

# *The Public School Forum's Friday Report*

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## **Bills Impacting K-12 Feel Effect of Crossover Deadline**

With the pressure of a self-imposed “crossover” deadline, members of the House and Senate worked marathon legislative sessions Wednesday to clear out hundreds of pending bills. Various bills affecting public education were among those impacted by this week’s frenzy of legislative activity. “Crossover” day in General Assembly parlance is the deadline for bills that do not require new funding. If a non-monetary bill passes in at least one chamber of the General Assembly before or on the crossover deadline date it is eligible for consideration in the other chamber this year and next. If, on the other hand, neither chamber approves a new non-money bill, the issue is dead for this year and next. Subsequently, sponsors and supporters of proposed bills are more than a little frantic as the deadline draws near.

### *Issues Large and Small Receive Legislative Approval*

One of the most widely publicized bills gaining support in both houses this week was a ban on smoking in restaurants and bars. Smokers need to enjoy their right to have a cigarette with after-dinner coffee or an adult beverage of their choice between now and January 2. Starting January 2, smokers will no longer be able to indulge in public restaurants and bars. In three coastal counties, consumers will see an end to plastic bags as part of an experiment encouraging stores to use recyclable paper bags. Turning to education, following are some of this week’s highlights:

#### ***Change School Starting Date – HB 593***

The House voted 79-39 to approve a bill that would allow school systems to begin classes as early as August 8, or the first Monday in August. House Bill 593 would require that a public hearing be held before the school start date is set. In addition, the number of days within the summer vacation period cannot change. Under the current law, passed in 2004, school systems must wait until August 25<sup>th</sup> to hold the first day of class. Bill supporters state the current start date prevents high school students from being able to align their schedules to take dual enrollment courses. The bill was opposed by the tourism industry and will be hotly debated in the Senate.

#### ***Reorganize Schools with High Dropout Rate – HB 1176***

The House supported a proposal that would require high schools with a high drop-out rate to offer or expand Career-Technical Education programs.

## Bills Impacting K-12 (cont'd)

### ***Block Requirement for Graduation Projects – HB 223***

While the State Board of Education, in the face of controversy over upcoming policies requiring high school students to complete a graduation project before receiving a diploma, delayed implementation of the requirement for two years, House members approved an act that would remove the requirement.

### ***Grant Hearing Rights to Dismissed Educators – HB 1292***

House bill 1292 would grant non-certified school employees the right to have attorney representation at any hearing regarding their employment status.

### ***Raise the Charter School Cap – HB 856***

Currently there can be no more than 100 Charter Schools in North Carolina. If supported by the Senate, House bill 656 would authorize the establishment of six additional Charters.

## **Bills/Issues That Did Not Meet the Crossover Deadline**

***Restore Contract Rights to State/Local - HB 750 & SB 427*** – would have repealed the prohibition of collective bargaining for public employees.

***Home Schoolers Participate in School Sports - HB 1116*** – would have permitted home-schooled students to participate in interscholastic athletics.

***Low Academic Performance/No Sports - SB 377*** – would have prohibited participation in interscholastic athletics at schools at which performance is inadequate.

***Obesity Prevention in the Public Schools - SB 977*** – would have established obesity prevention programs in schools.

For a Complete Run Down on the Status of Education Bills at the End of Crossover Week, see the NC Association of School Administrator's "Weekly Bill Action Summary" at: <http://ncasa.net/associations/2410/files/LegLink5-15-09.pdf>.

## **School Governance Bills Remain Alive in Both Houses**

Proposed bills aimed at resolving the school governance issue by placing a proposed constitutional change eliminating the State Superintendent of Public Instruction position on the ballot for a vote of the people remain alive for consideration in both houses. Since placing a constitutional proposition on the ballot would have a cost, these bills can be considered in the coming weeks.

## *This Week at the Forum...*

At the same time members of the General Assembly were working overtime as a result of the crossover deadline, the Forum was buzzing with its own activity. Heading this week's list was the advance preparation for the Teaching Fellow's Annual Discovery Trip that will take 500 rising sophomores across North Carolina to study the state's schools, businesses and culture. (See story at the end of this week's *Friday Report* for itinerary) Preparing for a caravan of college students and facilitators to cross the state is no small task and as the *Friday Report* goes to press, vans are being loaded with supplies and material needed to support the trip.

Earlier in the week, the Forum and the New Schools Project hosted a delegation of educators from St. Louis who came to study North Carolina's early college high schools. The delegation began at the Forum with a briefing on education and high school reform. Forum staff also took part in community meetings in Charlotte and Raleigh. In Charlotte, Kendall Jordan, the Forum's Research Director, presented an overview of testing and accountability to candidates running for local school board and county commissioner seats. The event was sponsored by MeckEd – Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education. In Raleigh, John Dornan, the Forum's Executive Director, also presented an overview on school finance and the current budget situation at a community forum sponsored by Wake Up Wake County.

## Fall-Out from Former Governor Easley Revelations Continue to Grow

After the *Raleigh News & Observer* published a series of extensive articles about former Governor Easley's unreported travel on private jets, what appears to be extensive personal travel during his administration, missing travel logs, a questionable land purchase deal and hiring practices related to a position created at NC State University that was given to the former Governor's wife, the fall-out is mounting.

