April 3, 2025

Joint Statement from North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction Maurice (Mo) Green and the North Carolina State Board of Education

We are deeply concerned with the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) March 28, 2025 decision to terminate immediately the ability of public schools and school districts, including some in North Carolina, to use federal Education Stabilization Funds to pay for approved projects that were underway. This unprecedented action undermines the careful financial planning of school districts across North Carolina and threatens critical programs supporting students. In particular, it threatens the financial integrity of four North Carolina school districts – the Public Schools of Robeson County, the Richmond County Schools, the Lenoir County Schools and the Halifax County Schools.

These four public school districts have strategically allocated the federal resources to address projects approved by the USDOE. They have made financial commitments, including contracts for facility improvements, based on a previously approved liquidation timeline. These districts will now face potential cancellation of projects or, worse, will not have the resources to pay the bills for work already done. This sudden reversal creates an administrative and financial crisis for districts that had legitimately relied on the USDOE prior approval.

We strongly urge United States Secretary of Education Linda McMahon to reconsider this harmful decision and honor the previously approved extensions. The Department's suggestion that school districts reapply for extensions on a "project-specific basis" is duplicative of information already submitted and creates an unnecessary administrative burden. Further, it introduces unacceptable uncertainty into school operations. Our students' education should not be jeopardized by an arbitrary deadline change when districts have been operating in good faith under approved timelines. However, to the extent Secretary McMahon will not simply reverse this decision and honor the previously approved extensions, we urge her to promptly grant the appeals that will be submitted.

The North Carolina State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction remain committed to supporting our districts through this challenge. We will work diligently to protect these critical resources for North Carolina students. While we hope for a swift reconsideration by the USDOE, we stand ready to assist our districts in navigating this unprecedented situation.

Eric Davis, Chair, North Carolina State Board of Education

Maurice (Mo) Green, North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction