

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Volume 14, Issue 30

January 27, 2012

State News

Governor Perdue Won't Seek Second Term

Various signs pointed for weeks if not months to the possibility that the fight to keep the governor's mansion might begin in a very unusual way; with the incumbent facing a challenge from within her own party in a primary. On Thursday around midday, Governor Beverly Eaves Perdue put that speculation to rest. Via a statement on her campaign website, Gov. Perdue announced that she would not seek a second term as governor.

Gov. Perdue cited concerns over the growing partisan political divide over funding for public schools and the impact it could have on schools and school children as a major contributing factor to her decision. "It is clear to me my race for re-election will only further politicize the fight to adequately fund our schools," said Gov. Perdue in her statement. She went on to say, "I hope [my] decision will open the door to an honest and bipartisan effort to help our schools."

State Schools Superintendent Race

A Wake County Board of Education member at the forefront of some of the district's most contentious issues has announced his plans to run for state superintendent of public instruction. John Tedesco said Thursday he wants to improve the quality of education throughout the state. Tedesco will join two other Republicans, David Scholl, a Union County school board member, and Ray Martin a teacher in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools system. In the Democratic primary, current Superintendent June Atkinson will face Rep. Rick Glazier (Cumberland Co.). Primary elections will take place on May 8th.

Teacher Effectiveness Ratings Available

Via a [press release](#) last Friday, the NC Department of Public Instruction announced the availability of new educator effectiveness ratings data. North Carolinians now have access to information on the effectiveness of teachers and principals in their local schools. This information is available as a link from the NC School Report Cards, www.ncreportcards.org, and is accessible from each school or district's Quality Teachers or Quality Teachers and Administrators tab.

2011 Local School Finance Study Available

Each year the Public School Forum releases an analysis of local spending patterns of public schools. This year's analysis finds that the resource gap between the state's poorest and wealthiest schools has continued to grow while counties either shouldered more of their school budgets to offset cuts in state funding or also cut their local budgets.

On average the State's twenty-five wealthiest counties can draw on \$1,659,039 of taxable real estate to support each child attending their public schools. At the other end of the spectrum, the State's poorest twenty-five counties only have taxable assets of \$397,451 standing behind each of their children.

"The Forum began this study," said Jo Ann Norris, the Forum's Executive Director, "in the hopes that it would take some of the mythology out of school finance. What we do annually is to look at the degree to which county commissioners support their schools in the context of their ability to support quality programs."

"Year-after-year we have found that many of our State's poorest counties are making the greatest taxing efforts to provide their young people with quality schools. But high tax rates in counties with little to tax can't even the opportunity scales," continued Norris. "On the other hand, our wealthiest counties can provide far more resources to young people while charging homeowners far lower taxes because they have such large tax bases."

In addition to looking at wealth and spending disparities between the State's highest and lowest spending counties, the analysis focuses on correlations between wealth, spending levels and student achievement. This is the twenty-fourth year the Forum has issued its annual finance study.

This year's study includes, for the first time, the nearly \$1.4 billion of federal funding provided to the state through the American Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. ARRA provided funding to North Carolina schools through existing federal formula and competitive grant programs including Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the McKinney-Bento Homeless Assistance program. Due in part to the infusion of the federal ARRA funding, 2009-10 experienced a small and imperceptible increase in total current spending per student from \$1724 per student to \$1807 per student.

The Forum's work laid the groundwork for supplemental state dollars that now flow to the State's poorest and smallest school systems. As a result of those supplemental funds, small and poor counties now receive \$237.4 million of additional state aid each year.

The full study is available for order at the Forum's website located at <http://www.ncforum.org> or call Pat Franklin at **919.781.6833**.

Tuition Recommendation

University of North Carolina system President Tom Ross has recommended average in-state undergraduate tuition and fee increases of 8.8 percent at the system's 16 campuses for 2012-13. Ross is also recommending a 4.2 percent hike in 2013-14. The UNC president recommended increases that were smaller than requests from trustees of seven of the 16 UNC universities. While all campuses would raise tuition under Ross' plan, none would see an increase greater than 10 percent for next year. He left intact the requests by nine other campuses that were already smaller than 10 percent. The system-wide average tuition hike for the current academic year was 9.3 percent. Last year, UNC campuses saw a state reduction of \$414 million. "I believe that these recommendations balance the campuses' demonstrated need for increased resources with the limited ability of many students and families to sustain further tuition increases in this tough economy," Ross said in a memo.

