

# *The Public School Forum's Friday Report*

PDF versions can be found at [www.ncforum.org](http://www.ncforum.org)

Volume 11, Issue 30

January 30, 2009



*Former Gov. Robert Walter Scott passed away on Friday, January 23 at the age of 79. Among his many roles, Scott served as the state's chief executive from 1969 to 1973, and president of the community college system from 1983 to 1994. Scott is survived by his wife of 58 years, Jessie Rae Scott; daughters Meg Phipps, Mary Scott, Susan Sutton and Jan Scott; seven grandchildren, and his sister, Mary Kerr Lowdermilk. The funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 28 Hawfields Presbyterian Church in Mebane. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Scott family.*

## **A Busy Week for K-12 Education**

On Monday, Governor Perdue shook up K-12 education by announcing that she would be bringing in Cumberland County Superintendent Dr. Bill Harrison to serve as the CEO of Public Schools and to lead the State Board of Education. In an effort to create clear lines of authority and greater accountability, Dr. Harrison will both manage the 780-person Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and guide education policy at the board.

On Tuesday, the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee heard from Evergreen Solutions, LLC, a consulting firm hired by the state to examine the top of the state's educational pyramid. The report recommends, among other things, that the duties of the Executive Director of the State Board be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer of the State Board (the State Superintendent) and that the job description of the Chairman of the State Board of Education be amended to include the title of Chief Executive Officer, an action taken by the Governor on Monday.

Harrison's appointment is an effort on the Governor's part to clarify responsibility and accountability in the Department. The appointment of Harrison has been warmly greeted within the educational community. He has led three very different school systems - Orange, Hoke and Cumberland Counties - and has experience with suburban schools, poor rural schools and a rapidly growing large-county school system. Harrison was recently the winner of the Forum's Jay Robinson Award given annually to an exemplary school leader.

Governor Purdue also announced that the current State Board Chair, Howard Lee, would work out of the Governor's office to reinvigorate the Educational Cabinet, a potential center of collaboration among the K-12, community college and UNC systems. JB Buxton, the current Deputy of Education, has resigned and is leaving to head up a new organization.

Commenting on Gov. Perdue's announcement, John Dornan, the Forum's Executive Director, said, "K-12 governance has been in need of an overhaul for years. This is a good first step and the Governor's choice of Bill Harrison puts a seasoned, respected school administrator in charge of schools at a critical time."

## Busy Week for K-12 Education (cont'd.)

On Wednesday, Legislators returned to Raleigh for a new two-year session of the General Assembly. With much of their attention turned to a budget gap expected to exceed \$2 billion, lawmakers are likely to focus on what projects and programs the state can do without. "It may be the most serious recession, the most serious problem in state revenues in my time in the General Assembly," said House Speaker Joe Hackney (D-Orange).

Thursday the Department of Public Instruction announced that the 2008 North Carolina School Report Cards are now available online. The NC School Report Cards provide parents, educators and others with online data resource information about student performance and attendance, class size, school safety, teacher quality, and school technology. Most of the data is available at the school, district and state levels. To access the 2008 NC School Report Card data go to <http://www.ncreportcards.org/src/>.

## LEARN NC Seeks Partners in Education Policy

LEARN NC is seeking partners in North Carolina interested in providing a central resource for educators who have questions about education policy. This resource, which would be updated annually, will provide a needed, central location for both the contextual and historical information necessary to be informed about the legal, economic and legislative landscape of education in North Carolina.

While other publication and dissemination options for this education policy resource are not to be ruled out, LEARN NC offers unique ways to make this material available. The text may be published in its entirety, yet also made available in smaller "chunks". Smaller elements/segments of the larger work may stand alone, yet as a part of the greater collection, they will be aligned to relevant lessons and linked to best practice articles. The document may be read straight through or searched like a reference work to answer a particular question. Finally, the text will also be formatted as a printable pdf with the click of a button.

LEARN NC is well positioned to design and deliver this resource, but seeks expertise to develop the content. Those interested in working with the organization to evaluate the collective capacity for offering such a resource through partnerships may contact Melissa Thibault, Executive Director of LEARN NC at [mthibault@learnnc.org](mailto:mthibault@learnnc.org) or by calling (919) 843-9920.

