

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Public School Forum Calls for Better Identification and Preparation of School Leaders

After seven months of reviewing the state's programs for preparing new assistant principals and principals for North Carolina's 2400 plus schools, a Study Group of the Public School Forum is calling for succession planning for school leaders that begins with a focus on teacher leaders who have the capacity to become effective school leaders.

The Forum recommendations come as concerns about improving the quality and quantity of effective school leaders have reached a critical level. These concerns have been exacerbated by two trends. The first is the impact of the high stakes of accountability for student performance driven by the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act and the demands of curriculum needs based on skills needed to compete in the global economy of the twenty-first century. The second issue is the impending exodus of large numbers of school principals. Nearly one-half of the State's principals are at, or near, eligibility for retirement and more are retiring each year.

The Forum recommendations come after a review that included looking at succession planning for schools leaders in other states as well as other countries. The review found common denominators in how others identify and prepare school leaders, including early talent identification, succession planning; rigorous screening of candidates; blending academics and field experience; and coaching components.

The Forum report made short and long-term recommendations including:

- Calling on the General Assembly to continue funding the Principals' Executive Program which is slated to lose funding at the end of this fiscal year.
- Proposing a series of Regional Leadership Academies that would be overseen by the NC Education Cabinet.
- Transferring the Center for School Leadership Development under the Education Cabinet.
- Creating a School Leadership Governing Board that would report directly to the Governor and Education Cabinet and be charged with developing a comprehensive program of talent identification and training that would guarantee the state a steady supply of well-qualified school leaders.
- Requiring college and university-based Master's of School Administration (MSA) programs to increase the amount of school-based field experience for candidates for school leadership, providing them with experienced coaches and including early assessment of candidates' leadership capacity.

Public School Forum (cont'd)

“We are seeking to point the way” said Phil Kirk, Forum Board Chair, “along with other such as the State Board of Education, higher education, the General Assembly, as well as Governor Perdue and the Education Cabinet, to meet the challenges of preparing school leaders who have the capacity to be effective twenty-first century leaders and bring school performance in North Carolina to the highest levels possible. We believe the recommendations in this report will do that.”

The Public School Forum is an educational policy and research center that has focused on the schools of North Carolina since 1985. It is a non-profit organization with a sixty-plus person board made up of educators, elected officials, business leaders and others.

Legislative News...

Afterschool and Mentoring Programs Dramatically Reduced in Senate Budget Proposal

For the last two weeks the *Friday Report* has focused on the proposed budget cuts that would eliminate Support our Students (SOS), an afterschool program serving 14,000 students. A closer examination of the Senate budget finds that proposed cuts to afterschool programs go much deeper than that:

- The Senate budget would also eliminate the Governor’s One on One Mentoring Program, a mentoring program focused on young people who have had encounters with the law and are very much at risk of ending up in prison.
- It would cut \$400,000 of support from Boys and Girls programs around the state, decreasing access to afterschool, weekend and summer programs for another large number of young people, and
- It would cut state support to Communities and Schools (CIS) by \$160,750, impacting mentoring service to even more young people.

The *Friday Report* is working to get estimates of the actual number of young people who will lose afterschool or mentoring program support, if the cuts remain in the final state budget.

Three of the proposed program cuts are found in the Juvenile Justice budget and have as their goal giving young people supervised activities during the 3 PM to 6 PM hours when most juvenile crime is committed. Two of them utilize adult mentors to both support young people academically and to provide social and developmental support to at-risk young people.

Bill Seeks to Increase STEM Instruction While Engaging Communities

MCNC, in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is building a scalable and replicable community visioning process focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, now called the North Carolina STEM Community Collaborative.

