

2013 SCPTA Legislative Advocacy Platform

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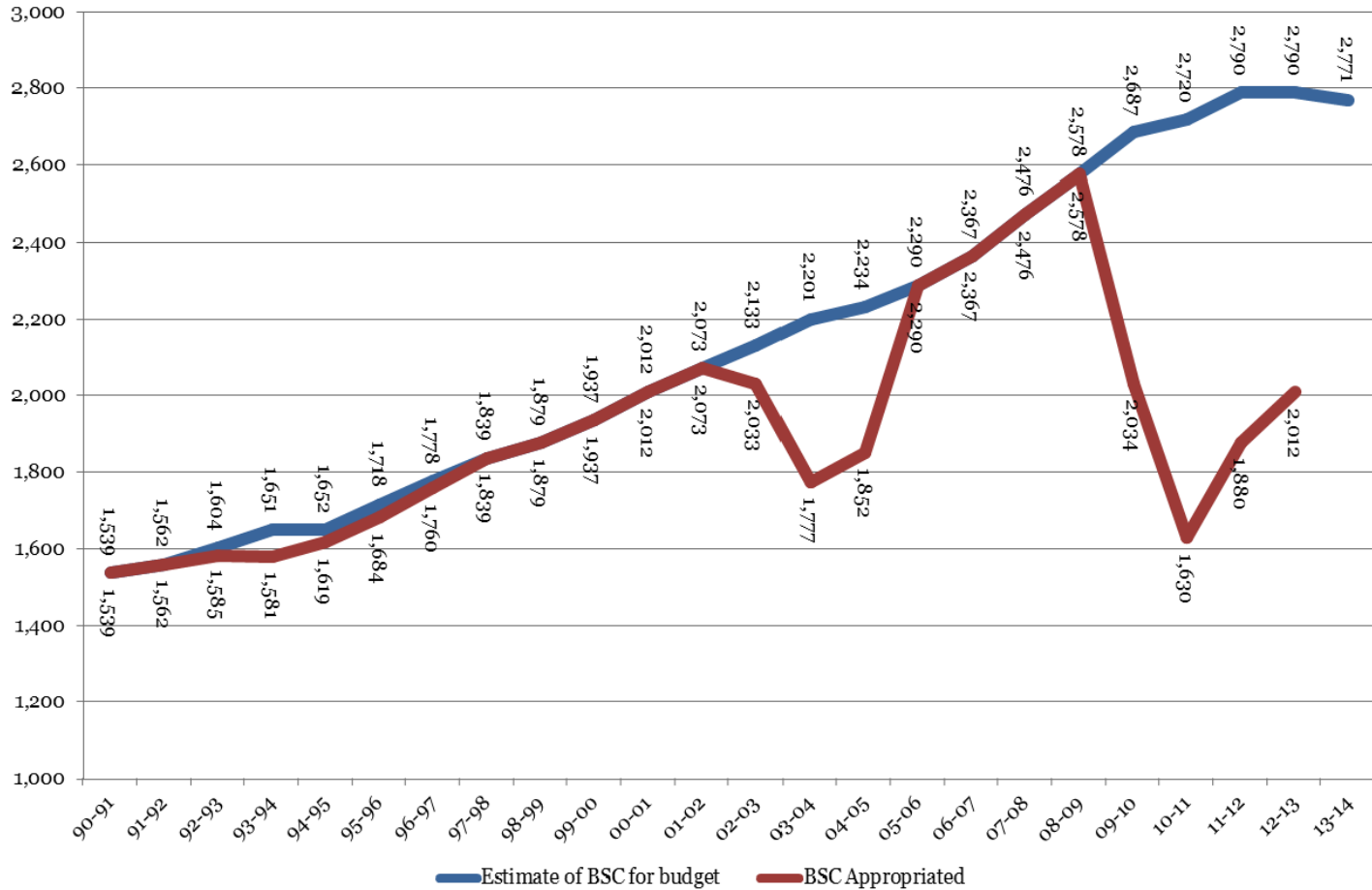
Special Thanks to:

Public Education Partners of Greenville County

Support State Funding of K-12 Education at the Levels required by the Education Finance Act

- The state has not fully funded the base student cost for the last 6 years (including this year).
- For the last 6 years it has been funded at less than 80%.
- FY 2013-2014 the base student cost will be \$2,101, a slight increase over last year's \$2,012, but only 76% of the \$2,771 required under the EFA.
- Prior to 2002-03, the state never funded the base student cost at less than 90%. Since then the state has done so nine out of twelve years.

