



the FORUM REPORT

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Happy Holidays

from the Public School Forum Board & Staff!



HighLights

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THE STATE'S TESTING CONUNDRUM

AN EDITORIAL BY JOHN DORNAN



John Dornan, executive director, Public School Forum

One of this year's Ten to Watch predictions is that the State Board of Education's capacity to reach sound decisions will be sorely tested when confronted with recommendations coming out of the Blue Ribbon Commission charged with making recommendations on overhauling the State's current accountability practices. Complicating the issue are five factors that impede real change, especially at the high school level.

First, the State Board is under extreme pressure from the General Assembly to reduce the amount of testing in schools. For two years in a row legislators have come close to taking testing matters into their own hands and only the agreement to create the Blue Ribbon Commission prevented the General Assembly from reshaping the accountability program more to their liking in the 2007 Session.

Second, whatever changes are made must be made within the parameters of the federal government's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation which mandates that all states meet NCLB testing requirements. That means that regardless of how much legislative pressure there is to reduce the amount of testing, North Carolina can not eliminate tests required by NCLB without running the risk of losing federal funding.

Third, more and more critics of today's testing program contend that the multiple choice tests used today encourage short-term memorization of facts while failing to assess whether students can apply information and think creatively. Other critics contend that while the state has as a goal establishing "twenty-first, world-class standards" in its schools, it will never succeed if it continues testing the wrong things because of a curriculum designed for the twentieth (or nineteenth) century.

These criticisms require fundamental changes not only in how schools test students but in what schools teach. Those calling for an end of reliance on multiple choice testing, advocate something called "authentic assessment." Authentic assessment requires that students demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and solve real-world problems. As an example, several years ago Great Britain used the following assignment to assess students who had taken science in the fifth grade:

Students were placed in teams of five. Each team was given a bucket of ice, a thermometer, a ruler and graph paper. They were to determine the varying melting rates of ice when placed in different parts of the room. Then they were to graphically illustrate their findings using chart paper and organize a presentation on their findings that would be given to the entire class at the end of the test.

When one compares the outcome of this type of assessment to students filling in multiple choice tests, the contrast is stark. At the end of the day, in Great Britain, students had been assessed on how well they understood the relationship between light and heat and melting rates, and on whether they could organize their findings into a report using graphing that required mathematical ability. Finally, the assessment measured their ability to work in teams as well as their presentation skills. In North Carolina, students' memorization skills have been assessed.

While authentic assessment goes far beyond paper and pencil tests, the arguments against it are cost and time. In Great Britain, for instance, the assessment described above requires bringing teachers from other school systems into schools to insure objectivity in scoring. The exercise described consumes the better part of a school day. When compared to the time and cost of having students fill out a bubble sheet over the course of one or two hours and scoring it by running it through an electronic scanner in a matter of minutes, the pros and cons are quickly evident.

The second criticism of today's testing program requires even more fundamental change. Those contending that today's curriculum is not preparing young people to thrive and survive in the twenty-

first century argue that the existing state-established curriculum is sorely lacking. Instead of teaching young people about world culture, there is an almost exclusive focus on the history and literature of Europe, the United States and North Carolina. Foreign language requirements are minimal. Thus far, North Carolina efforts to establish a twenty-first educational standard have essentially been to require more of the same – more math courses, etc. Courses and the curriculum largely remain unchanged.

Standing in the way of a comprehensive curriculum overhaul, is the fourth factor that will challenge the State Board of Education. Changing either the state's testing program or its curriculum is akin to turning a battleship in a small harbor. The process itself is cumbersome. The curriculum for each subject, for instance, undergoes review every five years. If the curriculum is altered it requires an additional review of text books that will be recommended. Typically, it will take two-to-three years for the process to actually filter down to the classroom level. If testing changes are also required, new tests must be developed and field tested – a process that takes another one-to-two years. By the time the new curriculum and testing procedures are fully in use it is almost time for the five-year review to begin anew.

Last but not least the State Board of Education is confronted with creating tests that matter – tests that mean something to people other than those who rate schools based on testing performance. Currently, state-developed tests at the high school level mean virtually nothing to the end-users of high school products, the young people who will graduate.

Business employers, the military and colleges look at overall grade point averages and, in some cases, SAT scores, but state tests are not seen as a valid indicator of high school preparation. Subsequently, all of the primary users of high school graduates, be they branches of the military, the private sector or two and four year colleges, have their own tests that will assess aptitude and/or the need for remediation following graduation.

Can the state develop a final high school assessment that will matter in the real world? That remains to be seen.

While the five factors above combine to offer the State Board of Education and the Blue Ribbon Commission it created to wrestle the issue a Herculean task, it is a task that nonetheless must be confronted. While an overhaul of today's system will require dramatic and, in some cases, painful and expensive changes, one thing is certain. Today's system may have served the state well, but it is no longer meeting the needs of young people or of North Carolina. In the simplest of terms, today's system is broken and needs fixing. ✨



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RECOMMENDED READING

HOW THE WORLD'S BEST-PERFORMING SCHOOL SYSTEMS COME OUT ON TOP

While one can grow numb reading the hundreds of research studies routinely produced about high performing schools in the United States, there is far too little research focused on what the distinguishing features are of top-performing school systems around the world. There is also far too little research on education being done by researchers from outside of the educational community.

“How the World’s Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top” is a refreshing exception to the educational research rule. First, it looked at developed nations’ educational systems and attempted to isolate the features that separated top-performers from the rest of the pack. Second, the study was done by McKinsey & Company, a highly-regarded international consulting firm whose work typically focuses

on top-performing businesses, not on schools.

The study was conducted on behalf of the Indicators and Analysis Division of OECD’s Directorate for Education. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development is the Paris-based organization that devised and now implements the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), widely regarded as the world’s best yardstick for measuring the performance of young people in nations around the world.

According to Andreas Schleicher, the Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division, the motivation for OECD to concentrate on education is simple: “The capacity of countries – both the world’s most advanced economies as well as those experiencing rapid development – to compete in the global knowledge

economy increasingly depends on whether they can meet a fast-growing demand for high-level skills... This in turn, hinges on significant improvements in the quality of schooling outcomes and a more equitable distribution in learning opportunities.”

The McKinsey Company approached the study in much the way a business school would study successful companies. It selected a group of educational top-performers including Singapore, Finland, South Korea and the Netherlands, and conducted case studies comparing them to countries with substantially lower performance rates.

Some may be surprised at the findings of the study – others may not. Spending levels on education, for

READING... continued on page 11



LEARNING FROM SINGAPORE

In January, a 30-person delegation of North Carolina educators, foundation officials and policymakers will leave for Singapore, one of the top-performing countries studied by McKinsey and Company for their OECD-commissioned study on nations that excel in educational performance (see story above).

The study is the eighth in the “Learning From” series of international studies jointly organized by the Forum and North Carolina Center for International Understanding (CIU). Previous studies have taken North Carolinians to other countries such as South Korea and the Netherlands, which were identified in the McKinsey study as among the best in the world.

Commenting on the upcoming study, Senator

Katie Dorsett, the Chair of the Forum’s Board of Directors, said, “One can read about best educational practices in other countries, but it is not like seeing them. When you see female students in countries like China who plan on being engineers and doctors, it explodes myths about gender differences between boys and girls. When you have a chance to hear about the investment other countries make in their teachers, it forces you to come to terms with what we are doing in North Carolina.”

Millie Ravenal, the Executive Director of CIU, added, “Our goal is to give policymakers and educators in North Carolina a different frame of reference when attacking educational problems. While we think we’re up against unique challenges, we aren’t. Singapore, for instance, has had to create a school system composed of diverse racial and religious students. They have to deal with income gaps between families. And somehow they have stitched together a system that is one of the best in the world. We want to learn from what they have done.”

One of the hallmarks of the Singapore system is their investment in staff development.

As one Singapore principal described their system, “From the time you begin to teach there is a number on your back.” The number is the annual leadership potential rating given to teachers and administrators. Singapore attempts to identify leadership and grow it internally. They invest in training potential leaders and scour the world looking for best practices that can be incorporated into their system.

The goal of the trip is to bring ideas back that can be incorporated into schools across the state. As John Dornan, the Forum’s Executive Director said, “These trips have given us a unique ability to isolate things that make top-performing countries excel. Our challenge on coming home is to try to bring those practices home and put them to use.”

On returning the delegation will meet again to reach a consensus on “lessons learned” in Singapore. Their findings will be available by February and widely disseminated to educational policymakers and educational leaders across the state.

The International Studies Program of the Forum and CIU has been made possible by support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Kenan Family Charitable Trust. ❁



1st Row, left to right: Jo Ann Norris, Meredith Henderson, Estva Vajda, Diane Houston, Dr. Ken Jenkins, Dr. Doris Jenkins, John Dornan, Elizabeth “Bettie” Kirkman, Dr. Diane Scott, Cindy Thompson, Dr. Valerie Brown-Shild, Sen. Joe Sam Queen, Enriqueta “Queta” Bond; 2nd Row, left to right: Dr. Ludy Van Broekhuizen, Rep. Joe Tolson, Dr. Sam Houston, Keith Blatz, Ted Fiske, Dr. Helen “Sunny” Ladd, Carr Thompson, Mary Donny, Rep. Doug Yongue, Dr. Mary McDuffie, Dr. Duane Kirkman, Dr. Hope Williams, Pat Orrange; Not Pictured: Dr. June Atkinson, Sen. Katie Dorsett, Dr. Tony Habit

EPFP GRADUATION

AT&T STATE PRESIDENT KEYNOTES



(left) The EPFP Graduating Class: Bonnie M. Curtis; Elizabeth "Lisa" H. Guckian; Phyllis Dunham; Mellotta Battle Hill; Loretta Peace-Bunch; Melanie P. Hester; Brian Joseph Lee; Shelley Jean Crisp, Ph.D.; Lorraine Tuck, Ed.D. Standing from left to right: Gladys Graves, Co-coordinator; Kenneth "Ken" William Gattis, Ph.D.; Geoffrey Coltrane (Geoff Shah); Harry A. Starnes, Ed.D.; Quentin Parker; Cheryl C. Brooks; Bill Winchester; Stephanie B. Carter; Donald A. Barringer; Locklear, Zoe, Ph.D.; Diana F. Beasley; Ashley Nicole Matlock; Mitzi Nicole Downing; Karen Caton Granger Catherine Soomsawadi Allen Ed.D.; Jamie L. Lathan; Jo Ann Norris, Co-coordinator; not pictured: William Henry Ewell; Tracey Collett Greggs; Julye Brown Mizelle; Melissa Rihm Thibault
(right) Cynthia Marshall, keynote speaker



The 2006-07 class of twenty-eight EPFP Fellows was honored on Tuesday, October 30, 2007, at a gala reception and dinner at the Cardinal Club in downtown Raleigh. The audience included over 120 alumni, sponsors, and friends who came together as in the past in a reunion for alumni. Special recognition was given to Taryn Tyler, representing the National EPFP office at the Institute

of Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. Also recognized as the "longest standing alum" was Dr. Lou Fabrizio, Director of Accountability Services, NCDPI. Lou was a Fellow in the first EPFP class in 1979!

The guests were treated to a look back at the 2006-07 class by viewing a slide show of meetings and conferences in Miami and Washington, DC. Everyone was mesmerized by the keynote speaker, Cynthia Marshall, President of AT&T North Carolina. A truly dynamic speaker, Marshall shared her passion for education and how it transformed her own life. She believes passionately that the lives of all children, especially those children in poverty and at risk situations can be transformed through education. Marshall gave the audience "Cynt's Ten Step Pep Talk of Professional, Encourag-

LEADERSHIP IN A GLOBAL AGE

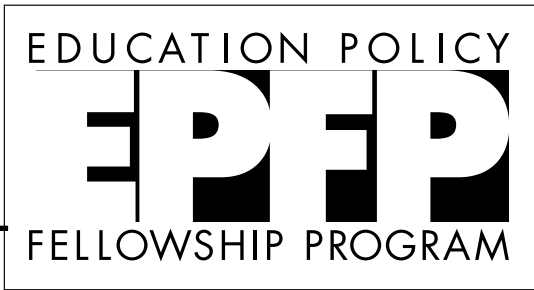


The current EPFP class: First Row Seated from Left to Right: Elizabeth "Beth" Renn, Fay Gore, Iris Garner, Bobby Hobgood, Yvette Richardson, Kendall Jordan, Susan Davis; Second Row Standing from Left to Right: Gladys Graves, Co-coordinator; Lucinda Cabrejas, Pam Leaman, Stacy Costello, Beverly Leathers, Joan Crump, Sherry Ward, Sheldon Harvey, Stephanie Dean, Kara McCraw, Jo Ann Norris, Co-coordinator; Third Row Standing from Left to Right: Jamie Knowles, Tom Winton, Tom Field, Kerry Mcbane, Stephen "Steve" Greene, Timothy "Tim" Heavey, James "J" Bell; Not Pictured: Elizabeth "Betty" Craven, Matthew "Matt" Friedrick, Dare O'Connor, Malinda Todd

In early December, the current class of EPFP Fellows attended their first national EPFP conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The 2007 Leadership Forum hosted over 225 Fellows from fourteen states including Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Washington, DC, West Virginia, and a new regional site called New England which takes Fellows from states other than those mentioned in the Northeast.

The conference looked at leadership in a global climate. The kick-off presentation was given by a return speaker, Dr. Yong Zhao, University Distinguished Professor, College of Education, Michigan State University. Dr. Zhao's theme, Public Schools as Global Enterprises: Challenges to Education Leaders in the Age of Globalization set the tone for energized conversations among the conference participants, within and across state sites.

Monica Martinez, Vice President for Education Strategy with the KnowledgeWorks Foundation facilitated an exercise in mapping the future which used points addressed in a discussion of future forces affecting education. An in-depth look at cross-cultural communications was presented by Michael Paige, Professor, in the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. On Tuesday, December 4, other conference topics and presenters included the following: Long-Term R&D in the Internet Age, Jim McCaffrey, senior Vice President of Strategic Planning, Turner Broadcasting; Mediation of International Conflicts, Tom Crick, Senior Political Analyst, Conflict Resolution Program, The Carter Center; Global Leaders & Contagions: Anticipating the Next Pandemic, Diane Allensworth, PH. D., Associate Director for Education Partnerships, Centers for Disease



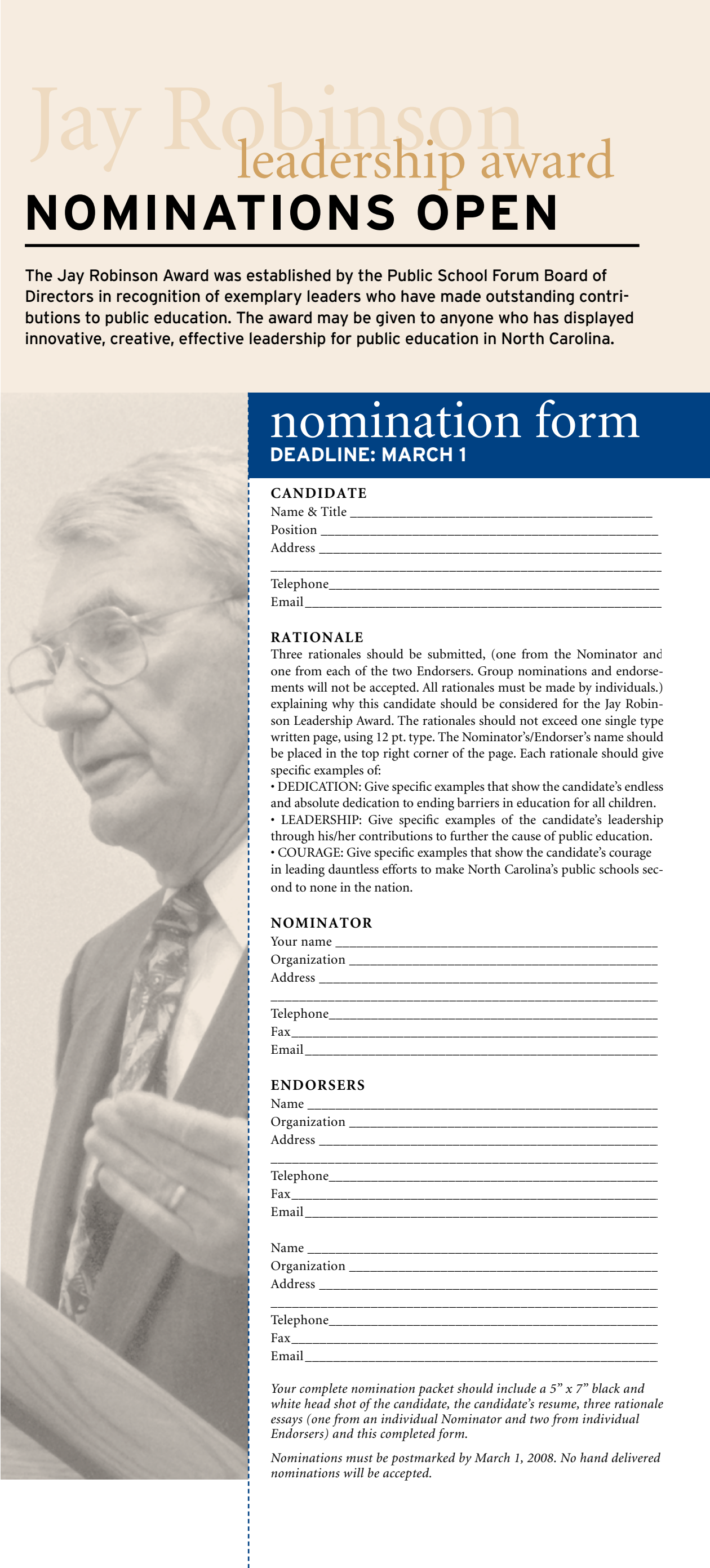
ing and Personal Advice” in which she challenged everyone to “strive for a life filled with Passion, Purpose, and Perspective.”

Cynthia Marshall has 26 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, joining Pacific Bell in 1981. She has held a variety of line management and staff positions in Operations, Human Resources, Network Engineering and Planning, and Regulatory/External Affairs. Before coming to North Carolina last year, she was Senior Vice President-Regulatory and Constituency Relations for AT&T California. In California, Marshall was instrumental in AT&T contributing \$3 million over three years to support the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program, a uniquely successful initiative that assists educationally disadvantaged students. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley with degrees in Business Administration and Human Resources management.

Following the keynote address, the graduates were presented framed certificates and their sponsors were recognized. They now join over 500 other EPFP alumni in a growing cadre of North Carolina educational leaders. *

Control; Setting the Agenda in a Global Age, David Lawrence, Jr., President, Early Childhood Initiative Foundation. The day ended with a sobering presentation by Beheruz Sethna, President, University of West Georgia on the topic of The Implications of the Flattening World for Georgia's Schools. There were numerous factors that could be replicated in other states.

