

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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New Leaders for New Schools Launches Partnership with CMS

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Superintendent Dr. Peter C. Gorman and New Leaders for New Schools CEO Jon Schnur announced last Wednesday that the New Leaders Board of Directors has selected CMS as its newest partner, following a year-long, national competition. New Leaders for New Schools is a New York-based nonprofit organization that recruits and trains principals to serve in high-poverty schools throughout the country. Since its start in 2000, New Leaders has trained over 550 principals within school systems in Baltimore, Chicago, the District of Columbia, Memphis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New York City, Prince George's County, Maryland, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

New Leaders for New Schools aims to place principals in CMS schools where a majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The partnership will recruit, train, and place over 50 principals in poorer-performing Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools over the next five years. Successful candidates will participate in a fellowship beginning with intensive summer training and a yearlong, full-time, paid residency in a leadership position with a mentor principal. From there, they are placed in high-need schools for at least five years.

Each New Leader is expected to make a long-term commitment to serve Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and to commit to achieving ambitious goals for students. This includes the goal that schools led by New Leaders principals for at least five years will have 90 percent to 100 percent of students achieve proficiency or above in core academic subjects.

Officials estimate training will cost about \$100,000 per candidate, which includes a salary roughly equivalent to that of an assistant principal's salary during the training period. The program is being funded by both national and local corporations and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education.

The organization has begun accepting applications for its Charlotte fellowships online, and according to Eric Guckian, New Leader's Charlotte Executive Director, the program already has over 180 candidate leads. For more information on applying or nominating strong candidates, visit www.nlms.org. The final deadline for applications is February 17, 2009.

Perdue Releases Report from Education Round Table

In preparation for her new role as North Carolina's Governor, Beverly Perdue has reached out to leaders and citizens across the state through public forums to help identify challenges the state faces and develop recommendations on each topic. Earlier this week, full reports from each of the public forums were published on the Governor-elect's website. The Education session summary lists brief summaries of presentations given by J.B. Buxton, deputy state superintendent of public instruction; Dr. R. Scott Ralls, president, North Carolina

Perdue Releases Report (cont'd.)

Community Colleges; and Dr. Alan Mabe, vice president for academic planning and university–school programs, University of North Carolina. Each presenter identified significant issues, opportunities and challenges their groups face.

The issues presented were discussed by session participants, and organized into seven broader areas. The report lists these key issues, along with solutions and recommendations. The seven key areas the Governor-elect hopes to address when she takes office are:

- Education cabinet: leadership and structure of education-related activities
- Address the role and needs of early childhood (0–5 years) education
- Address retention of students throughout their education experience (K–20)
- Identify ways to address school infrastructure
- Make the education system more responsive to the economic needs of the state
- Identify and implement best practices and financial innovation
- Hire, retain, and develop the best teachers and administrators

The full report can be viewed at: <http://bevperdue.com/uploads/Education.pdf> .

Dropout Prevention Grants Awarded

The North Carolina General Assembly's Committee on Dropout Prevention awarded 39 organizations initial grants and 37 organizations continuation grants in what was the final round of dropout prevention grants. The goal of the committee is to help improve high school graduation rates in the state. The General Assembly will disburse a total of \$14.4 million in grants ranging in size from \$9,100 to \$150,000 to school systems, schools, agencies and nonprofits who were either not funded during the first round in 2007, or applied for funding in 2008. For further information, including a complete listing of recipients, go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2008-09/20081217-01> .

Teaching Fellows Graduate Named Regional Teacher of the Year

Matthew Bristow-Smith, Edgecombe County Public Schools' "Teacher of the Year," was selected as the state's North Central Regional Teacher of the Year. Bristow-Smith was honored in a surprise ceremony on Monday, December 8th, where he was presented a plaque for his classroom door, designated parking space at Tarboro High School (where he teaches English), an engraved picture frame, and a certificate. He will also receive a \$5,000 reward for his accomplishment.

Bristow-Smith, a 1990 Teaching Fellow graduate, was selected from a pool of 15 local candidates in August and advanced to the regional level to become a finalist in the North Central Region that includes Nash, Wake, and Wilson counties. He is one of eight regional teachers who have qualified for the honor of North Carolina Teacher of the Year

Education Secretary Named

On Tuesday, President-elect Barack Obama named Chief Executive of Chicago Public Schools Arne Duncan as his Education Secretary. Since 2001, Duncan, 44, has led the nation's third-largest school district, improving teacher quality, championing good charter schools, raising elementary test scores, and lowering the drop-out rate.

In his campaign, Senator Obama promised to fix the nation's schools, recruit an "army of new teachers," create better tests and give public schools more funding. Improving the nation's schools, he feels, is critical to remaining competitive in the global market, stating, "If we want to out-compete the world tomorrow, then we're going to have to out-educate the world today." The President-elect feels confident that with Duncan's leadership, the education system will be brought into the 21st century.

Obama praised Duncan's willingness to embrace wide-ranging types of education reform, and the fact that he is not " beholden to any one ideology." He has been embraced by teachers unions and reformers alike, and his nomination is likely to be a consensus move by the President-elect to appeal to both groups. Duncan "has credibility with various factions in the education policy debate and would allow President Obama to avoid publicly choosing sides in that debate," wrote Democrats for Education Reform in a recent policy paper. Others have also praised Duncan, including current Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, who said he is, "a really good school leader," in an interview in the Washington Post last week.