The intent of the NC STEM Community Collaborative is to identify several North Carolina communities who have much of the present and future economic and social vitality based on STEM careers. In these "STEM Communities", business, policy, economic development, education and community stakeholders will work together to build K12 education plans that relate the education of their community's children to the rich STEM industry and education resources that exist in their region, connect with working models across our state, and map to the needs and standards of the 21st century . The STEM Community Collaborative will help these STEM Communities build and implement a grassroots, sustainable plan that results in rich, engaging STEM education for the community's K12 students.

The focus of House Bill 1085 is to create a study commission on science, technology, engineering, and math innovation and community collaboration. From the knowledge capture, process mapping, and documenting of STEM innovations, the commission will inform the visioning process that other communities in the state can utilize to develop their own plan.

Lead sponsors of the bill are Representatives Glazier, Dickson, Howard and Braxton, and its co-sponsored include Representatives Cotham, Faison, Fisher, Harrison, Hughes, Johnson, Jones, Lucas, McLawhorn, & Rapp. [You can click here for updates on HB 1085 status.](#)

State Health Plan Bill Heads to Conference Committee

The House, this week, approved a taxpayer bailout of more than \$730 million for the health insurance plan for state employees and retirees. The House version, which passed 64-52, would require the state to spend \$730 million from the state operating revenues and highway funds over the next two years to keep the plan afloat. Annual deductibles in the most popular "standard" benefit plan would increase from \$600 a year to \$800 for in-network coverage. While employees continue to be covered at no cost, premiums for their dependents would increase by 10 percent in each of the next two years.

The Senate three weeks ago passed a \$678 million bailout expected to keep health care bills paid through mid-2011. A final version is likely to come out of a House-Senate negotiating committee.

Global Education at Work in NC

St. Patrick's Day came alive for a group of first graders at Carolina Forest Elementary School last month when they learned about the patron saint of Ireland, shamrocks and traditional Irish dishes from NC State University study abroad student and Park Scholar Emily Gray.

Emily interacted from Ireland with students in Jacksonville using web conferencing software. Each could see and hear the other through a computer. Using a PowerPoint presentation, students taught Emily (a Virginia native) about N.C. festivals and influential people, like Caleb Bradham, inventor of Pepsi. In turn, Emily's presentation gave students a taste of Irish holidays and famous people, including hurling star Dan the Man Shanahan.

The lesson was part of Cultural Correspondents, an innovative program that partners university study abroad students with K-8 classrooms in North Carolina and fulfilled several first grade curriculum requirements. Using 21st century communications technologies, university study abroad students are paired with K-8 classrooms to present lessons on their host country, culture, and experiences.

The lessons that study abroad students and their classroom teacher design and share with K-8 classrooms are aligned to classroom concepts and curriculum. Cultural Correspondents, piloted in 2007 by the Center for International Understanding, has since grown to reach more than 1,000 students across North Carolina and has facilitated lessons from more than 15 countries across the world.

To view an excerpt from the 45-minute St. Patrick's Day lesson and other Cultural Correspondent sessions, please [click here](#) and scroll to "Carolina Forest Elementary and Ireland". (Please allow proper time for the video to load)

National News...

Secretary Duncan Calls for More Time in the Classroom

Last week, while visiting two Denver schools, Education Secretary Arne Duncan addressed national school reform and says U.S. children need to be in school more. While touring with Democratic Senator Michael Bennet, who, until January, was superintendent of Denver Public Schools, Secretary Duncan said he believes American schools should be open six days a week, at least 11 months a year, to improve student performance.

Addressing 400 middle and high school students at a public school in northeast Denver, Duncan said, "I fundamentally think that our school day is too short, our school week is too short and our school year is too short. You're competing for jobs with kids from India and China. I think schools should be open six, seven days a week; 11, 12 months a year."

States Look to Raising Taxes to Help with Budget Shortfalls

At least 10 states are considering major increases in sales or income taxes as a way to close their widening budget gaps. Once states tally the latest shortfalls from Wednesday's April 15th income tax filings, fiscal experts believe more states are likely to follow.

