

# *The Public School Forum's Friday Report*

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## *It's Official...Bowles to Retire by end of Year*

Erskine Bowles announced this morning that he will be stepping down as UNC system president. Addressing the UNC Board of Governors, Bowles, who has held the position since January 1, 2006, said he would remain at his post through the end of 2010 or as long as it takes to find a successor.

## NC Students Excel on Advanced Placement Exams

According to a report released by the College Board this week, North Carolina is one of 16 states in which the percentage of students that scored a 3 or higher on at least one AP exam exceeds the national average. A total of 24,563 (29.1%) students from North Carolina's public high school class of 2009 took at least one AP exam during high school. This number exceeds the national average of 26.5% and represents an increase of 6,473 students from 2004.

The 10 most popular exams taken by the high school class of 2009 were U.S. History, English Language, English Literature, Environmental Science, Psychology, Calculus AB, Statistics, Biology, Government and Politics: U.S., and European History. The latest AP report also shows that the numbers of low-income, African American, and Hispanic students taking and succeeding on AP exams in North Carolina continue to increase. The NCDPI continues to receive grant funding to help expand access for minority students, rural students and others who are under-represented in these courses.

In addition, the North Carolina Virtual Public School currently offers 20 online AP courses to high school students across the state. Advanced Placement courses are college-level courses offered in 37 subject areas and assessed through the annual AP exams. These exams are graded on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest score. Most colleges and universities in the United States and in North Carolina use AP exam results in their admissions process and may give college credit to students earning grades of 3, 4 or 5. To review the College Board's complete report, visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

## Superintendent Atkinson Addresses History Concerns

Earlier this week, Superintendent June Atkinson sent a letter to the North Carolina legislators to assist them in understanding the recent news coverage of North Carolina's proposed social studies standards. To view the letter that was sent, click on the following link. <http://www.ncforum.org/doclib/Legislators2%208%2010.pdf>.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Emerging Issues Forum Focuses on Creativity

North Carolina's leaders gathered in Raleigh this week as they did 25 years ago to "jump-start innovation in the state". The Emerging Issues forum that was created by Governor Hunt 25 years ago, played host to a cadre of speakers and presenters including Governor Beverly Perdue, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and internationally known author Daniel Pink. The annual meeting is designed as an incubator of ideas that brings together the state's leading thinkers in business, nonprofits, politics and academia.

Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, encouraged the "radical decentralization" of government, business and technology on Monday as the keynote speaker of an innovation conference that drew some 1,300 to the Raleigh Convention Center.

Secretary Duncan, who was skyped in to the conference due to inclement weather in Washington, D.C., told participants that public schools in the United States need to try to spark creative thinking in children and move away from curriculums that just teach to standardized tests. He stressed his desire to see schools go beyond the reading and math taught in traditional curriculums and to incorporate more technology, arts, sciences and humanities. "We want to give every child a chance to discover their genius, what they're best at," Duncan said.

Daniel Pink, internationally known author and featured speaker Tuesday at the Forum, gave an overview of the history of civilization as an evolution from physical labor to routine intellectual tasks, an epoch that is now coming to an end. "We are entering a paradigm that will require creative, big-picture thinking", he said. "We need to infuse arts education throughout the curriculum. The arts aren't ornamental; they're fundamental."

## NC Chamber to Celebrate Honorable Howard Lee

The North Carolina Chamber proudly presents its 68th Annual Meeting on March 3, 2010 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center. The Annual Meeting is a gathering of the state's most powerful and influential business, education, government and non-profit leaders.

This year, the Chamber will celebrate and award the Honorable Howard Lee for his inspirational achievements for educational reform. As a key advocate for education policies, the Chamber will be awarding Howard Lee the Award for Distinguished Public Service at this year's Annual Meeting. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

## Regional Principals of the Year Named

Eight outstanding principals have been selected as regional Wachovia Principals of the Year and will now compete for the title of 2010 Wachovia NC Principal of the Year. The winner, to be announced on April 1 in Raleigh at a state luncheon sponsored by Wachovia, will succeed the 2009 Wachovia NC Principal of the Year, Vann Pennell, principal of South Brunswick High School (Brunswick County Schools).

The regional principals of the year are as follows:

- North Central Region: John Wall, North Garner Middle (Wake County Schools);
- Northeast Region: Dianne Meiggs, Hertford Grammar (Perquimans County Schools);
- Northwest Region: Todd Wirt, Mooresville Senior High (Mooresville Graded Schools);
- Southeast Region: Julie Duclos, Murrayville Elementary (New Hanover County Schools);
- Southwest Region: Kirby Oldham, G.E. Massey Elementary (Lincoln County Schools);
- Sandhills/South Central Region: Renee Jackson, Lake Rim Elementary (Cumberland County Schools);
- Piedmont-Triad/Central Region: Chris Blice, Northwood High (Chatham County Schools); and
- West Region: Jan King, Glenn Marlow Elementary (Henderson County Schools).

