

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Ed Oversight Hears Recession's Impact on Public Schools

This week State Superintendent June Atkinson addressed the Education Oversight Committee regarding the state's budget and the recession's impact on North Carolina public schools. Atkinson highlighted some of the reductions to the state's public school budget (9.5% total) by grouping them into four major areas:

1. Elimination of Programs such as Improving Student Accountability and Literacy coaches (FY 2009-10: \$50.4M and FY 2010-11: \$50.4M)
2. Permanent Reductions to Programs (FY 2009-10: \$34M and FY 2010-11: \$34M)
3. Non-Recurring Reductions to Programs (FY 2009-10: \$449.8M and FY 2010-11: \$510.3M)
4. Recurring LEA Adjustment (negative reserve), where 79% of this was taken from classroom teachers / teacher assistants (FY 2009-10: \$225M and FY 2010-11: \$304.8M)

Atkinson pointed out that after the above budget reductions, public schools have few state paid personnel and less state funding. Examples included:

1. Classroom teachers (2,466 fewer teachers)
2. Teacher assistants (estimated 1,521.5 fewer assistants)
3. Instructional support (estimated 108 fewer counselors, social workers, etc.)
4. Career Tech (CTE) (estimated 142 fewer CTE teachers)

Atkinson's presentation also included an explanation of federal stimulus dollars, including key points to consider such as (1) funding cannot be used to cover all state and local reductions, (2) funding is not recurring and will be gone in two years, and (3) funding comes with significant monitoring and report requirements without administrative funding to support this requirement. In closing, she warned that with all the reductions and the elimination of the federal recovery funding in FY 2011-12, there is a very real possibility of a major funding gap in the future.

NC Students Show Progress; Outperforming Others Nationwide

The biennial National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) released Wednesday by the federal government shows North Carolina fourth-graders improving their average score from 242 in 2007 to 244 (on a 500-point scale). This is 5 points above the average score for public school students in the nation (239). While there was no change for eight-graders who scored an average of 284, they too were 2 points above the national average (282).

While male and female students in North Carolina scored similarly in 2009, there continues to be gaps between different racial groups. Black students had an average score that was 28 points lower than white students at the fourth grade level and 35 points lower at the eighth grade level. Likewise, Hispanic students had an average score that was 18 points lower than white students in fourth grade and 23 points lower in eighth grade. Students who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals had lower scores than students who did not qualify. At the fourth grade level, that gap was 23 points. At the eighth grade, the gap was 30 points. None of these gaps appeared to narrow in 2009 for our State or the nation.

For more information on this week's NAEP scores, please contact the NC Department of Public Instruction's Communication office or [click here for the 4th grade snapshot report](#) and [click here for the 8th grade report](#).

JOBS Commission Holds First Meeting

The Joint Legislative Joining Our Businesses and Schools (JOBS) Commission held its first meeting on Monday and Tuesday of this week. The JOBS Commission was established in the 2009 legislative session in a bill sponsored by the late Senator Vernon Malone. The Commission is charged in the legislation with studying issues related to economic development through innovative schools and through the recreation of measures and metrics that define the readiness of a community to deliver the services that equip the workforce to be competitive in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) intensive economy.

The Commission's Chair is Lt. Governor Walter Dalton. The Senate appointments are Sen. A. B. Swindell, Senate Vice-Chair, Sen. Harry Brown, Sen. Tony Foriest, Swadesh Chatterjee, Felicia Watson, Robert Beichner and Mike Murphy. House appointments include Rep. Rick Glazier, House Vice-Chair, Rep. Doug Yongue, Rep. Van Braxton, Joe Crocker, Caroline McCullen, Laura Bingham, Grant Godwin and Dr. Susan Purser. The Governor's appointments are Dr. Bill Harrison and Pamela Townsend. Howard Lee, Executive Director of the Education Cabinet, is an ex officio member. Advisors to the Commission are Sen. Fletcher Hartsell, Joe Freddoso, Karl Rectanus and Dr. Sam Houston.

JOBS Commission (cont'd)

Lt. Governor Walter Dalton opened the meeting by saying that the state must be more earnest in creating specialty high schools and drawing up courses that match the needs of growing businesses. He explained that the JOBS Commission is designed as a nearly three-year effort to expand "early college" high schools and align them more closely with high-in-demand careers.

"The early college program has had success so far, but I think it needs to be a little more focused," said the Lt. Governor. North Carolina already has 70 early college schools - the most in any state nationwide. Lt. Governor Dalton was the chief sponsor of the 2003 bill that helped create the early college schools with the backing of then-Gov. Mike Easley. They provide technical or academic programs designed to help students obtain both a high school diploma and college credit or an associate's degree with only one extra year of high school, and without paying for college tuition. The schools often concentrate on studies for broader, growing fields statewide such as biotechnology and health care so students can get a job when they graduate if they choose. Other high schools have focused aggressively on math and science classes to prepare students for four-year colleges through teaching techniques that emphasize critical thinking and confidence-building.

