

Harold Martin: Invest in success by supporting sales tax for schools

Guilford County is on the cusp of something special. I've seen firsthand the dedication of our educators, the talent of our students and the potential for a brighter future for our community. I've witnessed the commitment to progress and the drive to build stronger local public schools for all.

I've had the privilege of working alongside exceptional educators in our local public schools. They are working hard to help our students thrive. Last year, 92 Guilford County schools met or exceeded expected academic growth, and the district had the highest graduation rate in its history. (That includes the two high schools affiliated with North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where the A&T Four Middle College has a 12-year record of 100% graduation and the STEM Early College consistently ranks among the top three high schools in our state.)

Educators in GCS are championing a commitment to excellence. They understand that every child deserves access to a high-quality education.

Unfortunately, our educators have not received the compensation they deserve for too long.

This November, Guilford County voters have a unique opportunity to change that. A proposed sales tax referendum will provide much-needed resources to support our teachers, frontline staff and students.

This is about more than just funding classrooms. This is about building a foundation for success. It's about investing in our community's future.

Let's be clear: This referendum isn't about a radical shift; it's about building on progress we've already made. It's about ensuring our schools can continue to provide the support needed for our students, attract and retain the best teachers and offer competitive compensation to those who dedicate themselves to educating our children.

This is a small investment with a significant impact. We're talking about a fraction of a penny on every purchase, except for medicine, gas and groceries. That fraction of a penny can mean the difference between a teacher staying in Guilford County to inspire our students or leaving Guilford County for better pay. It can mean the difference between a student having access to critical resources or falling behind.

I've spent my professional life in education, and I've seen firsthand the power of investing in our children. I've seen how education can lift individuals out of poverty, open doors to opportunity and empower communities to thrive.

Our schools are the backbone of our community. They are the engines of our future. And this November, we have a chance to invest in that future, to support our students, our teachers and our community.

I urge every Guilford County resident to get informed about this referendum and vote FOR the sales tax for educators on Nov. 5. Together, we can ensure that our schools have the resources they need to succeed, and together, we can continue to create a brighter future for Guilford County.

Chancellor Harold Martin, N.C. A&T