

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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House Unveils Proposed Budget; Draconian Cuts in All Areas of Government

Against the backdrop of this week's calls for a balanced approach to dealing with this year's budget crisis, the House Committees unveiled their proposed budget package on Thursday. Virtually no area of state government was spared with cuts ranging from over 20% in areas like Juvenile Justice to 15% in K-12.

Over the weekend, Appropriations Co-Chairs are expected to make final budget adjustments and it is expected that House members will be asked to vote on a full budget proposal during the coming week. While rumors abound about considerations to raise additional tax revenue, as of yet no specific proposals have surfaced.

Education Groups Band Together In Support of Balanced Budgeting Approach

Monday of this week saw the state's major educational organizations standing together and calling on the General Assembly to balance program cuts with increased taxes to avoid deep cuts into education, health care and social programs. Speaking on behalf of the five organizations was Debra Horton, President of the state PTA.

The groups that came together included the PTA, the North Carolina Association of Educators, Association of School Administrators, the School Boards Association and the Public School Forum. The primary message of the groups was that cutting the state's way out of the recession would only lead to educational setbacks that would take years to recover from. See the joint news statement issued by the group by following going to:

<http://www.ncforum.org/doclib/June%201%20press%20conference%20-%20post%20conference%20release%20-%20all%20logos.doc> .

Over Eighty State Organizations Also Call for Balanced Budgeting Approach

On Tuesday, over sixty organizations joined together to repeat the plea to the General Assembly to balance the budget with a combination of revenue increases and cuts. This coalition, like the coalition of educational groups, pointed to the negative ramifications of slashing governmental programs, especially those serving the state's neediest citizens. Included in the coalition are:

AARP NC, ACORN-NC, Albemarle Area United Way, Alcohol and Drug Council of NC, American Friends Service Committee, Association for Home and Hospice Care, Autism Society of NC, Be Healthy Ministries, Inc., Capital Area Friends of Transit, Carolina Justice Policy Center, Center for Participatory Change, CFED, CFSA-NC, Child Care Health Consultant Program, Children First / Communities in Schools of Buncombe County, Common Cause NC, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Fayetteville, Covenant with North Carolina's Children, Inc., Disability Action Network, Disability Rights NC, EITC Carolinas at MDC, Inc., El Pueblo, Inc., Fair Trial Initiative, F.I.R.S.T., First in Families of NC, Friends of Residents in Long Term Care, Girls Incorporated of Wilmington, Good Work, Guilford County Acorn, IDA and Asset Building Collaborative of NC, League of Women Voters NC,

Legal Services of Southern Piedmont, MDC, Inc., Mental Health Association of NC, NAMI NC, NAMI Cabarrus County, NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina, National Association of Social Workers – NC Chapter, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, NC Adult Day Services Association, NC AFL-CIO, NC Association of Local Health Directors, NC Center for Nonprofits, NC Child Care Coalition, NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, NC Coalition to End Homelessness, NC Community Action Association, NC Conservation Network, NC Council of Churches, NC Fair Share, NC Housing Coalition, NC Justice Center, NC Latino Coalition, NC Minority Support Center, NC NAACP, NC Psychological Association, NC School Community Health Alliance, NC Voters for Clean Elections, NCAE, North Carolina National Organization for Women (NC NOW), North Carolinians Against Gun Violence, Planned Parenthood of Central NC, Rocky Mount OIC, SEANC / SEIU 2008, Self-Help Credit Union, Southlight Inc./NC Substance Abuse Federation, The Arc of North Carolina, The Coalition, Triangle Alliance of Retired Americans, Triangle OWL, United Way of North Carolina, and UE 150- NC Public Service Workers Union.

CEO of Public Schools Calls for Tax Hikes

Adding his voice to the growing chorus calling for North Carolina to soften the cuts to state government programs was newly appointed CEO of Public Schools, Dr. Bill Harrison, who not only called on the General Assembly to consider tax hikes but urged them to rethink some cuts currently under consideration for education. Specifically, he asked legislators to leave current class size regulations in place for K-3 classrooms.