The last day of the conference on Wednesday, December 5, proved as informative as the first days of the conference. Dr. Doug Brattebro, EPFP national Director presented from his studies as a presidential scholar about Presidential Leadership Failures. Brattebro shared factors of several Presidents which highlighted failures of leadership in their administrations. Merle Black, renowned professor of Politics and Government from Emory University closed the conference with his perennial favorite, Dixie and Democracy: Regional Change and the Country's Political Future. Each state delegation spent the last hour reflecting on the information presented during the conference and the delegation members' perspectives of the impact of the themes of leadership in a global age. The North Carolina delegation returned home steeped in information which focused on the issues of leadership in the global age. The next national conference will be the Washington Policy Seminar in April. This conference will focus on policy and leadership at the federal level. *



Jay Robinson leadership award NOMINATIONS OPEN

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

nomination form DEADLINE: MARCH 1

CANDIDATE

Name & Title _____
 Position _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____
 Email _____

RATIONALE

Three rationales should be submitted, (one from the Nominator and one from each of the two Endorsers. Group nominations and endorsements will not be accepted. All rationales must be made by individuals.) explaining why this candidate should be considered for the Jay Robinson Leadership Award. The rationales should not exceed one single type written page, using 12 pt. type. The Nominator's/Endorser's name should be placed in the top right corner of the page. Each rationale should give specific examples of:

- DEDICATION: Give specific examples that show the candidate's endless and absolute dedication to ending barriers in education for all children.
- LEADERSHIP: Give specific examples of the candidate's leadership through his/her contributions to further the cause of public education.
- COURAGE: Give specific examples that show the candidate's courage in leading dauntless efforts to make North Carolina's public schools second to none in the nation.

NOMINATOR

Your name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

ENDORSERS

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

Your complete nomination packet should include a 5" x 7" black and white head shot of the candidate, the candidate's resume, three rationale essays (one from an individual Nominator and two from individual Endorsers) and this completed form.

Nominations must be postmarked by March 1, 2008. No hand delivered nominations will be accepted.



UPCOMING SYNERGY CONFERENCE

NC CAP's SYNERGY Conference, scheduled for March 3-5, 2008 in Greensboro, will feature over 50 workshops, 30 vendors, networking receptions, and a special pre-conference opportunity on afterschool funding, sustainability, and quality enhancement. This fourth annual event was created to bring together a broad spectrum of community and school-based afterschool providers for training, networking, and sharing of effective practices. SYNERGY is held in collaboration with the NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Support Our Students Program, Boys & Girls Clubs, Communities in Schools, NCSU 4-H Youth Development, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Pre-Conference

The March 3 Pre-Conference offers a special opportunity for people who are interested in starting an afterschool program, but are not sure where to begin. The program will also serve as a refresher course on program sustainability and how the afterschool landscape in North Carolina has changed over the years. Pre-Conference programs will

showcase all of the major state funding and quality enhancement agencies. The agencies will introduce their services and funding guidelines, share tips and strategies for the RFP process, and field questions. Through panels, workshops, and a special evening reception, participants will leave with the latest resources on funding a high quality afterschool program in North Carolina.

Workshops

The March 4-5 Workshops will address current challenges in the field and connect those working in, partnering with, or advocating for afterschool programs with the most recent research and tools. Conference strands will cover capacity building, diversity, evaluation, policy, student achievement and well-being. Sample workshops include "Motivating the Unmotivated State of Mind" by Ken Babineaux, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; "Hip-Hope for Educators: Helping Teachers Relate to a New Culture" by W. Bernard Cook, HIP-HOPE Program; "Building Family and Community Involvement that Enhances Sustainability" by Dr. Bricca Prestridge Sweet, Executive Director, Ed-LBEX, Inc.; "Licensing Requirements

for Afterschool Programs" by Laura Hewitt, NC Division of Child Development; and "Internet Safety" by Lindsey L. Deere, North Carolina Department of Justice.

Featured Speakers

SYNERGY will also feature renowned speaker Gary McGuey, who was instrumental in developing The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens® workshop, based on the No. 1 best-selling business book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. A dynamic, energetic speaker, McGuey brings a keen sense of humor and extensive experience as an educator in both the public and private sectors in the U.S. and Canada.

Through both general session and workshop opportunities, McGuey will share a step-by-step framework for boosting self-image, building friendships, resisting peer pressure, achieving goals, improving communication and relationships with parents, and much more. The program is a means for educators, administrators, and superintendents to help improve student performance; reduce conflicts, disciplinary problems, and truancy; and to enhance cooperation and teamwork among parents, teens, and teachers. ✨

● **when** March 3-5, 2008

● **where** Greensboro, NC

● **who should attend?**

- Afterschool staff, directors, administrators, trainers
- School personnel - teachers, principals, central office staff, superintendents
- Faith- and community-based organizations interested in learning about afterschool
- PTA members
- Home school association members
- Funders
- Program volunteers, community leaders, and other afterschool advocates

● **how to register.**

Conference registration is \$135 and payable by cash, check, or credit card. The March 3 Pre-conference is an additional \$35.

Call NC CAP at (919) 781-6833 ext. 132 for more information or to register. Visit <http://www.nccap.net/about/conference.cfm> to download the registration form, which you may mail, email or fax form to:

NC CAP SYNERGY Summit
3739 National Drive, Suite 100,
Raleigh, NC 27612
Fax: (919) 781-6527
Attn: Rachel Chapin
Email: rchapin@ncforum.org

- Online registration (credit cards online please) is available at www.nccapconference.com.
- At a special discounted rate of \$118, rooms at the Koury Center's Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel can accommodate up to four people. Be sure to mention "NC CAP SYNERGY" when booking to receive the low rate. Call (800) 242-6556 or visit <http://www.kourycenter.com>. Hotel reservations must be booked by February 1.

The Collaborative Project

MOVING INTO FULL GEAR

The Collaborative Project, the five-county, multi-year project designed around intensive staff development, is moving into full gear. The project, an outgrowth of the Senate leadership's desire to see experimentation centered around staff development and financial incentives, has two primary goals: 1) to build the capacity of teachers and administrators working in demographically-challenged, low-wealth rural counties, and 2) by building their capacity increase the rate of student success while decreasing high teacher turnover rates.

Central to the Project is the addition of 11 days beyond the normal school calendar for staff development. Saturday training programs have already begun for teachers considering undergoing the rigorous process required for National Board Certification and the project will soon be announcing a schedule of intensive five-day professional development programs that will be offered on college campuses during the summer months, as well as, additional Saturday sessions.

The primary focus of the Project is on all teachers responsible for teaching mathematics at the elementary and middle-school level, beginning teachers and candidates for National Board Certification.