Earlier this year lawmakers in Arizona, Connecticut, California, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin agreed to multibillion dollar tax increases. Some lawmakers say they had little choice. "With the size of our budget gap, we are looking at a situation of closing down our courts, releasing prisoners and cutting the school year by as much as a month," said Representative Peter Buckley of Oregon.

While many states remain determined to balance their budgets by relying solely on spending cuts, governors in some states are proposing tax increases. Delaware Governor Jack Markell is looking to raise the marginal income tax rate by one percentage point, to 6.95%, on those earning more than \$60,000 a year, starting in 2010.

In Pennsylvania, where revenue forecasts continue to drop, officials last week said total March tax collections were \$334.5 million, or 7.9% short of expectations. For the fiscal year that began July 1, 2008, collections to date are running \$1.6 billion less than forecast.

Forum News...

Public School Forum Announces Jay Robinson Leadership Award Finalists

Shortly after the death of Dr. Jay Robinson, an esteemed North Carolina educator, the Forum Board of Directors honored him by establishing the Jay Robinson Leadership Award honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to education. Today the Forum announced the names of the three people named as finalists for this year's award. The individual selected will be the ninth recipient of the Award since its inception in 2000. The three award finalists are:

Dr. Dudley Flood, Education Consultant

Dr. Neil Pedersen, Superintendent Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Dr. Shirley Prince, Superintendent Scotland County Schools

In choosing the award winner the Forum looks for the citizen who best exemplifies the leadership traits that were the hallmark of Dr. Jay Robinson. Robinson's career in education spanned fifty years during which time he moved from classroom teacher to university vice president to chair of the State Board of Education. Dr. Robinson was the first President of the Public School Forum when it opened its doors in 1986.

Jay Robinson Leadership Award (cont'd)

“Dr. Robinson will always be remembered for his endless dedication to ending barriers in education for all children, for his leadership at all levels of public education, and for his courage in leading the state in efforts to make North Carolina’s schools second to none,” said Phil Kirk, the Forum’s Board Chair. Former Representative Gene Arnold, Chair of the Selection Committee said, “It is an honor to chair this committee because of the person and leader Jay Robinson was. To know him personally was a highlight of my career.”

The Public School Forum of NC will announce the ninth recipient of the Jay Robinson Leadership Award at a special luncheon at the North Raleigh Hilton on June 8th. In addition to former Representative Gene Arnold, other members of the selection committee are Barbara Allen, Consultant; Jim Barber, Senior Education Advisor, UNC-CH School of Education, Dr. Bob Bridges, 2004 Award Recipient; Dr. Ann Denlinger, President Wake Education

Partnership, 2006 Award Recipient, Gerry Hancock, Former Forum Board Chair; Dr. Bill Harrison, CEO/Chair State Board of Education, 2008 Award Recipient; Craig Hill, Associate Superintendent Wilson County Schools, 2007 Wachovia Principal of the Year; Debra Horton, President, NC PTA; Dawn Shepherd Pope, Wake County Schools; Kathy Taft, Member, State Board of Education; Carr Thompson, Senior Program Officer, Burroughs Wellcome Fund; and Richard Urquhart, Investment Management Corporation.

In honor of Jay Robinson’s legacy of leadership in North Carolina, the recipient will receive a cash award provided by BB&T. Kirk concluded by saying, “The Forum takes great pride in recognizing a ‘Jay Robinson leader’ and in having BB&T as its corporate partner.”

Editor’s Note: Last week’s Friday report story entitled “Preschool Programs Would Be Merged & Cut” stated that the Senate budget proposes moving the *More at Four* program out of DPI and into the Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS), thus merging *More at Four* with *Smart Start*. The Senate budget does not address merging *More at Four* and *Smart Start*.

House Bill 539 does calls to merge the *More at Four* and *Smart Start* early childhood development programs. According to Representative Rapp, “the bill is intended to strengthen the two programs by removing bureaucratic barriers in Raleigh and streamlining access to early childhood education.”

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 .