

The State Board of Education (“Board”) is aware of the Audit Report on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (the “Department”) that was released yesterday by the North Carolina State Auditor’s Office (“State Auditor”). We respect and appreciate the work of the State Auditor and take very seriously the Findings that were identified in the Audit Report. The Board is disappointed by the number of Findings and the concerns raised by those Findings.

The Board notes that the Department has provided Responses to the Findings, which state actions or planned actions, that are to be taken with the intention to correct the issues that were identified in the Audit Report. The Board is focused on supporting the Department in correcting the Findings and moving forward with implementing enhanced internal procedures and controls to meaningfully reduce any future Findings. In that regard, it is the Board’s intent to monitor the Department’s efforts in resolving the Findings and to support those efforts by receiving progress reports.

It is important to observe that the Department has many outstanding employees who provide great service to the citizens of North Carolina, in supporting the education of our children. We are thankful for the work of so many of these Department employees and we commend them for their contributions to our State. That said, the Board has been concerned for some time about the number of vacancies within the Department in several key areas of Department operations. This has put a genuine strain on the Department. The Board has supported and will continue to support the filling of key vacancies that will undoubtedly assist in addressing matters raised in the Audit Report. The Board believes that supporting the Department’s employees and full staffing of Department positions will be a critical aspect of resolving Audit Report issues and deterring any recurrence of such Findings. It is a priority of this Board that there be a high level of public confidence in the handling of the financial affairs of the Department.

We end by again thanking the State Auditor for bringing these findings to light. The Board would further emphasize its determination to move forward seeking assurance that the Department will resolve these issues, and to provide support and collaboration in bringing about that outcome.