

# *The Public School Forum's Friday Report*

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## **State Board of Education Adopts New Policies**

The State Board of Education adopted new policies at the board meeting this week affecting retesting options by local school systems and the charter school application and review process.

Dr. Lou Fabrizio, Director of Accountability Policy and Communications, requested that the board delete from current policy the option for local school systems to administer a third administration (Retest 2) of end-of-grade and end-of-course tests from the testing and accountability program effective with the 2010-2011 school year. It was made clear that the State would no longer provide the second retest and the scores will not be included in ABCS or AYP. Local boards of education must establish appropriate review procedures to determine promotion decisions. Local boards may also use other appropriate measures for evidence of the student's proficiency in the subject. The original request made at the November board meeting called for the policy to be implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. After concerns were registered with the board by representatives of the superintendents, the implementation date for the policy was moved to 2010-2011.

In August 2009, the State Board of Education convened an Ad Hoc Charter School Task Force to review and address areas of concern related to North Carolina Charter Schools. After multiple task force meetings, the Task Force Co-chairs presented recommendations for changes to the policies. The intent of the recommendations was to improve the academic accountability of charter schools and to clarify existing procedures for those interested in applying for a charter school. The new policies were approved by the State Board of Education this week. A charter application which has met the deadline stated in the application packet and is deemed complete will be reviewed by an Application Review Committee. The new policy states specific categories for the membership of the AR committee. Those applications which meet the established criteria in the policy will then be forwarded to the State Board for full review. In addition to ten specific criteria, the State Board shall give priority consideration to the applicants who demonstrate potential for significant, meaningful innovation in education.

## Governor Perdue Seeks Support for RTTT Proposal

In her report to the State Board of Education, State Superintendent June Atkinson shared information about the recent superintendents' meeting at which the agenda included a discussion of the Race to the Top guidelines as well as a discussion and input about North Carolina's proposal. Governor Bev Perdue attended the meeting to discuss the requirements of the RTTT application and to stress the need for superintendents' support of North Carolina's proposal. Others attending this meeting were representatives of NCAE, NCSAA NCPAPA, NCSBA and NCSSA.

The Race to the Top grant must be accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding as to the final priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria. The memorandum sets out the scope of work of the state and the LEA as well as lays out state and LEA responsibilities and the joint responsibilities of the parties to the memorandum. The document must be signed by the LEA superintendent, the chair of the local school board, and the president of the local NCAE and an authorized state official. Superintendent Atkinson also discussed the rating scale for the RTTT proposal. The scale has a total of 500 points in the following categories: State Success Factors (25%), Standards and Assessments (14%), Data Systems to Support Instruction (9%), Great Teachers and Leaders (28%), Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (10%), General (11%), and Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM (3%). The superintendent said that North Carolina was aiming for 500 points! The RTTT grant deadline is January 19. The stakes are certainly high. The amount of the grant could be as large as \$400 million. The funds would be available over the next four years.

## Joint Select Committee on Global Engagement Announced

Leadership in the North Carolina House and Senate have authorized the Joint Select Committee on Global Engagement, naming Senator Joe Sam Queen and Representative Becky Carney as Co-Chairs. According to the authorizing language, "the committee may work in conjunction with the Center for International Understanding to develop a statewide strategic plan for global engagement. The Committee may study North Carolina's current international activity in three sectors: business, State government, and education."

The Committee consists of 14 members including:

- Senator Pete Brunstetter
- Senator Don Davis
- Senator Tony Foriest
- Senator Malcolm Graham
- Senator Jean Preston
- Senator Josh Stein
- Representative Larry Brown
- Representative Nelson Dollar
- Representative Grier Martin
- Representative Wil Neumann

## Joint Select Committee (cont'd)

- Representative W.A. Wilkins
- Representative Larry Womble

The authorizing language assigns legislative professional and clerical staff to the effort and allows the 14-member committee to travel to hear from the public on global issues. The Committee is invited to present recommendations, including any proposed legislation, by May 2010, with a final report due February 1, 2011.

## NC's NAACP to File Complaint Against Wayne Co. Schools

The North Carolina chapter of the NAACP announced Monday that it plans to file a federal complaint against the Wayne County school system alleging that its practices have hampered black students. The organization said in a press release that it would file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, citing policies that have resulted in lower graduation rates, higher suspension rates and stiffer discipline for black students.

## Grants Available for Faculty to Internationalize Courses

World View and UNC's Center for Global Initiatives are providing grants to community college educators to help them internationalize their courses. In this program, funded by UNC's Center for Global Initiatives (CGI) and organized from World View, each grantee will receive \$750 to compensate for time spent and to offset costs for a trip to UNC-Chapel Hill for research.

The program, intended to support the addition of international content to existing course that have little or no such content, will give preference to proposals that develop regularly taught and/or required courses, and courses that affect large numbers of students. Awards will be announced February 1, 2010.

For additional information, including proposal cover sheet and examples of internationalized courses, visit: [www.unc.edu/world/ccgrants.shtml](http://www.unc.edu/world/ccgrants.shtml).

## *National News...*

### **Kansas Offers Engineering at the Elementary Level**

The Derby School District, in Wichita, Kansas will lead the nation by being the first to offer state-of-the-art engineering classes at the elementary school level. The district rolled out Project Lead the Way, a national program that provides engineering curriculum, at three of its schools this year. Next year, one of its elementary schools will be the pilot program for a primary aerospace engineering lesson plan designed by Project Lead the Way.

Updating the district's career-technical education program to the pre-engineering program was a large investment of money and dedication. Derby received a \$100,000 grant this spring from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to establish the Project Lead the Way curriculum in its schools. Another \$15,000 from a Wichita State University grant helped the district train five teachers in a two-week session over the summer.

Wineteer Elementary School teachers are starting training to be the first to teach Project Lead the Way's aerospace engineering lessons in grades three to five. Derby also received a \$318,000 grant from the Department of Defense to pay for the aerospace program for three years. About 70 percent of the students at Wineteer have parents who work at McConnell Air Force Base. As the program grows, Derby leaders say they plan to draw support from engineers in the surrounding aircraft industries in the form of mentors and guest speakers for students.

## *Did You Know...*

### **Fewer Women Leading NC School Districts**

Despite women holding nearly 80 percent of all teaching posts in North Carolina, there are far fewer women than men leading school districts in North Carolina. Last year, 84 percent of all school district superintendents were held by men. While the percentage of female superintendents fall short of the percentage of women teachers, female educators are making strides across the state. The number of female administrators in central offices across North Carolina has grown 42 percent in 10 years. In addition, the number of female principals has increased by 40 percent in 10 years.

### **MeckEd Issues Report on Impact of Dropouts**

The national dropout count for 2008 was 599,755 students. This was calculated in a nationwide study underwritten by State Farm Insurance and using a tool for socioeconomic analysis. If half of them had graduated they would have generated \$4.1 billion more in wages and \$536 Million in state and local taxes in one average year.

## MeckEd Issues Report (cont'd)

The study, issued in November, by the Washington-based [Alliance for Excellent Education](#), calculates the cost of the drop out problem in the 50 largest metropolitan areas, including Charlotte Mecklenberg. The study shows in the Charlotte area, 7,707 students dropped out. If just half of them had graduated they would have increased their wages by \$36 Million and additional State and local property, income and sales tax revenue by over \$5 Million during the average year. To view Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education's (MeckEd) report, go to: <http://www.all4ed.org/files/Charlotte.pdf>.

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