

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Reflections on Senator Vernon Malone...

Word of Senator Vernon Malone's death touched members of the Forum leadership and staff in very personal ways. To them, Senator Malone wasn't simply a name in the newspaper. He was a friend and a colleague.

For Jo Ann Norris, the Forum's Associate Executive Director, Sen. Malone was a leading member of the Raleigh School Board when she was a teacher in the seventies. She was an elected leader of the local NCAE affiliate when he worked to bring about the merger of the Raleigh City Schools and the Wake County Schools. "During those times," Norris said, "tensions were often high. Sen. Malone was central to the stability and civility of discussions, not only with community leaders but with educators as well. He has always been a champion for equal opportunities for students and teachers. And he was always there. He will be sorely missed."

For Phil Kirk, the Forum Chair, his work with Sen. Malone dates back to his days as Secretary of the Department of Human Resources during the Holshouser and Martin Administrations. The Governor Morehead School where Sen. Malone spent his entire educational career was part of the Department and he and Kirk worked together throughout those years. Remembering those years as well as Sen. Malone's years in the General Assembly, Kirk said, "To say that he championed public education is an understatement."

More recently, Sen. Malone was one of the Senate leaders who asked the Forum and the NC Science, Mathematics and Technology Center to design the five-county collaborative projects designed to strengthen schools in low-wealth counties serving large numbers of disadvantaged kids. John Dornan, the Forum's Executive Director, first met Sen. Malone in the early eighties when he was an elected Wake County official and has worked with him since on a variety of issues. Dornan said, "Vernon cared deeply about all young people, but his most passionate issue was his determination to see more black males succeed in school and life. He has been a true champion for programs aimed at at-risk young people and a voice for those who too often are overlooked."

Phil Kirk, speaking for everyone at the Forum said, "I do not know how the void he leaves in the North Carolina Senate will be filled but we must move ahead. We know that is what Senator Malone would want and he will be watching us. Our prayers go out to his family during this time of extreme sadness and celebration of a life lived to the fullest."

School Officials Urged to Maintain/Expand Summer Sessions

At the same time national education officials and organizations are urging school officials to use federal stimulus dollars to maintain or expand summer learning programs, North Carolina schools are planning on curtailing or cutting summer offerings. The *Raleigh News & Observer* reported this week that schools across North Carolina are planning extensive cuts in summer school programs. Durham, Johnson and Mecklenburg counties are cutting back on summer programs; others, such as Hoke County, intend to cancel summer programs altogether.

Those decisions fly in the face of recommendations coming from federal officials who point to multiple summer school funding options available in the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA). A recent "Idea Paper" issued by the Education Commission of the States, as an example, detailed stimulus funds that could be directed at summer programs. It also encouraged states to ensure that districts receiving Title I School Improvement Fund grants are required to include a summer learning component in their school improvement plan. The briefing paper also reminded school officials that recently appointed U.S. Department of Education Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has made it clear that state and local programs proposing to expand learning time programs could have a competitive edge in securing grants from the competitive Race to the Top fund, a competitive fund included in the ARRA.

School officials wanting advice on accessing new federal dollars for summer school programs should go to ecs@ecs.org to download a copy of the *ECS Idea Paper: American Reinvestment & Recovery Act*. Additional information on ARRA and summer learning can be found at www.summerlearning.org/recovery.

John Dornan, the Forum's Executive Director, said, "For many elementary and high school students, summer programs can mean the difference between passing to the next grade or graduating from high school *versus* having to repeat a year of schooling. For others, summer programs give them an opportunity to move ahead and keep learning in the summer by taking enrichment programs. With federal dollars available, school officials should exhaust all possible funding streams before making a decision to close the door to summer learning."

More on Afterschool Programs Aimed at Curbing Juvenile Crime

Last week's *Friday Report* looked at three programs housed in the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that the Senate has proposed to cut out of next year's budget. The largest, Support our Students (SOS), serves over 14,000 in over 200 programs across the state. This week, the *Friday Report* will take a look at the other two programs.

The first is a competitive grant program that distributes \$400,000 per year to Boys and Girls Clubs that design programs to meet the needs of juveniles who are court-involved or who are at-risk of becoming delinquent. Participants are referred to the program by social service agencies, juvenile courts, mental health agencies, law enforcement officials and others.

Last year, the program served 452 at-risk youth in eight counties, Beaufort, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Halifax, Lee, Pender, Wayne and Wilson. The majority of young people served (73%) are male and 67% are African-American.

More on Afterschool Programs (cont'd)

An assessment of program effectiveness submitted to the General Assembly found that 418 (93%) of the 452 young people participating in the program had no new involvement with law enforcement or the courts during the 2007-08 school year. 91% of the participants improved (43%) or maintained their school grades. The program cost was \$885 per participant per year.

The other program, the Governor's One-on-One mentoring program was created in 1982. It began with 12 programs in June of 1983 and has grown to where it now operates programs in 46 counties across the state.

Like the Boys and Girls grant program, One-on-One is focused on young people at-risk of falling into a pattern of juvenile delinquency. Program participants are referred by juvenile court, school resource officers and law enforcement officials. Program goals include providing structure for court-involved youth; recruiting community volunteers to provide positive adult role models; improving participants' school attendance and performance and reducing juvenile delinquency.

