

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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North Carolina Continues to Lead Nation In Number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers

A record 9,600 teachers achieved National Board Certification this year according to an announcement issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. North Carolina continues to lead the nation in the number of teachers who have been certified with 14,211, 15% of the state's teaching work force.

Nationwide the number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) has doubled in five years, from more than 32,000 in 2003 to 84,000 in 2008. Florida had the most new NBCTs with 1,826 achieving certification this year. North Carolina was second with 1,453.

Fully 35% of North Carolina's NBCTs are teaching in Title I schools, schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged young people. Counties with the largest number of NBCTs are Wake with a total of 1,486; Charlotte-Mecklenburg with 1,211; and Guilford with 517.

NC High School Loses Magnet Program

The Wake County School Board voted 5-4 on Wednesday to remove the International Baccalaureate magnet program from Broughton High School. While they voted unanimously to keep the status at their October 21st meeting, board members felt that Broughton no longer met the criteria to be a magnet school because it would remain academically healthy without the program. "Broughton doesn't have a high concentration of poverty that requires a magnet draw, and that magnet draw is hurting other schools," said board member Lori Millberg.

As it removed the IB program from Broughton on Wednesday, the board placed a new IB magnet program at Millbrook High School in North Raleigh. Wake County will have to spend \$2.1 million over the next five years to start the new program at Millbrook, while still spending \$1.8 million over that time to phase it out at Broughton. The phase-out will occur over five years to allow current Broughton students to finish the program and to give Millbrook enough time to get it up and running.

Gates Foundation Makes \$16.5 Million Grant to NC Non-Profit

MDC, a Chapel Hill nonprofit focused on community development, has received a \$16.5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant was announced on Tuesday when the Foundation awarded \$69 million to groups across the country that are working to improve college enrollment and completion rates.

Gates Foundation (cont'd.)

The MDC initiative is called “Achieving the Dream.” It focuses on community colleges and its goal is to identify barriers that prevent students, especially minority or low income students, from completing college degrees. Achieving the Dream programs are in operation at 82 colleges in 15 states, including North Carolina.

US News & World Report Names Top Public High Schools

In its second year of ranking public high schools, the *US News & World Report* announced this year’s list of America’s Best High Schools. Last year’s top school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, beat out over 21,000 other public high schools from across the country to be named top school for a second year in a row.

US News & World Report, together with School Evaluation Services, examined 21,069 public high schools in 48 states, placing the top performers into Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Honorable Mention categories. Of the schools evaluated, 1,925 were recognized for outperforming their state’s standards, and of those schools, 604 were found to be doing an “excellent job” preparing their students for college-level coursework.

California led the nation this year with 209 schools earning recognition, followed by Texas (151 schools), New York (105 schools), Ohio (87 schools), Michigan (74 schools), and Illinois (71 schools). Nebraska, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia did not have sufficient information on their high schools to fully participate in the analysis.

North Carolina fared well in the evaluation, ranking 25th with 41 of its 478 schools receiving Bronze status or better. Three schools in the state received Gold Status:

Early College at Guilford, Guilford County, Greensboro
Ranked #17 out of 100

Raleigh Charter High, Wake County, Raleigh
Ranked #20 out of 100

East Chapel Hill High, Orange County, Chapel Hill
Ranked #77 out of 100

NC School System Wins National Quality Award

The Iredell-Statesville School System was one of three outstanding organizations to receive the 2008 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation’s highest Presidential honor for organizational innovation and performance excellence. The winners were announced on November 25th by Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez and President George W. Bush. The recipients will receive their awards at a ceremony in Washington, DC early next year.

The Baldrige Award, named for the 26th Secretary of Commerce, was established by Congress in 1987 to enhance the competitiveness and performance of US businesses. It

NC School System Wins National Quality Award (cont'd.)

promotes organizational performance excellence, recognizes US organizations' achievements and results, and publicizes successful performance strategies. Since 1988, 75 organizations have been recipients of the award.

This year's winners were selected from 85 applicants, after a vigorous evaluation process that reviewed seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results. Joining Iredell-Statesville Schools were Cargill Corn Milling North America in Wayzata, Minnesota for manufacturing, and Poudre Valley Health System in Fort Collins, Colorado for health care.

North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Named

Dr. Terry K. Holliday, Superintendent of the Iredell-Statesville Schools, was named the 2009 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. The award was presented jointly by the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) at an awards presentation and reception in Greensboro on November 11th.

Since Dr. Holliday was hired by the Iredell-Statesville Board of Education six years ago, the school district has seen steady improvement in student performance and achievement. The district is now ranked among the state's ten best in student performance.