Teaching Fellow Named Teacher Advisor to the Governor

Donald Barringer was introduced by Dr. Bill Harrison at this week's State Board of Education meeting as Governor Perdue's Teacher Advisor. A 2002 graduate of North Carolina Central University, Barringer is a North Carolina Teaching Fellow as well as a fellow of the North Carolina Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP).

Barringer has taught at Pearisontown Year Round Elementary School in Durham Public Schools for the past 7 years and served as an adjunct instructor at NCCU's School of Education from 2007-08.

Barringer has said of his recent appointment, "I am excited about the opportunity to serve on behalf of North Carolina teachers. From the classroom to the Governor's office is a dream that was unimaginable." As the state's first male to serve as North Carolina's Teacher Advisor to the Governor, he looks forward to utilizing his prior experiences and working with Governor Perdue.

Sixteen States Enact Tax Increases; Seventeen More Considering New Taxes

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reports that sixteen states confronting the same kind of budget deficits facing North Carolina have already enacted new taxes to help them weather the economic downturn. Seventeen more are considering revenue-raising options to close budget gaps.

In New York and Hawaii high-income earners have seen their income rates increase; California has broadened its sales tax base and Wisconsin has enacted corporate tax reforms. Elsewhere, the Florida legislature voted to expand revenue-generating gambling and several states are considering establishing sports betting to generate more tax revenue.

NC Joins Effort to Draft Common Education Standards

Governor Perdue, State Board of Education Chairman and CEO Bill Harrison and State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson announced this week that North Carolina has joined 48 other states in a national effort to develop a common core of state education standards. The Governor, Dr. Harrison, and Dr. Atkinson have signed and submitted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that enables the state to formally join the initiative. The National Governors Association and the Council for Chief State School Officers have partnered to facilitate this state-led effort.

NC Joins Effort to Draft Common Ed Standards (cont'd)

The new common core state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 will be aligned with college and work expectations and will include rigorous content and skills. Standards will be internationally-benchmarked and based on research and best practices. The set of college and career ready standards should be completed by July while grade-by-grade standards work should be finished in December.

This is not the first time North Carolina has participated in a national effort geared toward creating new educational standards. The state is one of 35 to join the American Diploma Project (ADP), which works to align standards with college and career expectations. As part of its involvement with this group, North Carolina has administered the ADP Algebra II End-of-Course exam this year in a random sample of schools across the state. Because the same test is administered in other states, North Carolina students' performance and progress can be compared with results from students across the country. Once this national test aligned with ADP mathematics benchmarks is finalized, North Carolina will consider adopting the assessment.

Study Shows Why CMS Teachers Request Transfers

A study released last week by an associate professor of labor economics at Cornell University shows better teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system were quick to request transfers in 2002 when they realized a new student assignment plan would resegregate many schools.

The study by C. Kirabo Jackson looked at teacher movement between the spring of 2002 and the fall of 2003 when Charlotte stopped its long-running policy of busing students to keep schools racially diverse. Because the switch happened suddenly and without a corresponding change in neighborhood demographics, Jackson claims it is "the first compelling evidence" to show the direct relationship between the racial makeup of a school and teacher-quality without the distraction of other variables that can cloud an analysis.

Jackson's report, published in the *Journal of Labor Economics*, said both black and white teachers who were considered good tended to leave in anticipation of schools becoming mostly black. According to research cited in [Education Week](#), there is a growing body of research showing students in high-poverty schools and students from minority groups tend to have teachers who are considered, on average, to be of lower quality than those in wealthier suburban schools.

Charlotte began paying its teachers additional money to work in higher-poverty schools after it changed its reassignment plan. The recession has put that money in jeopardy, however, and test scores in most of those schools still lag significantly.

Kenan Fellows Program Receives NSF Grant

Outstanding public school teachers in 11 North Carolina counties will partner with leading researchers to develop new curricula for schools across the state through teacher fellowships established by a \$1.5 million National Science Foundation grant to the Kenan Fellows Program.

The Kenan Fellows Program for Curriculum and Leadership Development, an initiative of the Kenan Institute for Engineering, Technology & Science at North Carolina State University, has received an NSF grant to establish fellowships for the most outstanding K-12 teachers in the 11-county Base Realignment and Closure/Regional Task Force area.

