

# *The Public School Forum's Friday Report*

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## *State Revenue Watch . . .*

It was reported this week that state tax collections were 1% lower than projected in the 2009-1010 budget adopted in the 2009 Session. The report covered the first quarter of the State's fiscal year which runs from July 1 through June 30. This year's collections were 4% lower than last year's. Anticipated drops in revenue collections prompted Governor Perdue to order a deeper round of budget cuts soon after the General Assembly adjourned its 2009 Session. The question now is whether those cuts will provide enough of a buffer for the State; or, will deeper cuts be needed?

## *Did You Know?*

Speaking of the state budget, as more people begin to understand the current budget, there is growing anxiety around what will happen at the end of the 2010-11 fiscal and school year. To cope with the projected \$4.46 billion shortfall in the 2009-2010 budget, the General Assembly:

- Cut spending by \$1.67 billion
- Used Federal stimulus assistant funds of \$1.4 billion
- Increased fees and transferred funds to the tune of \$364 million, and
- Passed temporary taxes scheduled to end after 2010-11 raising \$1 billion.

If federal stimulus funds end as scheduled and if temporary taxes are not renewed, tax revenue will have to grow by 27% in order for the State to maintain services at today's levels. Given economic forecasts predicting that revenue levels are not likely to recover until 2013-14, without very thoughtful planning and action on the part of the Administration and General Assembly, the State could be facing two-to-four of the most challenging budgeting years in recent history.

## America's Promise, CIS, & DPI Host Graduation Summit

In partnership with America's Promise, Communities In Schools of NC and the NC Department of Education issued a "Call to Arms" Thursday to ensure youth of North Carolina graduate. Supported by America's Promise and corporate sponsors AT&T, GlaxoSmithKline, State Farm Insurance, and Walmart, the goal of the NC Graduation Summit was to generate solutions to curb the dropout crisis. This week's Summit, held Thursday at the McKimmon Center, is one of 100 such events nationwide in which local leaders will develop workable solutions to prepare our youth for success in college, work and life – starting with a high school diploma.

With over 450 statewide participants, the Summit brought together Leadership Teams consisting of three to five representatives from each county in North Carolina. After hearing from such inspiring speakers at Cynthia Marshall, President of AT&T NC, Lt. Governor Walter Dalton, State Superintendent June Atkinson and CIS founder Bill Milliken, attendees were tasked with participating on *Community Action Workgroups* focused on improving graduation rates for students in their county/region.

In addition, participants were given the opportunity to visit with 50 information stations: programs, initiatives and organizations from NC that provide replicable, proven, research-based strategies and solutions. Station representatives included: Action for Children NC, All Kinds of Minds, the NC New Schools Project and the NC Center for Afterschool Programs.

## Charlotte Forum Focuses on Ensuring Quality In Hard-to-Staff Schools

Earlier this week the Charlotte League of Women Voters, and the UNC-Charlotte College of Education co-sponsored a forum called "Keeping Teachers Teaching: Ensuring Quality and Stability in All Schools." Since returning to a neighborhood school student assignment process, Charlotte has faced greater and greater challenges in attracting and keeping high quality teachers in its low-performing inner-city schools.

Eric Hirsch, Director of Special Projects for the New Teacher Center, began the program by sharing the responses of teachers in Charlotte on the most recent working conditions survey. Over two-thirds of Charlotte's teachers responded to the survey and the results pinpointed school-by-school problem areas that, if addressed, could improve teacher retention rates over time. Frequent problems that surfaced included teachers feeling that they were not given adequate support by school principals and findings that the system's mentoring program was not providing adequate support to new teachers.

## Charlotte Forum (cont'd)

The Forum's Executive Director, John Dornan followed with examples of schools that were using innovative approaches to build a sense of community that creates a climate in which teachers want to remain. Dr. May Lynne Calhoun, Dean of UNC Charlotte's School of Education and Dr. Cathy Hammond, the Principal of Thomasboro Elementary School, described new approaches being promoted through the university and the school system. In Charlotte, as elsewhere, recruitment and retention problems are very uneven throughout the system. Schools in more affluent, middle-class neighborhoods tend to have few recruitment problems and higher retention rates while schools serving low-income, minority students find recruitment and retention are major challenges.