## Eight Named Regional Wachovia Principals of the Year

Eight principals throughout the state were recently selected to represent their regions as regional Wachovia Principals of the Year. All eight will go on to compete for the title of 2009 Wachovia North Carolina Principal of the Year. A State Selection Committee will review the regional winners' portfolios and visit each candidate's school campus in order to determine the 2009 Wachovia North Carolina Principal of the Year.

## Regional Wachovia Principals of the Year (cont'd.)

The eight regional winners each will receive \$1,000 for personal use as well as \$1,000 for their schools. The Wachovia North Carolina Principal of the Year will receive a \$3,000 check for personal use or professional development, and will serve a one-year term as advisor to the State Board of Education. Their school will receive a \$3,000 check for purchasing materials or equipment.

This year's recipient will be announced on April 2 at a luncheon in Raleigh sponsored by Wachovia Corporation to honor the regional winners. Since the program began in 1984, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Wachovia Corporation have recognized 28 Wachovia Principals of the Year, 178 regional recipients, and 2,334 local recipients. The program provides a unique opportunity to recognize outstanding principals from North Carolina public schools.

The regional principals of the year are:

- North Central Region: Matthew Wight, Apex High (Wake County Schools);
- Northeast Region: Donald Sisson, Northeastern High (Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools);
- Northwest Region: DeAnna Finger, Tuttle Elementary (Catawba County Schools);
- Southeast Region: Vann Pennell, South Brunswick High (Brunswick County Schools);
- Southwest Region: Steve Hall, Bruns Avenue Elementary (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools);
- Sandhills/South Central Region: Jeffrey Jernigan, Cape Fear High (Cumberland County Schools);
- Piedmont-Triad/Central Region: Sabre Robinson, Eastlawn Elementary (Alamance-Burlington Schools); and
- West Region: Ronette Dill, Saluda Elementary (Polk County Schools).

### *National News...*

## Report Cites Progress, Challenges for America's High Schools

The National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices, National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Association of State Boards of Education recently released "*Accelerating the Agenda: Actions to Improve America's High Schools.*" This follow up report to the original report from 2005, measures progress states have made since then in improving their high schools, and cites challenges that remain in ensuring students are prepared for college and career success in the global economy. The report highlights emerging trends, such as greater appreciation for international benchmarking and an increased focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

## Report Cites Progress, Challenges (cont'd.)

The report represents the organizations' shared vision for changes needed in today's high schools and offers new ideas and practices that help state leaders to:

- restore value to the high school diploma by elevating academic standards and high school graduation requirements to a college- and career-ready level;
- redesign high schools through alternative delivery mechanisms;
- ensure excellent teachers and principals by connecting teacher preparation, hiring and evaluation to student outcomes and other factors;
- improve accountability by aligning postsecondary expectations to high school expectations; and
- enhance education governance by bridging K-12 and postsecondary expectation gaps through P-16 councils.

The full report can be viewed at:

<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/0901IMPROVEHIGHCHOOLS.pdf>.

## Des Moines Lawmaker Calls for Extra Pay for Teachers

Most research in recent years shows that students fair better academically when their teachers have at least three years of teaching experience, and that students from low-income homes require extra help at school to compensate from fewer opportunities at home. Across the country, inexperienced teachers are typically placed in schools with the neediest students. A Des Moines, Iowa, lawmaker hopes to change this.

In a report earlier this month, the Des Moines Register found that novice teachers in the Des Moines school district typically work in schools that have the neediest students. Most job openings are at schools with the largest percentage of students from low-income families. According to the Register, nearly one in three Des Moines teachers in schools with the highest percentages of students from low-income families has less than three years of experience. At schools with the lowest percentages of poor students, one in six teachers has less than three years of experience. State Representative Wayne Ford sees this as a wake-up call, and wants to use money set aside for teacher training to attract quality teachers to these areas in need. "It's crucial that experienced teachers are part of those landscapes that really need them," Ford said.

Ford's plan, which is part of a larger plan to improve high-poverty schools, calls for teachers to commit to spending at least five years at the school. The money would be paid as a bonus or used to help teachers repay their student loans. State Representative Cindy Winckler of Davenport, chairwoman of the House education appropriations subcommittee, feels the idea deserves consideration, but believes the chances of it passing are low. Winckler said the issue mostly affects larger school districts, and it would be difficult to determine which teachers would qualify for the limited funds. The issue is unlikely to be addressed this year, given the state's bigger budget concerns.

