

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 24  
ACCELERATING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND HIRING FOR *MORE AT FOUR*  
AND CLASS SIZE REDUCTION IN LIGHT OF JUDICIAL REQUIREMENTS,  
BUDGET DEVELOPMENTS, AND IMPENDING SCHOOL OPENINGS

In September 2001, the General Assembly ratified and I, as Governor, signed a budget for the State of North Carolina that allocated funds to establish a pre-kindergarten program for at-risk children, known as *More at Four*, and to reduce class sizes.

Pre-kindergarten programs for at-risk children and class size reduction are necessary for improving educational opportunity and outcomes for children across North Carolina. In addition, these programs are fundamental to addressing the needs of at-risk students, eliminating the achievement gap, reducing the State's persistently high dropout rate, increasing college enrollments, and meeting other education challenges.

Moreover, improving public education is the key to a better-prepared workforce that is able to attract quality jobs, strengthen our economy, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

The current proposed House Budget includes expanded funding for *More at Four* and class size reduction. While the General Assembly continues working to ratify a final budget I can sign, the school year for the majority of North Carolina's children will start imminently.

In addition, the school funding lawsuit, known as *Leandro*, has now reached a crisis point.

Nearly two years ago, in October 2000, the Superior Court Judge assigned by the Supreme Court of North Carolina to oversee *Leandro* ordered that pre-kindergarten educational programs for at-risk children must be expanded to serve all of the at-risk children in North Carolina that qualify for such programs.

Three months ago, in April 2002, the Court explicitly re-affirmed the October 2000 judgment with regards to pre-kindergarten programs. In addition, the April ruling found that at-risk children need smaller classes in early grades and that every classroom

provide differentiated, individualized instruction. Such individual attention, of course, requires smaller class sizes.

On July 19, 2002, the Court made clear that the prior judgments, including the mandates of *More at Four* and individualized instruction in early grades, remained in effect and were not being complied with.

NOW THEREFORE, in light of the factual circumstances set forth above, and under the legal authority vested in me as Governor by Article III of the Constitution of North Carolina, N.C.G.S. § 143-23, and decisions by the Supreme Court of North Carolina interpreting N.C.G.S. § 143-23, I hereby AUTHORIZE and INSTRUCT:

- (1) The Director of the *More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Program, in conjunction with the Co-Chairs of the *More at Four* Task Force (the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services), to recruit the teachers necessary to expand the program; and,
- (2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction, working with and through local school system superintendents, to recruit and hire the additional teachers necessary to reduce class sizes in kindergarten and first grade beginning with the 2002-03 school year.

This Executive Order is effective July 24, 2002.

Done in the Capital City of Raleigh, North Carolina, this 24th day of July 2002.

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MICHAEL F. EASLEY  
GOVERNOR

**ATTEST:**

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ELAINE F. MARSHALL  
SECRETARY OF STATE