

## Break the glass

*Letter to the editor, [State Port Pilot](#), 06.26.24*

The words on some fire alarm boxes are “In Case of An Emergency, BreakGlass.” It is time that citizens “break the glass,” because local and state politicians have failed to respond to a “five-alarm fire” raging in the public school system.

Based upon the NC Constitution which states that every child is entitled to a sound, basic education, the Leandro Court Case was brought 30 years ago by a few poor counties in North Carolina to address the inadequate funding of public schools. The politicians refused to channel hundreds of millions of dollars designated by this case to public schools and redirected these funds to private schools (Opportunity Scholarships). Less than three weeks into the state legislative session, our representatives are expressing a desire to add millions of dollars more to the private scholarship program to meet a demand fueled by wealthy parents.

Meanwhile, public schools in Southeastern NC are suffering in several areas (five alarms).

- 1) Since the federal government will no longer provide COVID-related funding, local school budgets must be cut.
- 2) A teaching position costs 30 more than it did five years ago, but the state is allotting the same amount of funding for the school district.
- 3) The teacher turnover rate has soared by 47%, with one in nine teachers saving the profession.
- 4) Other positions (teacher assistants, workers, counselors, etc.) may be eliminated.
- 5) Recent test results indicate that some students are recovering from the COVID-19 isolation but the performances of an alarming number of students continue in a downward spiral.

Citizens must “break the glass” and sound the alarm by telling our representatives to increase funding for public schools instead of private schools. If there is no satisfactory response in this legislative session, then citizens should pull the appropriate voting lever in November.

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