Currently the Project is building collaborative relationships with other organizations that offer high-quality professional development. The North Carolina Center for the Advancement for Teachers (NCCAT) is already conducting Saturday sessions around National Board Certification. The Teacher Academy is going to be coordinating a number of Saturday programs on topics like classroom management and working with young people living in poverty. The Math and Science Educational Net-

work is helping to design summer training for math teachers and discussions are underway with several other organizations about other possible collaborations.

Another component of the Project will lead to the creation of ten afterschool programs modeled after the Z. Smith Reynolds Young Scholars Program, a program that blended enrichment activities with academic support. Each of the five project counties will be launching two afterschool programs shortly after the New Year.

Project Staffing Now in Place

Two experienced educators are now coordinating the work of the Collaborative Project. Dr. Jean Murphy is the Project Director and Alfred Mays has joined her as the Assistant Director. Neither are strangers to the challenges facing low-wealth, rural counties in North Carolina. They previously worked together on the NC Model Teacher Education Consortium, a forty-plus county collaborative program designed to increase the supply of qualified teachers for counties.

Dr. Murphy served as the Executive Director of the Consortium from its inception in 1989 until 2006. Most recently she was Director of Peace College's new Teacher Education Program and was responsible for designing its Adult Evening Teacher Licensure Program.

Alfred Mays entered education as the coordinator of a "Troops to Teachers" initiative housed at the Department of Public Instruction. That program was focused on recruiting recently-retired military personnel into teaching. Most recently Mays was the Director of Informa-

tion Resources Affairs at UNC's Office of General Administration and brings with him extensive experience in applying technological solutions to educational problems and building strategic relationships that leverage limited resources.

The Collaborative Project is housed at the Public School Forum and co-coordinated by the Forum and the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center (the SMT Center). Commenting on the Project's progress, John Dornan, the Forum's Executive Director, said, "It's exciting to see the Project taking shape and much of the progress being made is due to the leadership being provided by Jean Murphy and Alfred Mays. Their backgrounds lend themselves well to a multi-county project like this and we're extremely optimistic about the future of the program." ❄️



Alfred Mays, assistant director and Dr. Jean Murphy, Collaboration project manager

STUDENTS HELP ELDERLY

AFTERSCHOOL PARTICIPANTS CREATE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

When participants in the Scotland SCHOLARS Serve afterschool program learned that some elderly adults in their community did not have sufficient funds to pay for their medications or utilities, they decided to set up a foundation where community members could submit proposals for assistance and receive monetary support.

Students from Project TRUST, a structured-day center for suspended or court-ordered youth, were the driving force behind the project, which was developed in the afterschool program. SCHOLARS Serve reaches 205 students in eight Scotland County schools. The students are charged with identifying community problems, brainstorming solutions, and designing a service project to address the problem.

"The lesson from Project TRUST's service learning project is to never underestimate what kids can do if

given responsibility, some guidance, and a whole lot of faith in their ability to get the job done," said Anne Crabbe, project coordinator for SCHOLARS Serve.

Through their own initiative, students researched procedures and governance rules for creating a foundation. At their local library, participants researched Roberts Rules of Order and parliamentary procedure, and created rules for their foundation. Operating similarly to the board of a real foundation, the youth met, discussed and made decisions regarding the allocation of funds to community members in need.

At one elementary school, students visited weekly with local retirement center residents and elected to help the seniors improve their outdoor courtyard. Students devised a list of supplies and a budget then went with staff members to purchase pots, plants, paint, and bird feeder kits. With these supplies, the

students and retirement home residents worked together to build and paint the birdfeeders, which were hung outside each senior resident's window when complete. Students used the remainder of the supplies to beautify the communal courtyard.

Anne Crabbe attributes much of the success of SCHOLARS Serve to the student ownership and investment in the projects. "It was their project, not the teachers' project," she explained. "Not only were they learning about helping others, but they were beginning to look at needs in their community and to address ways in which to involve themselves in the solutions."

For more information about the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium's Small Grants Program, which funds Project TRUST, contact Christie Hinson at (919) 962-8389 or hinson@sog.unc.edu. ❄️

10 *to* WATCH IN 2008

In what has become a holiday tradition, the Forum annually looks into its crystal ball and makes predictions on what educational issues will dominate in the year ahead. This year, before issuing predictions, we did the unthinkable and looked back to see how the 2007 Ten to Watch list held up. We were pleasantly surprised to find that most of the issues that made last year's list were indeed among the prominent issues of 2007.

Included in last year's forecasting were predictions that North Carolina's Education Lottery would not be the windfall it was predicted to be (it wasn't), that student test scores would hit a glass ceiling (they did), that the leadership of the state's House of Representatives would undergo major changes (it has) and that the teacher shortage would not go away (it hasn't).

With leadership at the state and national levels being hotly contested, politics and the potential for major swings in educational priorities rank high on our 2008 list. However, less predictable issues, like the potential for continued drought conditions and concerns about crumbling roads and bridges putting education on the back burner when it comes to additional funding, also are on our list of Ten to Watch. With no more introduction, what follows is the Forum's Ten to Watch list for 2008:

Presidential Elections May Well Determine Federal Role in Education

No small part of the reason Congress reached a dead-lock on reauthorizing the federal government's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation is the deep division that exists over the legislation not only inside leadership circles of both political parties but among presidential candidates of both parties.

Some of the presidential candidates are concerned over the validity of NCLB's testing policies. Others believe the federal government has overstepped its bounds and is intruding on education, traditionally a states' rights issue. Still others contend that until the federal government assumes a larger funding responsibility for education that it can't hold states accountable for meeting higher, federally-imposed standards.

Those concerns make it virtually certain that the delayed debate over NCLB which will take place after the 2008 elections has the potential to be a pivotal moment in the history of education in the United States. At stake is far more than whether No Child Left Behind will continue.

The fundamental issue comes down to whether the United States, like virtually every other developed nation, will assume major responsibility for education. Will there be national testing standards; or, will accountability continue to rest on fifty different state systems of accountability? Will state and local governments continue to bear the majority of funding obligations for schools; or, will the federal government invest more in the education of its young people?

No Child Left Behind was the major educational initiative of the Bush Administration. It may well be that the debate over the fate of NCLB that will take place during a new Administration's tenure will determine not only whether NCLB continues or ends, but what role the federal government will play in education for years to come.