The JOBS Commission's charge is ambitious. Lawmakers who approved the bill creating the panel directed the Commission to recommend by March four potential career areas that could serve the employment and work force preparation needs of the state and its seven regions. Commission members plan to visit each region over the next eight months. The State Board of Education would develop at least one specialty high school in each of the regions as early as next fall and no later than fall 2011.

The JOBS Commission will hold its second meeting in Williamson on November 18. For more information contact the Commission legislative staff member Dr. Shirley Iorio at Shirley.iorio@ncleg.net.

Worldview Celebrates International Education Week

International Education Week (IEW), started in 2000, celebrates international education and international exchange. IEW, celebrated November 16-20th, promotes international understanding and builds support for international educational exchange, better preparing Americans to live, work, collaborate, and compete in a global environment. IEW is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education.

Worldview Celebrates (cont'd)

The International Education Week 2009 website iew.state.gov has officially been launched, and includes promotional materials, an interactive quiz, and opportunities to post and view planned events around the world. IEW also has an active presence on the social networking sites *Facebook* and *ExchangesConnect*. *ExchangesConnect* promotes mutual understanding and exchange among people worldwide. It is administered by the U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

World View believes that every week should be International Education Week. Teachers in North Carolina's schools and colleges are educating students for a global society every day. This year World View will work with its 14,000th educator and has formal partnerships with over 80 schools, school systems, and community colleges from across the state. These partners have a commitment to global education and to preparing students to study, work, and live in an interconnected world. For more information, [click here](#).

National News ...

Congress Declares October 2009 National Principals Month

Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA) has introduced a resolution (H. Res. 811) this week marking October 2009 as National Principals Month to honor principals for their contributions to student success. The resolution was introduced in large part due to the efforts of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

“Principals play an essential role in the causes of closing the achievement gap and improving student performance overall,” Rep. Davis said. “In fact, teachers often cite management as the deciding factor on whether they accept a position or stay at a school. I am proud to introduce a resolution in Congress to honor principals and give them the recognition they deserve.”

During National Principals Month, NASSP will honor the 2009 state principals of the year and the 2010 MetLife-NASSP National Middle Level Principal of the Year Sheila Kahrs and 2010 MetLife-NASSP National High School Principal of the Year Lucy Beckham.

EPFP Graduation Reminder

The NC EPFP Annual Graduation Celebration honoring the 2008-09 EPFP Graduates will be held on **Tuesday, October 27**, at the Cardinal Club, which is located on the twenty-eighth floor, Wachovia Building, 150 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, NC. The reception will begin at 5:30 pm, followed by the dinner and program at 6:30 pm. The keynote speaker will be Mrs. Muriel Summers, principal of A.B. Combs Elementary School in Raleigh. Mrs. Summers is featured in Stephen Covey's best-selling book, *"The Leader in Me"* and was recently featured in an article in the News & Observer. There are a limited number of tickets available for non-EPFP Fellows/Sponsors on a first come, first serve basis. Tickets are \$40. For more information, please contact Claire Ancelet at 919-781-6833 or email her at cancelet@ncforum.org.

Invitation to All for Ann McColl's "Constitutional Tales"

This week the 2009-10 North Carolina EPFP Fellows had the opportunity to learn about the history of our State's Constitution and its implications on education through Ann McColl's "Constitutional Tales". The Tales gave listeners the history behind the 3 versions of our state's Constitution, including the existence of the long ballot and the right to a "general and uniform" education (the only state in the nation with this right in their Constitution).

On Thursday, November 5 at 7:30 p.m., you have to opportunity to see a special presentation of Constitutional Tales at the State Capitol. Playwright Ian Finley and local actors will join Ann McColl in bringing to life some of the remarkable history of the education provisions in the North Carolina Constitution. Participants will occupy the space where the 1868 Constitutional Convention was held. Ann encourages you, if interested, to register for a delegate's seat as soon as possible. Gallery seating will be available on a first-come first-served basis. To reserve a delegate seat, call the Capitol at 919-733-4994 or e-mail state.capitol@ncdcr.gov.

For your official invitation, visit www.constitutionaltales.net. The website will be officially launched in 2010; however, they will be posting more information and resources about the Tales close to this event, so please return to the site.

Did You Know...

Redistricting and Its Impact on Legislative Seats

Wake and Mecklenburg counties, along with counties surrounding them, stand to gain more political power after the next census, according to a statewide analysis by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. UNC's Program on Public Life used Census Bureau population projections to determine the possible breakdown of House and Senate seats following the 2010 session. Lawmakers will use data from next year's census to redraw the boundaries of legislative districts in 2011.

Wake County, which grew by nearly 50 percent since the last census, stands to gain one Senate seat and at least two House seats, according to the report. Durham and Johnston counties should each pick up a Senate seat, while Cumberland County could gain a Senate seat but lose a House seat. After the 2000 Census, the state's 50 Senate districts had an ideal population of about 161,000, and the 120 House districts were drawn to have about 67,000 people each. In 2010, Senate districts will grow to encompass a population of more than 191,000 and House districts of nearly 80,000.

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