NC State Provost Larry Nielsen, who recommended Easley's wife for a five year \$850,000 position, resigned this week. Erskine Bowles, the President of the UNC System has asked McQueen Campbell, a close friend and supporter of former Governor Easley whose airplane was frequently made available to the Governor, to step down from his position as Chair of NC State's Board. Campbell was Chair of the Board's Personnel Committee when the position filled by the former Governor's wife was created.

On Thursday, the State Board of Elections requested the Highway Patrol to turn over all records of air travel related to the former Governor and current Governor Purdue has ordered those records to be released. Last but not least, Republicans are calling for a special prosecutor to be appointed to look into the allegations.

## **CMS to Bring in 100 New Teach for America Cadets**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) will bring in 100 new Teach for America cadets for the 2009-10 school year. This decision is raising eyebrows, as the district looks to lay off experienced teachers next school year. Superintendent Peter Gorman believes it's the best move for kids: "They (cadets) would be bumping a teacher who's below standard."

According to Gorman, more than 400 classroom teachers will get layoff notices the week of May 25. Teachers and other employees will be called back if the state, federal or local budget pictures for 2009-10 improves. Job performance will be the biggest factor in deciding which teachers will be cut, Gorman has said, although experience and subject area can also play a role.

The tension emerging in Charlotte is playing out across the country. Applications to Teach for America (TFA) have surged this year, with jobs getting scarce in other fields. Meanwhile, districts that had struggled with teacher shortages in the past, are now finding themselves shedding teachers and in some cases, closing schools.

### ***NC State Board of Education News...***

Governor Beverly Perdue recently announced the reappointments of State Board of Education members Tricia Willoughby of Raleigh and Wayne McDevitt of Marshall to eight year terms. In addition, she has appointed Reginald Kenan of Duplin County and Christine Greene of High Point to the State Board of Education. Kenan owns a law practice and serves on the Duplin County School Board. Greene has worked as a Guilford County high school counselor and led the Guilford Institute for Leadership Development. Because she is filling out a term, Christine Greene's appointment does not have to be confirmed by the NC General Assemble, the other three must.

### ***National News...***

## **Arizona Lawmakers Vote to Halt \$300M in Payments to Schools**

Arizona lawmakers voted Wednesday to plug the state's \$650 million hole in this year's budget with a combination of federal stimulus dollars (\$250 million) and what it is calling "short-term borrowing". The plan, approved by both House and Senate, relies primarily on delaying \$300 million public school aid payments and \$100 million to the three universities, payments that come due in days.

## Arizona Lawmakers (cont'd)

Technically, the payments are only being “delayed” until after July 1, when they will become part of next year’s budget. But the plan includes a provision that could relieve the state of ever having to make up much of the public school funding.

The plan is based on the contention that some schools have accumulated and are banking more dollars than legally allowed. The legislation directs the state Department of Education to check each district’s books and determine if they have “excess” funds and, if so, how much. If they do, then the state is off the hook from having to repay that amount.

### *Forum News...*

## SYNERGY Unites Afterschool Community, Unveils New Standards

Over 350 afterschool providers, community leaders, and elected officials attended NC CAP’s annual statewide SYNERGY conference in Greensboro from April 29 – May 1. During a May 1 luncheon, the Move More Afterschool Collaborative, a statewide group led by the NC Division of Public Health, launched new statewide standards for physical activity in afterschool programs. Keynote speakers included Dr. Robert Schwartz, NC Pediatric Association and Wake Forest University, along with Heba Salama and Ed Brantley, NBC’s *The Biggest Loser* Contestants.

“Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic,” said Dr. Schwartz, in referencing the rising Type 2 diabetes rates in children. “Afterschool programs can help kids stay active and healthy.” A news clip of the event is viewable through Channel Two news in Greensboro. Visit [http://www.digtriad.com/news/local\\_state/article.aspx?storyid=123396](http://www.digtriad.com/news/local_state/article.aspx?storyid=123396) and click the link on the right side of the screen to watch the video. The Move More Afterschool standards are available for download at: <http://www.nccap.net/documents/NCAfterSchoolStandardsFINAL.pdf>.

During a Youth Forum on Afterschool, a panel of 11 children and youth from across the state shared with elected officials their vision of a high quality afterschool program. “The Forum empowered youth to address their community leaders and elected officials about the importance of keeping quality afterschool programs available during these tough economic times, when parents and communities need extra support,” said NC CAP Director Jamie Knowles. “Over forty thousand of North Carolina’s youth depend on afterschool programs that keep them safe after school, promote learning, and help working families.”

## SYNERGY (cont'd)

Other keynote speakers included:

- 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

The conference also featured over 30 workshops that addressed current challenges in the field and connected those working in, partnering with, or advocating for afterschool programs with the most recent research and tools. 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.