Change in State Leadership Could Signal Change in Priorities

Closer to home, North Carolina's statewide elections in 2008 also portend changes in educational priorities. For education, the major election is obviously the race for Governor. New Administrations typically mean new educational priorities. Last year's educational panaceas frequently become political orphans as Administrations change hands, and that is certainly possible following the 2008 elections. What that means for the current Governor's priorities, More at Four, high school reform and the lottery, remains to be seen.

While it is too early to predict what changes might occur in the next Administration, all of the candidates in the Governor's race were largely supportive of education and voiced concerns about essentially the same issues at the first Candidates' Forum sponsored in November by the NC School Boards Association. Over the course of the coming months, however, the field will be narrowed and educational differences will begin to emerge.

In addition to the governor's race, a lively primary campaign is shaping up in the Democratic Party as incumbent Superintendent June Atkinson and her challenger, NCAE President Eddie Davis, go toe to toe. Given that the Office of Superintendent has been stripped of most of its authority, many view the election as largely symbolic, but the winner will still have a

“bully pulpit” and can be a force in policy debates.

Additionally, the races for Lt. Governor and State Treasurer will impact the State Board of Education. Both offices serve on the State Board by virtue of position and with both Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue and State Treasurer Richard Moore running for Governor, their successors will automatically become voting members of the Board of Education.



Competition for State Dollars Will Be Heightened

The 2007 Session of the General Assembly could well have been prelude to what is becoming a more competitive environment for state funding support. During the 2007 Sessions, UNC colleges and universities, advocates for water and sewer dollars and supporters of additional funding for land conservation succeeded in bringing their issues to the front burner of legislative attention.

In 2008 the competition for state dollars may grow even keener. External events like the continued drought that grips North Carolina or the attention being paid to the condition of the state’s roads and bridges following a bridge collapse in Minnesota, could be major issues in the 2008 Session. It is entirely possible that recommendations coming out of the Governor’s recently appointed blue ribbon commission on highways or the plight of dozens of communities faced with dwindling water supplies could dominate funding debates in 2008.

Competing for attention with those issues will be the question of health care and the prospects of thousands of North Carolinians being left uninsured as a result of changes in federal health funding. Also vying for attention will be two and four-year colleges faced with enrollment growth, state employees who chaff at receiving smaller salary increases than educators and the pressure to bring teachers salaries closer to the national average.

If nothing else is certain, the lines at the door of the General Assembly’s Appropriations Committees will be longer and more vocal than usual. New voices will be clamoring for state support and lawmakers will find themselves confronted with Hobson’s Choices when it comes to funding priorities, all of which makes continued significant support for school improvement a debatable proposition in the 2008 Session.



When it Comes to School Construction We Have Met the Enemy and It Is Them & Us

At this time last year, many in the school community (including those of us at the Forum) believed that the chances were good for a \$2 billion school construction bond being supported by the General Assembly. Around the state, nearly 1,000 supporters of a bond had attended regional meetings, the concept had received editorial support in major state newspapers and it appeared almost certain that the state would move to give counties relief from the mounting backlog of construction needs.

While the General Assembly gave counties relief from medicare obligations and empowered them to go to the people for permission to impose higher

sales taxes or land transfer taxes, efforts to support a major construction bond went nowhere in the 2007 Session. Since then, all 16 counties that went to the voters for approval to enact land transfer taxes went down to defeat as a result of real estate and builders’ associations pouring over \$400,000 into local races.

The construction issue, however, has not been resolved. In 2008 expect continued debate over ways to meet the growing backlog of school construction need – now estimated to exceed \$10 billion dollars.

Beyond that, watch for growing strains between educators, local officials and members of the General Assembly who represent high-growth counties and those representing counties whose student enrollment numbers are stagnant or dropping. With that, another schism emerged during the 2007 Session between counties with relatively low local tax rates and those that impose above-average taxes on local real estate.

The new schism traces its roots back to the formula used to distribute lottery funds earmarked for school construction. The formula provides more funding for counties with above-average tax rates and less for counties that are below statewide taxing averages. The dollar impact of the formula is significant. Wake County’s school enrollment, for instance, is now slightly larger than Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s enrollment. Because of differences in the two counties taxing policies, however, Charlotte was slated to receive \$18 million of lottery revenue for school construction while Wake was projected to receive \$9 million, or one-half of that received by Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

In the 2007 Session, a move to revise the lottery formula was narrowly defeated. In the meantime, supporters of changes were adamantly opposed to considering new ways to ease the school construction problem. One prominent legislator said it best, “Until this lottery mess (i.e., the school construction formula) is straightened out we’re not going to talk about a school construction bond.”

The potential of strains between high growth/no growth counties and between high tax/low tax counties could intensify in 2008. In the meantime, associations of real estate agents and builders stand ready to work against land transfer fee initiatives at the local level. The combination of the two will, in all likelihood, result in little progress being made on the school construction front in 2008.



Student Performance & Testing Debates Will Intensify

As predicted in last year’s Ten to Watch, most student performance indicators were down slightly or flat in 2007. After over a decade of steady measurable progress on indicators ranging from the state’s ABCs tests to scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to SAT scores, performance growth has been marginal at best or slipping at worst for the last three years.

The decline has been most marked at the high school level. In 2007, 290 high schools were found to have less than 65% of their students performing at proficient levels. Worse, 127 high schools had fewer than 50% of their students at proficiency.

That trend will result in 2008’s student performance indicators coming under intense scrutiny. At issue is whether the state has been experiencing

a temporary performance growth setback; or, has student performance hit a glass ceiling that calls out for new approaches.

With that, the State Board of Education will receive recommendations from a blue ribbon Task Force charged with studying the state’s current accountability program and making recommendations on how to improve it. Some of the recommendations would require a major rethinking of the state’s curriculum as well as major changes in the types of assessments now being used.

While more and more voices are calling for educational standards that are up to twenty-first century standards, the state’s accountability system and curriculum standards have remained little changed since the early nineties. Revising either the state curriculum or testing policies will mean major, and to some, wrenching changes in the status quo.

Dealing with this issue in a constructive and forward-thinking way will prove to be a major test for the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Education in the year ahead.



Middle Schools Will Be Rediscovered

As a result of the Gates Foundation’s funding of high school reform and Judge Manning’s threat to shut down the state’s lowest performing high schools, the attention of policymakers and educators has been riveted on high school improvement in recent years. While the drive to improve high schools will continue in 2008, a number of factors will lead to the rediscovery of middle schools.

Heading the list of factors that will refocus attention on the middle school years is the growing realization that unprepared ninth graders are unlikely to become high achievers once in high schools, even with the best-intentioned interventions. That realization is supported by testing data that clearly shows the linkage between low performance in middle schools and poor performance and high dropout rates in high schools whose student populations come from the state’s lowest performing middle schools.