Regional Teachers of the Year Named

Nine teachers have been selected to represent their regions and charter schools as the state's regional Teachers of the Year and will now compete for the title of 2012-13 North Carolina Teacher of the Year. The winner will succeed the 2011-12 North Carolina Teacher of the Year Tyronna Hooker, an exceptional children's teacher at Graham Middle School (Alamance-Burlington Schools).

North Carolina's Regional Teachers of the Year are:

- North Central Region: Malinda Pennington, Toisnot Middle (Wilson County Schools);
- Northeast Region: Lisa Staats, Chocowinity Middle (Beaufort County Schools);
- Northwest Region: Darcy Grimes, Bethel Elementary (Watauga County Schools);
- Southeast Region: Melissa Warren, South Brunswick High (Brunswick County Schools);
- Southwest Region: Lenora Crabtree, Forest View High (Gaston County Schools);
- Sandhills/South Central Region: Karrie Detwiler, JW Turlington Alternative School (Hoke County Schools);
- Piedmont-Triad/Central Region: Jennifer Arberg, Kiser Middle (Guilford County Schools);
- West Region: Edith Callahan, Smoky Mountain High (Jackson County Schools); and
- Charter Schools: Jenni Clayton, Forsyth Academy (Forsyth County).

Southeast Region Teacher of the Year Melissa Warren is a North Carolina Teaching Fellow, having graduated from UNC-Wilmington in 2002. The 2012-13 North Carolina Teacher of the Year will be announced in early May at an awards ceremony in Raleigh. North Carolina has recognized outstanding teachers through its Teacher of the Year program since 1970.

The Growing Issue of Poverty

Last Thursday and Friday, January 19th and 20th, a group of more than 60 volunteers organized by leaders of various advocacy groups boarded a bus and took the “Truth and Hope Tour of Poverty” through six counties in the northeastern part of the state. David Zucchini, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times travelled with the group and wrote a column that appeared on Friday afternoon (Jan. 20th) in the “Nation Now” section of the [Times](#).

Among the many interesting things Zucchini reported in his article were statistics on poverty rates in the six counties that the tour visited. He noted that North Carolina overall has the 12th highest poverty rate in the country at 17.4%. In the six counties visited, the poverty rate ranges from 21% to 26% and among blacks, poverty rates approach 40% in parts of those counties.

During the two days, tour participants went to churches, town halls, and community centers in the six counties where they heard firsthand descriptions from local residents about what poverty looks and feels like. North Carolina NAACP leader, Rev. William Barber, one of the tour organizers said that he hoped the tour would put “a human face on bloodless statistics” as he feels just looking at poverty statistics doesn’t tell the full story. He and other organizers also hoped to show that the federal poverty earnings threshold of \$22,113 per year for a family of four is too low as many families earning more than that amount also live in poverty.

Meanwhile another article that ran in a newspaper in the western part of the state on Sunday spotlighted a rise in the number of people using food stamps. Numbers from 5 counties (essentially the Citizen-Times coverage zone) were reported with the article and show an increase of 6,121 users from the beginning of 2010 through the end of 2011. Nationally, a record 45 million people received benefits from the Federal Nutrition Assistance Program in 2011. According to census data, 49% percent of recipients are white, 26% are black, and 20% Hispanic. The AP article is an interesting read and profiles a recipient who is an Army veteran with a Masters degree and another who was a formerly successful Midwestern marketing and sales representative. Access the full article on the Asheville Citizen-Times [website](#)

Burroughs Wellcome Fund Afterschool Grants Available This Spring

Application Deadline: April 16, 2012

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF)’s Student Science Enrichment Program (SSEP) supports out-of-school time programs with a common goal: to enable primary and secondary students to participate in hands-on scientific activities and pursue inquiry-based exploration in BWF’s home state of North Carolina. Since 1996, BWF has awarded 150 grants totaling \$22 million to 70 organizations that reach nearly 35,000 North Carolina students.

BWF Afterschool Grants (cont'd)

SSEP awards support creative, hands-on science education activities for K-12 students. Nonprofit organizations serving North Carolina primary and secondary school students are eligible to apply. Programs range from afterschool programs, year round science experiences, Saturday academies or summer camps. These awards provide up to \$60,000 per year for three years.

SSEP programs must enable students to participate in hands-on scientific activities and pursue inquiry-based avenues of exploration—an educational approach that BWF believes to be an effective way to increase students' understanding and appreciation of the scientific process. To increase academic achievement, programs must provide a well-defined structure that aligns with the school-day curriculum, well-trained staff, and student follow up.

