

WCPSS School Board Update:

Class Size / Principal Pay Cuts

*WCPSS School Board Advisory Council meeting summary: January 2018 – Guest speaker – Senator Jay Chaudhuri
Tara Muller, BAC liaison*

Class sizes - Did you know? Senator Jay Chaudhuri of the NC General Assembly sponsored a bill to reverse the class-size legislation (which mandates very small classes in K-3 but no funding for extra teachers or classrooms, causing big classes in upper grades and possible cuts to the arts). In Wake County alone, the class-size legislation requires principals to find space for the equivalent of **559 classrooms** this fall – all with no extra funding. Unfortunately, Sen. Chaudhuri reported at the BAC meeting that, despite extremely vocal parent lobbying, the Senate Republican leadership is not supporting his corrections bill. While the leadership has implied it may produce its own version of a “fix,” it is unclear when action will come, and if it will be effective. Many principals attending the meeting indicated that it is already too late, given time constraints for school budgets and hiring. Meanwhile, Ms. Locklear is working hard to create a plan for Brooks to comply with the law while maintaining reasonable class sizes and MIT classrooms.

Principal pay cuts - Did you know? Speaking of Ms. Locklear’s hard work, the NC General Assembly’s budget for next year includes a **30% pay cut** for veteran principals. NC now ranks #50 in the United States for principal pay. Some principals will get a one-year “stay” on the pay cut, but still are very worried about their future pay. Many principals attending the meeting said they did not go into the education field for the money but at least want to be treated as professionals. They are getting the clear message that NC does not value them. In many schools, assistant principals will be paid more than principals.

How to help? Senator Chaudhuri and others suggested that the general public is not aware of what one principal called “a systematic assault on the public school system in NC.” Although the NC PTA has extensively lobbied, other influential advocacy groups like Chamber of Commerce, etc. have refused to take a stance on the class size legislation or principal pay cuts. Please spread the word to your friends, business associates, neighbors, and others (Republican and Democrat) that strong public education is very important to everyone, not just parents. If lawmakers know we are watching them to decide how to vote next election, they will listen.