2008 will mark the beginning of a major push to insure that young people entering high school have a stronger foundation in the basics. While the drive to rethink and reform high schools will continue apace, debates around new initiatives aimed at curbing dropout rates and graduating young people ready for work or for college will center not just on 9th-12th grades, but focus on the critical middle school building block years as well.



The Debate Over Dealing with Teacher Shortages Will Shift to Insuring Teacher Quality

In recent years, educators and policymakers have sought ways to increase the supply of teachers. Barriers to gaining teacher certification have been eased. Incentives to attract career changers into education have been created, and several new scholarship programs have been introduced to lure more people into teaching.

Locally, school recruiting efforts now extend into other countries as well as into states that have

a surplus of teacher candidates. Counties are using recruiting bonuses and, in some cases, housing subsidies to attract new teachers.

While these efforts are beginning to make a difference in the supply/demand situation, a growing number of researchers are arguing that the issue goes well beyond filling classrooms with bodies. Instead, they contend that the real issue is the quality, not merely the quantity, of teachers in the classroom.

The contention that policymakers should focus on building the capacity of teachers has been building ever since Dr. William Sanders released a multi-year study of the relationship between teacher quality and student performance that was based on a statewide analysis of teacher effectiveness in Tennessee.

Since that original study, similar studies have been conducted in cities like Dallas and elsewhere. The findings are stark. Young people who are assigned to weak or ineffective teachers for two or more years, especially in the early elementary years, are educationally scarred for life. Conversely, young people fortunate enough to have high quality teachers for consecutive years will typically flourish academically.

Most recently these findings have been bolstered by a study conducted by the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company. The study focused on countries that are at the top of international comparisons in education and attempted to isolate what they were doing that differed from other, lower-performing countries, including the United States.

They concluded that in high-performing countries, the pivotal difference was in how teachers were selected, trained and supported once into the profession. High performing countries have high standards for teacher candidates. Their preparation includes far more time spent in actual classroom settings prior to graduation from teacher preparation programs. Perhaps most importantly, once in the profession, teachers are provided with time to continue learning and perfecting their skills.

New teachers are assigned smaller teaching loads in their beginning years to enable them to have time to observe seasoned teachers and continue coursework. The best teachers become coaches and mentors for new teachers. Teachers work together to perfect lesson plans and teaching strategies that work.

In North Carolina the issue of finding ways to attract and retain highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff schools has attracted increased attention in recent years. Largely ineffective initiatives in North Carolina and around the country are increasingly convincing policymakers and educators that financial incentives, while important, are not sufficient to attract high quality teachers to hard-to-staff schools.

That is leading to the conclusion that schools need to become more effective at working to build the capacity of teachers within those hard-to-staff schools. One such experiment is underway in five North Carolina counties that are putting into place intensive staff development programs in an effort to build high quality faculties. Watch for more schools to abandon ineffective financial inducements and embrace new ways to support and build the capacity of their faculties. Beginning in 2008 the debate will shift from supply and demand to teacher quality.

educational ISSUE 8

General Assembly Will Be More Proactive

During the 2007 Session of the General Assembly leaders in both houses independently framed major educational initiatives focusing on curbing dropout rates and finding new approaches to boosting performance in small, rural school systems.

Their actions appeared to stem from increasing impatience with North Carolina continuing to have one of the nation's highest dropout rates and with frustration at student performance gains leveling off or dipping slightly.

The proactivity of the General Assembly might also be anticipated, coming as the current Administration nears the end of its eight-year tenure. For roughly five years, the Administration has focused exclusively on expanding access to the More at Four program and to increasing support for high school reform efforts.

During the 2007 Session lawmakers in both houses independently searched for new approaches to school improvement. House members held hearings on root causes of high dropout rates and successful strategies that curbed dropout rates. Senate education leaders held focus group discussions with superintendents, nonprofit organizations, teachers and others to discuss ways to strengthen schools of North Carolina.

Since the 2007 Session adjourned leaders in both houses have continued looking for new approaches to old educational problems. Expect more proactivity from the General Assembly in 2008.

educational ISSUE 9

North Carolina Grantmakers Could Play Major Role In Rethinking School Improvement

Foundations can make a major impact on educational policy. Witness the impact the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have had on high school reform efforts not only in the state but around the country.

Closer to home, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's willingness to fund experimentation with kindergarten education is credited with laying the foundation for what would become state-supported, statewide kindergarten access for young people.

2008 has the potential to see private and corporate North Carolina foundations make a major contribution to school improvement. They are underwriting a major study in order to identify missing pieces in the school improvement puzzle. The study is being conducted by national researchers and is expected to be issued prior to November's general election.

The foundations leading the effort are part of North Carolina Grantmakers, a statewide organization of public and private foundations that invest in North Carolina. The foundations within NC Grantmakers that focus heavily on K-12 education, concluded that the state lacks a master plan for school improvement. Subsequently, foundations confronted with requests for educational funding have no litmus test they can apply to see if one initiative holds more potential than another to move the state forward.

Given that the State is about to undergo a change in administrations the foundations hope that their study and subsequent recommendations will have an impact on educational policy making in the transition from today's administration to the next.

The foundations also hope that the results from the study will give them a roadmap that will enable them to make more strategic educational investments in the years ahead. Supporting this initiative are a number of foundations including the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Weaver Foundation and the Wachovia Foundation.

Given the credibility of the groups supporting this study, it has the potential to be a driver for school improvement in 2008 and beyond.

educational ISSUE 10

Judge Manning's Influence Will Continue to Be Felt

For years, the Forum's Ten to Watch list would not have been complete without including the potential for Judge Manning, the presiding judge overseeing the Leandro case, to shape the direction of North Carolina's schools. This year is no exception.

Since Manning found that North Carolina is not meeting its constitutional obligation to provide a sound, basic education to all young people, the Judge has been a major driver of school improvement efforts in North Carolina. As an example, Judge Manning's charge that North Carolina's lowest performing high schools are committing "academic genocide" led the state to intervene in low performing high schools and it has led the Department of Public Instruction to focus assistance programs on a growing number of high schools across the state.

Since the Leandro ruling, the General Assembly has also created the Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Fund that targets new resources toward students based on need. Since the fund was established it has been increased annually, albeit at a relatively modest pace..

