

## **SB329 Press Conference**

**March 21, 2019**

**Chris Brown, President of the North Carolina Association of Teacher Assistants and a teacher assistant in the Johnston County School System.**

I want to thank Senator Nickel for sponsoring this bill. I appreciate that he believes in our value in helping our students become good readers and is willing to back that belief up action with a bill that calls for increased funding for teacher assistants to work with our K-3 students in reading.

Certainly, teacher assistants make a difference in our schools at *all* grade levels. I can attest to that. I work in the Dropout Prevention Program at Clayton High School and have been a teacher assistant since 2001. Before that, I was in the United States Navy, working on a guided missile destroyer, and served in Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and the Gulf War. While in the service, I found a motto to live by. I say that one way to lose a fight is not to fight. If you don't stand, fight, or believe in something, you will run and fall for anything.

I am ready to *stand up* and *fight* because I *believe*. I *believe* our students deserve the best education North Carolina can offer and that our public schools need to be fully funded **first**. I *believe* that it is in the best interest of our students to employ **more** teacher assistants in our schools. I *believe* that teacher assistants make a difference in helping students achieve, just as I *believe* they also help our students grow in many other important ways, such as in becoming respectful, lawful, and kind people.

Our NCATA motto is "Teacher Assistants: Helping Hands in Education." If there is one thing I have learned as I have traveled around our state and met and talked with teacher assistants, it is that they love their jobs! They want to help in their schools whenever and however they are needed. They want to assist their teachers and be members of the educational teams. Most of all, they want to make a difference in the lives of their students each and every day. This bill would put more teacher assistants helping in our elementary schools and make a substantial impact for good for our students.

I believe in teacher assistants and will stand and fight with Senator Nickel to support this bill.

Thank you!