school district in the State of North Carolina, serving approximately 42,000 students in 53 schools and having approximately 5,000 employees; and

The Union County Board of Education has identified the following issues as priorities:

- 1. School Calendar** - UCBOE requests that the General Assembly amend the Calendar Law to provide greater flexibility for LEAs to create school calendars that meet the needs of students. Considering the recent weather events the UCBOE could better plan and prepare for weather relating school closings if there was more local control over the calendar. In the alternative, UCBOE requests that school boards be allowed to open at least three weeks earlier than the current school calendar law prescribes or have the flexibility to align the public school calendar with that of the local community college. The revision would allow students to take their exams prior to winter break and conclude the academic year on the Friday prior to Memorial Day.
- 2. Principal Compensation** – UCBOE requests that the General Assembly continue to invest in principal compensation to retain a career progression from the classroom to administration. UCBOE also requests that the General Assembly extend the “hold harmless” clause that was instituted for the 2016-2017 year. Additionally, principal pay is now calculated based upon the performance and size of the school to which s/he is assigned which UCBOE would like to see maintained, however, UCBOE believes that years of service as a principal should also be factored into compensation.
- 3. Teacher Pay** - UCBOE firmly believes that our teachers should be compensated above the national average at all levels of experience and for Master's and Advanced Degrees and National Board Certification. UCBOE requests that the General Assembly reinstate supplements for teachers who earn advanced degrees. Veteran teachers who have only received one permanent pay increase in recent years should receive special consideration.

Additionally, the General Assembly should consider rewarding the teachers who provide the foundation which results in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading and 4<sup>th</sup> grade math teachers receiving a bonus. (i.e. K-2 and K-3).

- 4. Reduce Testing** - UCBOE requests that the General Assembly reduce the number of assessments administered yearly to students. North Carolina requires many tests for students. Currently, North Carolina Final Exams (NCFEs) are given in 21 courses in which credit is awarded. Career and Technical Education (CTE) has an exam for 90% of their courses and they cannot be waived (80 courses). There are three high school End-of-Course exams (EOCs) - Math 1, Biology and English II. Elementary/middle schools give an End-of-Grade test in reading and math in grades 3-8. Science is given in grades 5 and 8. The national PreACT and ACT are administered to all 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders respectively to determine Career and College readiness. All students in grades Kindergarten through 3 are required by the state to participate in individualized MClass testing 3 times as year, which accumulates into many hours of instruction cut in the classroom due to this 1:1 student/teacher testing format.
- 5. Safe School Environment** - Safe school environments require multidisciplinary supports and planning. UCBOE requests that the General Assembly consider funding the following:

  - a. Teachers and School Administrators: in order to address the increasing needs of their students, teachers and school administrators need targeted, specialized, social-emotional training.
  - b. Student Support Personnel (School Psychologists, Social Workers, Counselors, and Nurses): It is critical to properly staff schools with the necessary support structure for the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. The General Assembly should provide sufficient allotments to meet the nationally recommended staff to student ratios for these positions. Specifically, the American Counseling Association recommended ratio is 1:250 and the National Association of School Nurses recommended ration is 1:750.
  - c. School Resource Officers: The General Assembly should provide the appropriate funding to have a full-time resource officer in every school. Additional pay, training, and education should be provided for this unique law enforcement position.
- 6. School Technology:** In 2008, Superior Court Judge Howard Manning ordered that the State pay \$748 million into the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund to be used for school technology. More than a decade later, the State still owes public schools \$730 million in technology funding. Given the continued transition to digital tools, UCBOE would like the General Assembly to work on developing an mechanism to address this debt.
- 7. LEA/Charter School Relations:** UCBOE requests that the General Assembly adopt a local funding strategy for charter schools to seek funding for current expenses directly from the local government as opposed to using the LEA as a flow through for payments. Revising the current funding procedures would ensure

that the charter schools receive their fair share of local tax dollars at the same time as the district.