

Hood got it wrong on public education

To the Editor:

John Hood's editorial in the Feb. 10 Times-News contains misleading information regarding his assessment of the quality of public education in North Carolina. As a retired superintendent, I criticize his assertion that public education has prospered under current Republican control of the North Carolina General Assembly; quite the contrary.

Mr. Hood bases his entire assessment of the current state of public education in North Carolina on 2021 test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. This test is given annually to a random sample of students in English and math at 4th and 8th grades. While scores are generally representative of achievement at those grade levels, they are only one data point. The Republican controlled NC legislature has steadily cut funding for many of those other factors that support a strong public education system. Also 2021 was the year of COVID-19. Many students missed in person instruction for most, or in some cases all, of the school year. Testing experts question the validity of any standardized assessments under those circumstances.

Educators are leaving the field in droves. Low salaries, less money for materials, programs, and technology, loss of health insurance for beginning teachers, and inadequate raises for experienced teachers all contribute to a decline in the quality of public education in North Carolina.

Mr. Hood needs to go back and do real research. I think he'll come to a different conclusion.

Jane Pulling, Saluda