As the 2009 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year winner, Dr. Holliday will go on to compete for the National Superintendent of the Year honor, which will be presented at the American Association of School Administrators' National Conference on Education, held in San Francisco, February 19-21, 2009.

AT&T-NC President Receives State Board of Education Award

Cynthia Marshall, President of AT&T-North Carolina, received the State Board of Education's most prestigious award, "Friend of Education," on December 4th. The award, presented by State Board of Education member and NC Business Committee for Education Excellence Executive Director Tricia Willoughby, was given to Marshall in recognition of her "generosity to support causes and programs that improve children's lives."

AT&T has been a strong supporter of public education in North Carolina, and since Marshall was named President in January of 2007, the company has increased its support, with an emphasis on dropout prevention. According to State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee, Cynthia Marshall has, "gone above and beyond the call of duty in support of public education."

AT&T-NC President Receives Award (cont'd.)

In addition to her work with AT&T-North Carolina, Marshall serves on the North Carolina General Assembly's Committee on Dropout Prevention as well as on the North Carolina New Schools Project Board of Directors.

Idaho Representative Proposes Kindergarten Homeschool Incentives

Idaho Representative Steven Thayn, R-Emmett, plans to introduce a proposal to the 2009 Legislature that would offer state funding to parents to teach their children kindergarten at home. The Idaho Representative sees his plan as one that would benefit both tax payers and students at the same time.

Kindergarten classes are not mandatory for children in Idaho, though they are funded by the state. Under Thayn's proposal, parents whose children pass a test proving readiness for first grade will receive an average payment of roughly \$2,250. Currently the state pays approximately \$4,500 per pupil. If passed, nearly half of the money saved by this proposal would go to parents, one quarter would go to school districts, and the remaining funds to the education stabilization fund.

There are still many concerns that need to be considered, such as parents abusing the program by sending kindergarteners to daycare while collecting state funding, or students not being prepared for first grade. But the proposal is still in its early stages of development, and a lot of discussion on it will be necessary to work out the details

Michigan Close to Passing New Math Curriculum Bill

On Tuesday, December 2, the Michigan House unanimously approved a bill that would allow a financial literacy course to count as an option toward meeting graduation requirements for math. The bill has already passed the Senate, and will return to the Senate once more before being forwarded to the state's Governor, Jennifer Granholm.

While the new legislation has sparked a number of complaints from some school officials and parents, many feel the inclusion of a financial literacy course among the requirements will help students learn real world skills, as well as accommodate varied learning styles. According to Jan Ellis, a spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Education, the legislation, "recognizes the importance of students being able to understand and manage their finances, and clarifies that a financial literacy course can count as a student's fourth required math credit."

The proposed legislation will expand options for meeting math requirements, such as allowing students to complete Algebra II over a two-year period. If passed, Michigan's new high school graduation requirements, including the completion of four math credits, will go into effect starting with the graduating class of 2011.

Recommended Reading . . .

“A Tale of Two Economic Cycles”

The NC Budget and Tax Center has issued a new report entitled “What Happened to the Jobs? A Tale of Two Economic Cycles.” It should be must reading for policymakers and others who are working to understand the economic challenges facing North Carolina. The major conclusions of the study find:

- Since 2000, North Carolina has not created enough jobs to keep pace with the growth of the workforce.
- The pattern is opposite of the one that prevailed during the 1990’s, when job growth outpaced workforce growth.
- Sluggish job growth has contributed to the economic hardships facing the state’s households. For many it has meant stagnant or declining living standards.
- Today’s recession has exacerbated these difficulties.
- Even if the recession proves brief, North Carolina’s labor market will likely limp through 2012 and perhaps longer.
- Both federal and state actions are needed to recover from the downturn.
- Meanwhile, state leaders must avoid making the situation worse by attempting to “cut” their way to a balanced budget.

The full study can be accessed on the Budget and Tax Center website at http://www.ncjustice.org/assets/library/1340_btcrpt4dec2008jobs.pdf .

On Different Planets

The Corporate Library released its annual data on chief executive compensation (CEO) pay at public US and Canadian companies In the midst of today’s economic turmoil, some of the numbers force one to ask if some in Corporate America are living in another universe. Consider the highest paid in 2007.

- Larry Ellison, Oracle, \$192.92 million
- Barry Diller, IAC/InterActive, \$184.49 million
- And our personal favorite, Angelo Mozilo, Countrywide Financial, \$124.7 million

At a time when taxpayer bailout money goes out the US Treasury Department’s door, it does make one wonder. Perhaps humor is the best antidote. Jay Leno, in a televised interview this week said, “It’s really something watching guys who owe trillions (i.e., members of Congress) scolding guys who owe billions (i.e., banks and auto executives).”

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