BSC Estimate Provided for the Budget and the BSC Appropriated



Compete Nationally on Teacher Salaries

Salaries are important for attracting, developing, and keeping a top-notch teaching force in place in each zip code. However, over the years from 2001-02 through 2011-12, the national buying power of teacher salaries has declined 2.8%,* and yet:

- S.C. teacher salaries are 86.5% of the national average (\$55,489).*
- The average k-12 teacher salary in South Carolina is \$47,050*
- S.C. ranks 38th in the nation for teacher salaries, or 12th from the bottom*

*Rankings of the States 2012 and Estimates of School Statistics 2013
National Education Association, RESEARCH DECEMBER 2012

Promote Compliance with 15-Year Bus Replacement Cycle Law

- South Carolina is the only state that provides the buses for their school districts.
- A law passed by the state legislature in 2007 requires a 15-year bus replacement cycle.
- Approximately 1/15th of the school bus fleet is to be replaced each year with new school buses, resulting in a complete replacement of the fleet every 15 years.

State Funding of School Buses

The state is not meeting the requirements of this law.

- 2008 - the last year the state appropriated funding to meet the 15-year replacement cycle.
- 2010 - The state purchased 130 used school buses averaging 18 years old from Kentucky and other states. Money to purchase these buses came from the sale of junked buses for scrap metal.
- For 2012-13, the state provided \$12.7 million for the purchase of new school buses, about 1/3 of the annual amount needed to meet the requirements of the 2007 law.
- In December 2012, the state used funding from two fiscal years and scrap metal sales to replace 7% of state school buses—enough to replace those buses **over 25 years old**.
- The Legislature's 2013-2014 Budget includes a line item for \$23.5 million for school buses, which includes \$17 million from unclaimed lottery money and other revenue that may or may not materialize.

Tuition Tax Credit Legislation Opposition

SCPTA opposes any legislation that provides government subsidies for attending K-12 private schools or home schooling. This includes:

- (1) Tuition Tax Credits,
- (2) Tuition Tax Deductions, and
- (3) School Vouchers.

Reasons to Oppose Tuition Tax Credits

- Cost - Last year's tuition tax credit bill was projected to reduce General Fund revenue by **\$37 million**.
- Lack of Accountability to Parents and Taxpayers.
- Inadequate for low-income students
- Choice is already available through Charter Schools.
- Primarily serves those already attending private schools.
- No gain in academic achievement.
- An opportunity for corporate lobbyists to gain influence.

Advance School Safety, But Oppose Concealed Weapons in Public Schools

- CCW Legislation has been introduced in both The House and Senate that would allow concealed weapons in public schools, and in particular, by school employees.
- The Chief of the South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division opposes this idea.
- Better methods of increasing school safety include:
 - 1) improved and additional building security features,
 - 2) more secure entrance and exit procedures, and
 - 3) and increased use of law enforcement professionals on school grounds.

Oppose an A through F Rating System

SCPTA opposes a statewide teacher and principal rating system that uses A - F performance levels. Under the ESEA waiver requirements, South Carolina has to modify the state method of teacher and principal evaluations. The U.S. Dept. of Education requires that the state use evaluation systems that include these elements:

- Three or more performance levels;
- Student growth as a “significant” component;
- Provides clear and timely feedback to teachers;
- Informs personnel decisions.

Reasons for Opposing A-F Grading Scale

- Teachers and principals are highly-trained professionals.
- No professionals in other occupations or businesses are subjected to such a system.
- A-to-F ratings are demeaning and demoralizing and could be expected to negatively impact both the recruitment and retention of educators in our state.
- We need to become competitive on both salary and quality of life.
- In reviewing the evaluation proposal, members of The State Board of Education have come out in opposition to this rating system.