Connect with SSEP on [Facebook](#). Follow SSEP on [Twitter](#). Or visit BWF's website for more: <http://www.bwfund.org/pages/155/Student-Science-Enrichment-Program/>

27th Annual Emerging Issues Forum

This year's Emerging Issues Forum, "Investing in Gen Z: Guaranteeing Our ROI" is taking place February 6-7, 2012 at the Raleigh Convention Center. The forum will explore Gen Z's impact on NC's economic and workforce development; how increased connectivity raises the bar; and what can be done to ensure Gen Z's (and NC's) overall well-being. For a more detailed look at the agenda as well as to register for the event, [click here](#).

National News

Twelve Issues to Watch in 2012

The Education Commission of the States (ECS), a Denver, CO based nonpartisan research organization has released a report on twelve key issues in education to watch during 2012. The group makes clear that the list is not a ranking of the issues, and that it isn't an all-inclusive list as there are many other issues and policy decisions to be made that will impact education in 2012. ECS says that it's list isn't meant to be an "exhaustive" list of hot education topics, but rather it is intended to "stimulate thinking around how best to craft the '2.0' of powerful policy across the states," based on ECS's read on current trends and research.

The twelve issues ECS's report focuses on are as follows:

- 1) Pre-K: Expanding the focus to P-3
- 2) K-12 finance: Creating and maintaining efficiency and financial accountability without lowering expectations

Issues to Watch (cont'd)

- 3) Blended learning: Getting moving
- 4) Common Core State Standards: From talking to doing
- 5) Developing civic engagement in PK-12: State action in the absence of federal funding
- 6) Teaching quality: Fasten your seatbelts!
- 7) Rural: Enhancing the potential of education in rural America
- 8) Data: Access to what teachers and leaders need to improve student outcomes (and the skills to use it)
- 9) Individualized instruction: Faster. Cheaper. Smarter.
- 10) Performance funding: Building a model without a blueprint?
- 11) Remedial education: We know more now than we ever have
- 12) Credentials of value: Some are better than others

For each of the 12 issues identified, four common threads are addressed in the ECS report: potential power (i.e. are there wide-reaching implications for getting state-level results); biggest challenges; positive signs; and further reading. Access the full ECS report by visiting <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/00/28/10028.pdf>.

Federal Appropriations Bill

During the holidays, you might have missed the passage of what has been described as an omnibus appropriations bill, (H.R. 2055). On December 23, 2011, President Obama signed the bill providing funding for the U.S. Department of Education into law. After a small across the board rescission, the bill provides \$68.1 billion in discretionary spending for the agency's programs, a decrease of \$233 million from FY-2011. Specifically the bill includes:

- \$14.5 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies, a \$74 million increase;
- \$11.6 billion for special education state grants, a \$112 million increase;
- \$2.47 billion to help states improve the quality of their teachers and leaders;
- \$160 million for the Striving Readers (PK-12) literacy program; and
- \$22.8 billion in discretionary funding for Pell Grants for low- and middle-income college undergraduates, which will support maintaining the maximum grant at \$5,550.

Among other key programs, the bill includes \$549 million for a new round of Race to the Top (from this pool, seven more states will receive funds in phase three funding and a new program targeting individual school district reforms will be launched); \$149 million for the Investing in Innovation Fund; \$60 million for the Promise Neighborhood initiative, which is double its FY 2011 funding level; and \$534 million for the School Improvement Grant program.

Local Boards of Education Support Teaching Fellows

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission and staff continue to receive copies of resolutions passed by local boards of education in support of the restoration of the NC Teaching Fellows Program. NEW RESOLUTIONS received since last week's *Friday Report* are included in the list in **BOLD** type.