Since the program began in 1984, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and The Wachovia Foundation have recognized 30 Wachovia Principals of the Year, 194 regional recipients, and 2,494 local recipients. In addition, The Wachovia Foundation has provided more than \$1 million in cash awards to these individuals. In its 27th year, the program provides a unique opportunity to recognize outstanding principals from NC public schools.

## NEA Awards Durham with Grant to Close Achievement Gap

The National Association of Educators has pledged \$1.25 million over the next five years to help Durham improve academic performance by black male students. The grant was announced Tuesday morning by Gov. Beverly Perdue at Lowe's Grove Middle School. The host school is one of six in the Durham district that will share \$250,000 annually over the life of the grant.

The NEA Foundation awarded the grant to Durham as the first major expansion of its six-year-old Closing the Achievement Gaps Initiative. Columbus, Ohio, and Springfield, Mass., received grants similar to Durham's. The foundation has piloted the initiative in Seattle, Milwaukee and Hamilton County (Chattanooga), Tennessee.

Most of the activities funded by the new grant have yet to be determined. Teachers, principals, district officials and advisers from UNC Chapel Hill, N.C. Central University and elsewhere will collaborate on designing projects that are worthy of funding. "If we can guarantee that every child had one adult -- just one, one adult -- that really cared, that really was committed to their educational outcome, we could turn so much stuff around," Perdue said.

### *National News...*

## New Jersey Governor Plans to Withhold School Aid

In a speech yesterday, to a joint session of the Democrat-controlled legislature, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (R) declared a fiscal emergency and said he plans to withhold \$475 million in school aid to help close a \$2.2 billion budget deficit with less than five months remaining in the fiscal year. In addition, Christie said he will reduce funding for hospitals and colleges, delay capital projects, cut subsidies for New Jersey Transit and eliminate state programs that "sounded good in theory but failed in practice."

Christie scheduled the address after he said he discovered the deficit in New Jersey's spending plan was twice as big as his predecessor, Democrat Jon Corzine, had projected. The new governor has vowed not to raise taxes to cope with declining revenue and increased costs for services including Medicaid, the health-care program for the poor.

Christie said he signed an executive order before the speech that gives him the right to freeze spending to balance the budget. Democratic lawmakers said they didn't receive a copy of the fiat until an hour prior to the address and said it was an attempt to circumvent legislative opposition. Lawyers for both legislative houses are examining whether the executive order goes beyond Christie's legal powers and how it can be blocked. The governor's plan would raise local property taxes.

## New Jersey Governor (cont'd)

School systems in New Jersey on average receive about 40 percent of their funding from the state, according to the New Jersey School Boards Association. The remainder is financed primarily through local property taxes, which at an annual average of \$7,045 are the nation's highest. Aid to public schools accounts for \$11.1 billion, or 38 percent, of the \$29 billion budget signed in June. The state has yet to pay about \$3.5 billion of that aid, making it the largest account that can be accessed this late in the fiscal year.

Christie said more than 500 school districts will be affected by his decision to withhold \$475 million, and more than 100 districts will lose all state aid for the rest of the year. "No district will have aid withheld in an amount that is greater than its surpluses", Christie said.

### *Forum News...*

## Seeking Jay Robinson Award Nominations

The Jay Robinson Leadership Award was established by the Public School Forum Board of Directors in recognition of outstanding leaders in the field of public education. The award may be given to anyone who has displayed innovative, creative, effective leadership for the public schools of North Carolina.

Past winners include Laura Bilbro-Berry, the first Teaching Fellow to be named North Carolina Teacher of the Year; Tom McNeel, superintendent of Caldwell County schools; Jim Causby, two-time state Superintendent of the Year and executive director of the NC Association of School Administrators; Robert Bridges, former superintendent of Wake County Schools and former chair of the state's Raising Achievement and Closing Gap Commission; Superior Court Judge Howard E. Manning, Jr., the trial court judge in the *Leandro* school finance case; Dr. Ann Denlinger, former superintendent of Durham Public Schools and Wilson County Schools and currently President, Wake Education Partnership; Phillip J. Kirk Jr., Director, Brady Energy Services, Bill Harrison, former superintendent Cumberland County Schools and Chairman of the State Board of education; and Dr. Dudley Flood, retired educator and consultant.

The nominations must be postmarked by March 1, 2010. Nominations postmarked after that date and nominations delivered in person will not be accepted. The award ceremony will be held on June 21, 2010, at the Raleigh Crabtree Marriott Hotel. Admission will be by invitation only. The honor includes a cash award sponsored by BB&T.

To obtain an application, contact Claire Ancelet ([cancelet@ncforum.org](mailto:cancelet@ncforum.org)) at 919-781-6833 or you can download a copy at [www.ncforum.org](http://www.ncforum.org).

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