## Extra Pay for Teachers (cont'd.)

Ford's plan as met with opposition, as well. Alan Young, president of the Des Moines teachers' union, feels the idea does not address large class sizes or provide more money for teaching resources. According to Young, the plan, "misconstrues what motivates teachers to want to work with children."

A similar pay program is planned for at least two districts in Tennessee. Lawmakers there allowed schools to use different pay scales to attract high-quality teachers to low-performing schools. A Chattanooga school district will pay one-time bonuses to those who work in low-income schools and an annual bonus if students show academic growth.

## Minnesota Ranks Among Top Nations on TIMSS

One of only two states in the nation to participate in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), a prominent international measurement of academic skill, Minnesota scored at or above the level of many of the highest-performing countries on that exam. Since first taking the exam in 1995, Minnesota's scores have jumped significantly, with impressive gains in several areas.

Participation in the 1995 and 2007 TIMSS has given researchers information into what factors led to the state's gains in some areas. Officials credit the establishment and continued refinement of academic standards as prime factors behind the progress. Following the first test, Minnesota's state board of education adopted math and science standards in 1998. The math standards have been redrawn twice since then, and science standards have been revised once, with a second revision currently underway.

The results of TIMSS, released last month, show Minnesota had scored above international averages in 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and science, with the biggest gains seen in 4<sup>th</sup> grade math. The state's scores were also statistically higher than the US average in every major TIMSS category except 4<sup>th</sup> grade science. Massachusetts, the only other state to participate in both 1995 and 2007, also had 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and science scores that exceeded international and US averages in all four categories.

### *Forum News...*

## 2008 Local Finance Study is Here!

The Public School Forum's annual Local Finance Study is available for order. This study has become the "last word" in county expenditures on schools. The study annually ranks North Carolina's 100 counties on their actual spending on schools as well as the effort they make in supporting schools. School boards, finance officers, and county commissioners routinely rely on the Forum's annual study as budget decisions are made.

## 2008 Local Finance Study (cont'd.)

“The Forum’s Local Finance Study has been an essential tool when I teach school finance. I use the study as a basic “text” in helping graduate students in school administration understand finance and taxation theory as well as value-laden issues such as equity, fairness, and responsibility.” – Dr. Ken Jenkins, Appalachian State University

To order your copy today, visit the Forum’s website and complete the order form by going to: <http://www.ncforum.org/doclib/lfs-order.aspx> .

## Seeking Jay Robinson Award Nominations

The Jay Robinson Leadership Award was established by the Public School Forum Board of Directors in recognition of outstanding leaders in the field of public education. The award may be given to anyone who has displayed innovative, creative, effective leadership for the public schools of North Carolina.

Past winners include Laura Bilbro-Berry, the first Teaching Fellow to be named North Carolina Teacher of the Year; Tom McNeel, superintendent of Caldwell County schools; Jim Causby, two-time state Superintendent of the Year and executive director of the NC Association of School Administrators; Robert Bridges, former superintendent of Wake County Schools and former chair of the state’s Raising Achievement and Closing Gap Commission; Superior Court Judge Howard E. Manning, Jr., the trial court judge in the *Leandro* school finance case; Dr. Ann Denlinger, former superintendent of Durham Public Schools and Wilson County Schools and currently President, Wake Education Partnership; Phillip J. Kirk Jr., Vice President for External Relations at Catawba College and Dr. Bill Harrison, superintendent Cumberland County Schools.

The nominations must be postmarked by March 2, 2009. Nominations postmarked after that date and nominations delivered in person will not be accepted. The award ceremony will be held on June 8, 2009, at the North Raleigh Hilton Hotel. Admission will be by invitation only. The honor includes a cash award sponsored by BB&T.

To obtain an application, contact Debra Jordan ([djordan@ncforum.org](mailto:djordan@ncforum.org)) at 919-781-6833 x. 101 or you can download a copy at [www.ncforum.org](http://www.ncforum.org).

---

The *Friday Report* is published weekly by the Public School Forum of NC and is distributed to Forum Board members, legislators active in education policy, the press, and Forum subscribers. Archived editions can be found at [www.ncforum.org/doc](http://www.ncforum.org/doc) .