During the 2007-08 school year, 1,152 participants were matched with an adult volunteer/mentor for at least 12 months, spending a total of 70,233 hours in one-on-one mentoring. The 45 programs employed 41 full-time and 35 part-time employees.

Participants were diverse. 54% of participants were female. 34% were white; 56% were African-American and the remaining 14% were classified as Asian, Hispanic, Multiracial or Indian.

The two programs threatened with elimination next year serve over 1,600 young people at-risk of becoming juvenile delinquents. When added together with young people currently served by SOS programs, it is possible that 15,600 plus young people will be without afterschool support services in the coming school year.

Readers wanting the full Annual Evaluation Reports for the Boys & Girls Club programs or for the Governor's One-on-One Mentoring program can find them by going to the North Carolina State Government website and pulling up the publications/reports section of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Guest Editorial...Reprinted with Permission of Chris Fitzsimon

Published: April 16, 2009

by Chris Fitzsimon

Save our students or the booster clubs?

Senate Finance Chairman David Hoyle announced this week that the Senate tax package would be released next Wednesday and it seems all but certain that it will expand the base of sales and income taxes and lower the overall rates.

Save our students (cont'd)

The budget the Senate passed last week counts on 500 million from the revenue plan that makes deep cuts in early childhood programs and public education.

The budget also follows the lead of Governor Beverly Perdue and eliminates Support our Students (SOS), a 15-year-old afterschool program in 92 counties that works with at-risk kids to keep them out of trouble and off the streets, making it less likely they will dropout of school.

North Carolina is recognized around the country for its two signature preschool programs, Smart Start and More at Four, though both are cut in the Senate budget too. But what happens to at-risk kids when they age out of the early childhood programs, especially if the conditions at home that put them at risk in the first place are still present?

That's where SOS comes in, helping 14,000 at-risk kids last year. Some of the students have posted comments about their experience on a website created by supporters of the program.

They are summed up succinctly by one entry. "SOS has helped me understand more about how school is important in my life. SOS has put me in a spot where I can now see my life ahead of me."

Cutting kids off from that extra help and understanding about school saves the state just six million dollars in a 20 billion budget.

Every expenditure adds up and cuts have to come from somewhere, but it's worth considering what the Senate finds money for instead, most notably \$10 million for athletic booster clubs at UNC Chapel Hill and N.C. State.

The windfall comes from a change in the law snuck into the budget in 2005 that allows out of state athletes to pay in-state tuition, which not only saves the booster clubs millions at taxpayers expense, it also means less in-state slots for North Carolina students. Some families lose twice.

Legislation to repeal the booster club subsidy introduced by Rep. Pricey Harrison and Rep. George Cleveland passed the House last session but the Senate never considered it.

Harrison and Cleveland are trying again this year but face even bigger hurdles. The leaders of two powerful political action committees funded by wealthy supporters of UNC-CH and N.C. State were among the new members of the UNC Board of Governors elected by the Senate this year. The PACs have given roughly a million dollars between them to legislative candidates in the last four years.

And it's not just afterschool programs that Senate leaders apparently think are less important than subsidizing the booster clubs with the in-state tuition change.

The Senate budget repeals a tuition waiver at UNC campuses for graduates of the N.C. School of Science and Math, which you can argue is the right policy, but why is it worse to help some high-achieving high school kids than the Rams Club?

The Senate budget also ends free community college classes for senior citizens and inmates in the state prison system trying to acquire skills to get a job when they are released.

Save our schools (cont'd)

It adds up to grossly misplaced priorities in a budget year where there is no room for error or for protection of the well-connected.

It's up to the House to do the right thing and save our students.

Forum News...

Bring A Co-Worker to SYNERGY!

In this last week leading up to NC CAP's annual statewide conference, NC CAP is extending a one-time special offer for registrants to bring a co-worker to attend all conference events on April 30. The special low rate of \$55 is available by calling Katie Biggerstaff at 919-781-6833 ext 132 before the deadline of **Monday, April 27**.

SYNERGY will be held from April 29 – May 1, 2009, at the Koury Center in Greensboro. The conference will feature over 30 workshops that will address current challenges in the field and connect those working in, partnering with, or advocating for afterschool programs with the most recent research and tools.

Keynote speakers will include:

- Heba Salama and Ed Brantley, NBC's *The Biggest Loser* Contestants
- Dr. Robert Schwartz, NC Pediatric Association
- Wendy Miller, 2005-06 NC Teacher of the Year
- LeVelle Moton, NC Central University Men's Basketball Assistant Coach and Boys & Girls Clubs Alumnus
- Mycal King, high school senior moderating the Youth Forum on Afterschool

SYNERGY is held in collaboration with the NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Boys & Girls Clubs, Communities in Schools of NC, and NCSU 4-H Youth Development.

Visit <http://www.nccap.net/about/conference.cfm> for more information and to register, or contact Katie Biggerstaff at 919-781-6833 x132 or kbiggerstaff@ncforum.org.

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