## NC is Named a Top Ten State for Afterschool Programs

In 2009, North Carolina families were surveyed to see how many children are in afterschool programs, how many are unsupervised after school and how these numbers measure up to five years ago. Comparatively strong participation in afterschool programs by North Carolina youth, along with high satisfaction rates among their parents, has landed the State in the Afterschool Alliance's newly named "Top 10 States for Afterschool Programs" list. The "Top 10 States for Afterschool" in the new report are: Hawaii, Arizona, New York, California, New Jersey, Virginia, New Mexico, Florida, Texas and North Carolina. The ranking is based on data from the landmark [America After 3PM](#) study, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

*America After 3PM* found that 12 percent of North Carolina schoolchildren are enrolled in afterschool programs, up from 10 percent in 2004. "North Carolina is making progress on afterschool, and can be proud of that," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "But the data also show another side of the story. The majority of North Carolina parents who want their kids in afterschool programs aren't able to find them, usually because programs aren't available, they can't afford the fees, or transportation issues make it impossible. These are all barriers we can and should overcome."

Although there has been an increase in the number of North Carolina children attending afterschool programs over the last five years, today 31 percent of the state's schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons, and another 13 percent are in the care of their brothers or sisters. In addition, the parents of 36 percent of children not already in afterschool say they would enroll their kids in a program if one were available.

The data underscore that, despite some progress, we still have significant work ahead if we are to make quality afterschool programs available to every child in this state," said Jamie Knowles, Director of the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs. "Too many children who need afterschool programs don't have them, and families are carrying a heavier burden as a result. That's particularly difficult during these hard economic times. For afterschool programs to meet the huge unmet demand from families, they're going to need more support from all sectors - from the business and philanthropic communities, as well as from the government at all levels."

## **Eight State Network Mets to Share Best Practices**

Last week, the Columbia Group, a network of eight southeastern states which meets semi-annually to share best practices and innovative educational policy initiatives, convened their fall meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. The Group, started in 1995, was created to be a network of “Forum-like” organizations focused on school reform.

Members had the opportunity to hear from a panel made up of Atlanta-area principals and associate superintendents about the outcomes their schools are experiencing as a result of implementing the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards’ *Take One!* program school-wide. *Take One!*, a component of national Board Certification, provides a standards-based approach for improving teaching practice and linking student learning to effective instruction. “We have less isolation (after Take One!). We go out into the hallway and talk to each other more,” said Darryl Felker, Principal of Mount Olive Elementary School.

Lydia Logan and Karen Elzey, vice presidents/executive directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW) came and spoke to the Columbia Group members about their Business LEADs network. The Business LEADs network is a national network of business leaders who work collaboratively with experts, elected officials and other stakeholders dedicated to improving education and workforce development in America. With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, ICW is working to develop and support the network using a tiered approach, which will include a Leadership Course, various working groups, and events. For more information on the Business LEADs network, [click here](#).

The meeting concluded with state sharing as well as some best practices being shared with several new organizations designed around the same ideas/goals as those of other Columbia Group organizations. For more information on the Columbia Group, and a list of its members, go to the Forum’s website at: <http://www.ncforum.org/initiatives/columbiagroup.aspx> .

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

## **U.S. Secretary Calls for Teacher Training Changes**

U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan’s call for “revolutionary changes” in K-12 education extended to college teacher preparation programs as he delivered a major policy speech on Thursday at Columbia University’s Teachers College. Duncan described many of the country’s teacher preparation programs as “cash cows” that do a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the real world of teaching. Pointing out that many teacher education programs have large enrollments and low overhead making them profit centers for universities that divert their profits to smaller, higher prestige programs such as science or business administration.

## U.S. Secretary (cont'd)

Duncan charged teacher preparation programs with failing to give teachers the training necessary to manage classrooms, especially those serving high needs young people. He also contended that preparation programs were not teaching prospective teachers how to use data to improve their instruction. "We should be studying and copying the practices of effective teacher preparations and encouraging the lowest performers to shape up or shut down," Duncan asserted.

Thanks to the federal stimulus bill, the new Secretary of Education has more discretionary federal funds to promote change than any before him. With hundreds of millions of dollars earmarked for innovation grants, Duncan is positioned to stimulate major changes not only in K-12 schools but in teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities across the country.

### *Forum News...*

## NC EPFP Fellows Bond During Leadership Retreat

This week, in lieu of a national leadership conference, this year's EPFP class had the opportunity to take time out of their busy schedules to learn more about each other, their leadership styles and how they work in team settings with other "styles". The 26 member group spent Tuesday and Wednesday at the Aqueduct Conference Center in Chapel Hill hearing from Myers Briggs consultant Dan Bruffey and working through several team building exercises.

NC EPFP co-coordinator Kendall Jordan shared, "I feel the retreat was a success. It was amazing to watch a room of 26 individuals transform into a strong cohesive group. Going forward each week's meeting/experience will only enhance the unity of the group."

Next week the 2009-10 fellows will serve as hosts at the graduation ceremony honoring the 2008-09 class of NC EPFP fellows. The graduation 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.

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