

April 2, 2011

Members of the Mecklenburg Delegation,

We urge you not to support House Bill DRH80121-LE-93 "Alternative Salary Plans for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools."

Under the proposed bill, CMS will receive a special exemption from the State pay scale, allowing CMS to implement its flawed "pay for performance" system. Parents in Mecklenburg County have deep concerns about this system, especially the increased number of high-stakes standardized tests it is already forcing on our children and their schools. We do not believe it deserves the support of the Legislature.

There is no data showing that pay for performance increases student achievement or raises teacher effectiveness. Several other districts around the country have already abandoned pay for performance plans because they were not showing the desired results.

Under CMS's plan, pay for performance will turn our schools into factories for high-stakes tests, driving away many of our most talented and dedicated teachers, and increasing the practice of teaching to the test. This year CMS is rolling out 52 ADDITIONAL standardized test - tests that cut into needed instructional time. Test administration and proctoring disrupts special area classes such as PE, art and music, and effectively ends the instructional calendar for many EC and ESL teachers, who are pulled from their students to proctor tests.

The 52 new tests are just the beginning. CMS is developing standardized tests for EVERY teacher in EVERY subject, including art, music and yearbook. This test development is draining millions of dollars from an already strapped budget.

You will find few parents in Mecklenburg County who believe that more testing is the way to meet our school system's challenges. MecklenburgACTS has already gathered more than 800 signatures on a petition that calls on CMS to end its efforts to tie teacher pay to test scores. As parents, we have the greatest understanding of our children's academic development, and the greatest stake in their success. We look to you to back us up. Please do not support the bill.