## Teaching Fellows Head out on 22<sup>nd</sup> Discovery Trip

This weekend, 500 rising sophomore North Carolina Teaching Fellows from 16 campuses will begin a week-long tour of the state. The Discovery trip was designed to broaden the perspectives of the Fellows by introducing them to the economy, the schools, and the people of North Carolina. The Teaching Fellows Commission hopes that the tour will instill in the Fellows knowledge about and an appreciation of North Carolina and its people through a unique, interactive experience.

Fellows will get the opportunity to see the diversity of our state's land and people, and the impact that economic conditions and regional culture have upon schools. The Teaching Fellows Commission's goal is to have Fellows understand that, in addition to teaching, they also are going into communities where they will be contributing citizens.

What follows is a map of the counties they will visit as well as the itinerary they will follow:

### **Day 1 – Sunday, May 17th:**

- Registration / Check in at NCCU
- Opening Session Speaker: Mr. Demond "De" McKenzie, Teaching Fellows Commission
- Video Presentation: *Trends & Challenges Facing Our State*
- Bus Meetings
- Second General Session: The Honorable June S. Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

## Teaching Fellows (cont'd)

### Day 2 – Monday, May 18th:

- School Visits: Caswell, Granville, KIPP Preparatory, Northampton, North Raleigh Charter High, Roanoke Rapids, Piedmont Community College, Person, Pitt, Torchlight Academy, Vance, Weldon City, Wake, Wilson
- Business Visits: Harperprints, Inc., NCAE, Palace Pointe, Plastic Ingenuity, Inc., ViQuest-Pitt Memorial Hospital
- Cultural/Historical: Caswell Co. Courthouse and Museum, H. Perry Leslie Library, Imagination State Science Museum, Northampton Cultural Arts & Wellness Center
- Other Visits: Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park
- Buses arrive at ECU

### Day 3 – Tuesday, May 19th:

- School Visits: Beaufort, Brunswick, Camp Lejeune Dependent, Clinton City, Duplin, Hyde, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico, Sampson, Sampson Community College, Washington
- Business Visits: Chestnutt Farms, Duplin Winery, River Landing, Salem Pizza, Sturgeon City, Zeng's Pizza
- Cultural / Historical: Ocean Isle Museum & Ingram Planetarium, Sampson Regional Health Center, Sampson Partnership for Children, Somerset Plantation, Dr. Victor Small House
- Other Visits: Goose Creek State Park, NC Justice Academy, Military Operations in Urban Training, Trent River
- Buses arrive at UNC-Pembroke

### Day 4 – Wednesday, May 20th:

- School Visits: Anson, Cabarrus, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Columbus, Cumberland, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Richmond Community College, Scotland, Whiteville City, Union
- Business Visits: Carolina Hotel, Concord Mills, Lowe's Motor Speedway
- Cultural / Historical: Airborne & Special Operations Museum, Hamlet Train Depot, JAARS Alphabet Museum, Jesse Helms Center, Wadesboro Rotary Planetarium & Science Center
- Buses Arrive at UNC-Charlotte

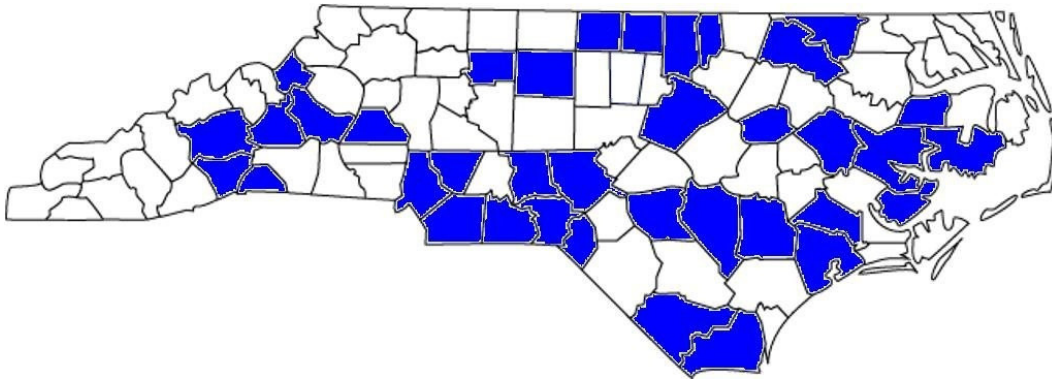
### Day 5 – Thursday, May 21st:

- School visits: Asheville City, Burke, Catawba, Grandfather Academy, Guilford, Henderson, Hickory City, McDowell, Newton-Conover, Polk, Winston-Salem/Forsyth
- Business : Hickory Metro Higher Education Center, Johnson Farms
- Cultural / Historical: Arts & Science Center for Catawba Valley, Greensboro Children's Museum, Trail of Faith, Winston-Salem Visitors Center
- Other Visits: Children's Center for Physically Handicapped, Lake James State Park, Randolph Learning Center
- Buses arrive at UNC-Charlotte
- RoadShow 2009

## Teaching Fellows (cont'd)

### Day 6 – Friday, May 22nd:

- Final Bus Meetings
- Closing Session Speaker: Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Recognitions
- Final Reflections
- Buses Depart for home



*\*Shaded areas are counties to be visited on Discovery 2009.*

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