Budget Woes Further Threaten Education Funding

Across the country, which has been in a recession since December 2007 according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, state spending on government programs has been in decline in an effort to make up for budget deficits. Officials are predicting that the economic downturn's effects may be felt for up to four years before a significant recovery can occur. This means bad news for K-12 education, which is typically spared cuts in funding during tough economic times.

In tough budget times, states resort to cutting spending, tapping into rainy day reserves, or raising taxes to prevent deficits at the end of the fiscal year, which are prohibited in most states. But with the drop in consumer spending, continued housing crisis, and mounting unemployment rates, many states have already done all they can to close budget gaps. Though K-12 education funding is generally spared, it is becoming more and more difficult for states to avoid cuts in what is most often the biggest single expenditure in state government. Last year, it was 20.9% of all state spending nationally.

In total, 36 states are facing budget gaps totaling \$30 billion. Already, more than a dozen states have made targeted cuts to education, and these cuts are starting to affect programs and curriculum. In Alabama, declining state tax collections have forced Governor Bob Riley to declare a 12.5 percent across the board spending cut for the \$6.3 billion education budget. The cut in the fiscal 2009 budget would be the largest since education spending was hit by 14.1 percent in fiscal 1961. More cuts are pending in Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, and Virginia. In North

Budget Woes (cont'd.)

Carolina, all 115 public school systems have been asked by the Department of Public Instruction to revert \$58 million in state funding.

New England States Form High School Consortium

Education Commissioners of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island have come together to form the New England Secondary School Consortium. The goal of the newly formed group is to remake their states' high schools into "flexible, borderless, multidimensional community learning centers." The states will work to improve learning at high schools, but also to build examples that can influence policy so that all schools have access to the lessons learned through this consortium.

The four states will work to ensure that by 2016 every one of their public high schools will offer students an education that will prepare them for college, career, and civic responsibility in the 21st century global community, while working to increase graduation rates to at least 90 percent, and lowering dropout rates to less than 1%. Students will have opportunities to study at a college level, build real-world skills, work within their communities, and immerse themselves in technology.

The Consortium, which has offered Massachusetts and Connecticut the opportunity to join them, has gained the support of governors, commissioners, and other state education champions. The group's work will be coordinated by the Great Schools Partnership at the Senator George J. Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute in Portland, Maine. The first 18 months of the consortium are being funded by a \$1 million grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation that includes a \$500,000 partnership grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Louisiana Leads with Accountability-based Reform Efforts

As states and the federal government consider ways to improve teacher-preparation programs in this country, Louisiana's accountability-based reform efforts are leading the way. While the state already requires public- and private-teacher-education programs to offer more rigorous course work, the most striking innovation is an evaluation system that judges teacher-preparation programs based on how much their graduates improve student performance in important areas, including reading, math and science.

The evaluation system, once in place throughout the state, will be able to provide officials with information as to which programs are turning out first-class teachers and which ones still need work. This year's report, released in early December, gives high marks to the teacher-preparation program at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and is especially flattering to the New Teacher Project. This private certification program, available in several states, puts highly qualified college graduates through 12 to 18 months of additional training before placing them in schools.

According to the Louisiana report, new teachers from the New Teacher Project were more effective in teaching math, language arts and reading than others with two or more years

Louisiana Leads (cont'd.)

of experience. The report's findings also echo an earlier study showing that participants in a similar program, Teach for America, who worked in North Carolina between 2000 and 2006 had a more positive impact on student performance than traditional teachers. The findings suggest that high-quality programs like Teach for America and The New Teacher Project have a big role to play in the effort to improve teacher preparation nationally.

Calling all Candidates!!!

The North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association (NCPAPA) is currently seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director. NCPAPA is a professional membership organization serving 4,500 principals and assistant principals across North Carolina. The candidate must be a visionary leader who can evaluate the needs of principals and assistant principals state-wide, develop the programmatic response to meet those needs and move the organization to the next level on their behalf.

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the daily operations for the association, including the following specific duties:

- Supervise work of other staff members to ensure timely and effective delivery of services to NCPAPA members
- Serve as a liaison with other organizations to help provide visibility and respect for NCPAPA and its membership
- Communicate with NCPAPA members in person, by the phone and by e-mail to ensure questions and concerns are addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner
- Coordinate the long-range and short-range planning for all aspects of the organization
- Serve as chief spokesperson for the organization in venues including but not limited to governmental entities, the General Assembly, the media, and the public
- Promote the organization and affiliate organizations by traveling the state to meet with various principal groups
- Develop timely and informative professional development opportunities for NCPAPA members.
- Facilitate meetings and conferences for the organization by lining up presenters, setting agendas, coordinating member notifications and directing the creation of materials to be shared and presented
- Represent the association in numerous collaborative efforts pertaining to legislation and education policy development
- Serve as chief fiscal officer for the organization

Applications are due into the NCPAPA office no later than January 15th, 2009. For more information on requirements and job offerings visit:

<http://www.ncpapa.org/forms/ed%20search.pdf>.

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