The five year grant from NSF's Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program will allow the Kenan Master Teaching Fellows Program (KMTF) to link experienced teachers with university, industry and community college researchers and to join with local stakeholders to build a sustainable initiative. As a result of this grant, teachers will become more informed about important new scientific developments, building their leadership skills and develop curricula that support economic development sectors unique to the region, such as aerospace, sustainable energy/green technologies and advanced medical technologies.

The KMTF will complete two-year fellowships, then engage in a range of leadership activities in their home districts including assisting in the preparation of new teachers.

National News...

Senate Incentive Bill Supports 21st Century Skills

States offering students curriculum options that integrate key 21st-century skills would receive matching federal funds through an incentive bill introduced in the U.S. Senate last month by West Virginia Democrat John D. Rockefeller IV. According to a press release from Rockefeller's office, the legislation was developed using ideas generated from West Virginia educators and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which researched and surveyed the skills students need in the classroom to remain competitive for the future.

The bill (S.1029), which is co-sponsored by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and John Kerry (D-Mass), suggests several areas where states could expand their curricula to encompass 21st century skills, such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civil literacy; and health and wellness awareness.

If passed, the bill would appropriate \$100 million a year for the U.S. Department of Education to pass on to states that have developed a comprehensive plan for implementing a statewide 21st century skills initiative and are able to supply matching funds for their initiative.

2008-09 EPFP Fellows Reflect on the Year

This year saw the largest ever class of North Carolina fellows in the Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP). Several of the 2008-09 EPFP fellows wanted to take a moment to reflect on their experience as well as thank those who made the program such a rewarding experience.

“As a new person to the state level of education, EPFP provided me the time and opportunity to meet key policy leaders in the state. This will enable me to perform my job at a level that is needed for me in my efforts to make a difference each day of work.” – *Angela Quick, Assistant State Superintendent/Deputy Chief Academic Officer, NC Dept of Public Instruction*

“The EPFP experience allowed me to better understand the etiology and protocol of policy making and its impact on education. In addition the opportunity to meet and interact with others from a variety of roles and positions within the field of education was very valuable. – *Don Phipps, Executive Director, Student Services, Cumberland County Schools*

“I had the great privilege of attending the program this year. It had many highlights and fabulous opportunities, including a budget buster exercise where we had to figure out how to balance the state's budget. I think, however, that my entire class would agree that one of the most valuable parts of the experience was the opportunity to build relationships with an amazing group of people truly committed to improving education. – *Wendy Kuhn, Director, Program Management, MCNC*

“EPFP provided us with the opportunity to learn from our State's educational policy makers and leaders about the complexity and potential to make our educational system number one in the nation! More importantly, it allowed us to develop a network of fellow educators that are passionate, creative, and eager to participate in the mission to ensure that our students are prepared to be successful Global Citizens! It's a once in a life time experience!!! - *Virginia L. Cárdenas, Ed.D., Magnet Grant Director, Wake County Public Schools*

The 2008-09 class completed its 10-month weekly seminar sessions on May 12. The class' graduation will be held on October 27, 2009 at the Cardinal Club in downtown Raleigh. Applications are now being accepted for the 2009-10 class of fellows. The ten month seminar program meets weekly on Tuesday night from 5:30 to 8:30 pm from September 15, 2009 to May 11, 2010. The program addresses issues related to policy and leadership development. North Carolina boasts almost 600 EPFP alumni. The program seeks high energy individuals committed to enhancing their professional career through networking and exploring leadership and policy in the "real" world. An application may be obtained at the Forum's website. Go to www.ncforum.org and click on EPFP. The deadline is July 31st. Don't delay. Apply today!

Fun Facts...

Twitter Invades the NC State Board of Education

During the State Board of Education's committee meetings as well as the meeting of the full Board on Thursday, it was announced that several members of the audience were "tweeting" the board's activities. Vanessa Jeter, Director of Communications and Information Services at the Department of Public Instruction was providing constant updates on the Board's actions through the popular social networking site www.twitter.com. 'Followers', as they are called on the website were able to stay informed on the site as well as follow the agenda and action taken by the Board Members.

Other organizations in attendance that were also "tweeting" updates to their members include the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), NC Association of School Administrators (NCASA), and NC Principals and Assistant Principals Association (NCPAPA).

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