Alamance-Burlington Board of Education, Jackie Cole, Chair; Dr. Lillie Cox, Supt.
Alexander County Board of Education, Josh Lail, Chair; Jack Hole, Supt.
Avery County Board of Education, John L. Greene, Chair; David Burleson, Supt.
Brunswick County Board of Education, Shirley Babson, Chair; Dr. Edward Pruden, Supt.
Cumberland County Board of Education, Carrie Sutton, Chair; Dr. Frank Till, Supt.
**Durham Public Schools Board of Education, Minnie Forte-Brown, Chair,
Dr. Eric Becoats, Supt.**
Edenton-Chowan Board of Education, Ricky Browder, Chair; Dr. Allan Smith, Supt.
Elkin City Board of Education, James Freeman, Chair; Dr. Randy Bledsoe, Supt.
Greene County Board of Education, Patricia Lee Adams, Chair; Dr. Patrick Miller, Supt.
Guilford County Board of Education, Alan W. Duncan, Chair; Dr. Maurice Green, Supt.
Hoke County Board of Education, Hank Richards, Chair; Dr. Freddie Williamson, Supt.
Jackson County Board of Education, Ken Henke, Chair; Dr. Michael Murray, Supt.
Martin County Board of Education, Gene Scott, Chair; Dr. Ron Melchiorre, Supt.
McDowell County Board of Ed., Russell Neighbors, Chair; Dr. Ira Trollinger, Supt.
Mt. Airy City Schools Board of Ed., Wendy Carriker, Chair; Dr. Greg Little, Supt.
Onslow County Board of Education, Pat Thomas, Chair; Dr. Kathy Spencer, Supt.
Person County Board of Educ., Gordon Powell, Chair; Dr. Larry Cartner, Supt.
Pamlico County Board of Ed, Reggie Hawkins, Chair; Dr. Wanda Dawson, Supt.
Richmond County Board of Education, Wiley L. Mabe, Chair; Dr. George Norris, Supt.
Robeson County Board of Education, Dr. Jo Ann Chavis Lowery; Dr. Johnny Hunt, Supt.
Surry County Board of Education, Sexton E. Coe, Chair; Dr. Ashley Hinson, Jr., Supt.
Vance County Board of Education, Gloria J. White, Chair; Dr. Ronald Gregory, Supt.
Watauga County Board of Ed., Deborah H. Miller, Chair; Dr. Marty Hemric, Supt.
Whiteville City Board of Education, James DiMuzio, Chair; Dr. C. T. Hager, Supt.

Dr. Mike Priddy, retired superintendent and NC Teaching Fellows Commission Chair stated, "Having had the privilege of hiring the first Teaching Fellows graduate and many more since then, I personally know their value to our children, classrooms, and schools. I also know that every principal, superintendent, and school board member in NC appreciates the quality that is so very predictable. Even though there are many important, even competing, educational priorities, we must remain diligent in seeking support for the re-instatement of the Teaching Fellows Program."

Board Member's Thoughts on Education as a Priority

The following is a letter written to the editor of the *News and Observer*
by Ann Goodnight, Forum Board Member. It was published by the N&O on Sunday, January 22, 2012

As North Carolina strives to meet the challenges of the economic recession, we must remember just how vulnerable we are, and will continue to be, in this knowledge-based, global economy. Now is the time for North Carolina to renew its historical commitment to education for all, as a long term priority.

We must improve K-12, give more support to our community college system, and extend our constitutional mandate to provide low-cost access to higher education for all students "as far as practicable." Not only is it our moral responsibility to provide the next generations with a quality education that prepares them for a successful livelihood, we must also grow a knowledge workforce to ensure our country's economic well-being for the future.

Learning and entrepreneurship must be organic in a region that nurtures an educated, innovative population. Specifically, the need to strengthen science and math education in K-12 is paramount. The jobs of the future will require at least rudimentary skills in these fields.

What we do now will affect generations to come. We must make education excellence our highest priority if we are to preserve our quality of life in North Carolina. This will require a citizenry unified around a singular mission: To ensure that a quality education remains accessible to all North Carolinians.

Nominations Open for Jay Robinson Leadership Awards

Nominations for the Forum's Jay Robinson Leadership Awards are now open. The original award was established by the Public School Forum Board of Directors in honor of Dr. Jay Robinson, former Superintendent Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, UNC Vice President and Chair of the State Board of Education. In 2011 the award was expanded to two awards; Exemplary Educator with statewide impact in K-12 education and Exemplary Leadership in Public Service with statewide impact in K-12 education. The awards may be given to anyone who has displayed innovative, creative, effective leadership for the public schools of North Carolina.

The nominations must be postmarked by March 1, 2012. Nominations postmarked after that date and nominations delivered in person will not be accepted. The award ceremony will be held on June 11, 2012 at the Raleigh Crabtree Marriott Hotel. Admission will be by invitation only. The honor includes a cash award sponsored by BB&T.

Leadership Awards (cont'd)

To obtain a nomination form, contact Pat Franklin (pfranklin@ncforum.org) at 919-781-6833. You may also use the form in the Winter 2011 edition of the *Forum Report which was released over the holidays*.

The *Friday Report* is published weekly by the Public School Forum of NC and is distributed to Forum Board members, legislators active in education policy, the press, and Forum subscribers. Archived editions can be found at www.ncforum.org/doc.



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