As a first grade teacher in the Wake County Public School System I was alarmed when reading about possible school budget cuts which could shed as many as 8,700 teacher assistant positions. While I am thankful that teacher’s jobs are being spared, I worry that by cutting our support we are doing our students a huge disservice. Perhaps legislative leaders do not understand how much they are relied on and what an impact they play in our children’s lives. The early elementary years are where the foundations for every child’s learning are laid. Children learn to read, write, and grasp a basic understanding of number concept during these most precious years. These are skills that they will build on for the rest of their lives. It is absolutely imperative that all hands are on deck during these crucial years. This ensures that they leave elementary school with the skills they need to succeed in their future education. I’d like to challenge anyone who thinks that teacher assistants are unimportant to spend a day in first grade classroom teaching 24 children all of the core subjects with no help. Cutting education does nothing but create problems for the future.