In recent months Judge Manning's views on school improvement have shifted somewhat. He has been, for instance, among the first to refocus on the connection between low-performing middle schools and low-performing high schools and recently convened an all-day hearing focusing on middle school approaches that are showing results. He has also reached the conclusion that hard-to-staff schools in rural or inner city areas need to focus on improving the capacity of their faculties.

While some lawmakers chafe at the role of Judge Manning, others, including Republican Candidate for Governor, Robert Orr, who wrote the Supreme Court ruling upholding Manning's decision, say that as long as the administration and General Assembly fail to act, they cannot condemn the judge for holding the state's feet to the fire.

Perhaps the safest prediction that can be made for 2008 is that Judge Manning will not go quietly into the night until the state is making measurable progress toward insuring that all young people have access to a sound, basic educational opportunity.



2007 LOCAL SCHOOL FINANCE STUDY

NOW AVAILABLE! ORDER YOURS TODAY!

For 20 years the Public School Forum has published an annual study of local school spending across North Carolina. The study focuses not only on the amount that county commissioners spend on their local schools; it puts that number in the context of the wealth of a county. Specifically, the study rates counties based on the "effort" they make to support their local schools.



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What Readers Are Saying About The Study

"The Forum's Study has been an essential tool when I teach school finance. I use the study as a basic "text" in helping graduate students in school administration understand finance and taxation theory as well as value-laden issues such as equity, fairness, and responsibility."

DR. KEN JENKINS, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

"It emerged when the state first confronted the reality of local school funding inequity and has proven to be the essential benchmark for progress in pursuing equal educational opportunities from the funding perspective. It was critically important in the justification for additional funding for low wealth and small schools."

JIM BARBER, SENIOR EDUCATION ADVISOR, UNC CHAPEL HILL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

"It has provided the information necessary that has allowed school systems to be able to accurately compare the level of local funding from their county to other school systems. This ability has led to significant increases in local funding for many school systems."

DR. JIM CAUSBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

READING... continued from page 3

instance, did not emerge as a major predictor of quality. Nor did experiments with school choice, school structure and varying school governance approaches.

Instead, what the study found was that countries that focused on the quality of classroom teachers were significantly more likely to outperform countries that did not.

The conclusion reached in the study was:

"The experiences of those top school systems suggests that three things matter most: 1) getting the right people to become teachers, 2) developing them into effective instructors and, 3) insuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child."

Top-performing countries draw their teachers from the academically top one-third of entering college students. Some have a screening process that goes far beyond looking for top academic students, but employ screening interviews and assessments that are designed to determine the probability of a candidate's success once in the classroom. Once candidates for teaching are identified, top-performing countries invest in them, in some cases providing a tuition-free education for teacher candidates.

In contrast, states across the United States, especially high-growth states like North Carolina, have lowered screening standards and increasingly rely on college graduates who majored in fields

other than education. Most U.S. education majors come from the academic bottom one-third of their entering classes.

While the selection of prospective teachers is the critical first step in developing high-quality teachers, the preparation process in top-performing countries does not end when teacher candidates graduate from college and enter the workforce. Instead, top-performing countries invest heavily in the continued development of their teachers.

Teaching loads, compared to those in the United States, are light. Time is provided for new teachers to learn on the job, work with seasoned teachers and observe master teachers at work. Some of the top-performers even subsidize international travel that allows teachers to observe best educational practices around the world. In contrast, new teachers across the United States are typically expected to shoulder a full teaching load, often in classrooms with some of the nation's most demographically challenged young people.

It should be noted that educational top-performers also reward teachers and place a societal value on their jobs. While their pay is not exorbitant it is competitive, or nearly so, with jobs in the private sector.

Last, but certainly not least, countries with uniformly high educational standards take great pains to insure that students who need the very

best teachers are likely to get them – a sharp contrast to the United States where the nation's neediest students are most likely to have the nation's least experienced and capable teachers. Many employ rotation patterns in which teachers are moved to high-need schools for a fixed period of time to insure a stable supply of high-quality teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

For the United States the findings of this study have much to recommend them. While the nation has been consumed with a school improvement movement since the publication of "A Nation at Risk" in 1983, the results have been discouraging.

The findings of this study would suggest that the reason for the lack of results is that the reform movement in the United States has focused on the wrong things. Reform initiatives have typically swung from providing more resources, to experiments (most of them failed) with merit pay, to presumptions that if standards were raised and high-stakes accountability methods employed results would follow, to choice experiments ranging from charter schools to vouchers.

Top-performing countries, in contrast, have been focused on the classroom – more specifically, top-performing countries have concentrated on the one factor that is likely to make the most difference, the quality of the teacher standing in front of a room full of potential learners. This is a study worth reading. *



NORTH CAROLINA
TEACHING FELLOWS
PROGRAM

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

PREPARING OUR STUDENTS TO TEACH DIVERSE STUDENTS



Jewell E. Cooper, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Junior Teaching Fellows Seminar Leader, UNC-Greensboro

With increasing cultural diversity entering our nation's classrooms, we must rethink the traditional ways that we have been preparing preservice teachers to teach. Lack of knowledge by our teacher education students about their learners' cultural capital can oftentimes lead to poor com-

munication that, in turn, translates to behavioral challenges related to the learners and engenders continued negative stereotypical beliefs about learners and their families by teachers and administrators. Perhaps, if we lead our teacher education students from the architecture of their schools into the communities of their learners, we could not only challenge their beliefs but also we could create avenues of better understanding and increase possibilities and realities of the ongoing practice of culturally relevant teaching.

At UNC Greensboro (UNCG), junior Teaching Fellows engaged in six community-based activities, designed by the author and the past Director of the UNCG Teaching Fellows that were implemented to guide them from knowledge of themselves into the communities of their learners. The six activities,

- Personal Autobiography
- Bio-poem
- Privilege Walk
- Camera Safari
- Walking a Mile in Another's Shoes
- Debunking the Community

occurred over a period of an academic year. The first four activities took place during the first semester; the last two activities were executed during the second semester of their Teaching Fellows seminar experience. The goals of the seminar were:

- to help Teaching Fellows experience diversity or "otherness" themselves
- to provide sequentially connected experiences for cultural engagement that went beyond the

schools where Teaching Fellows were completing internships;

- to discover community/human assets in each community explored

Teaching Fellows expressed comfort in completing the first two activities; however, the Privilege Walk (an activity that unveiled the social construct of privilege) caused students to be "nervous," "confused," "isolated," and it "evoked bad memories." The Teaching Fellows began looking at themselves and their classmates differently because of earlier perceived perceptions. Fierce resistance and apprehension occurred with the Camera Safari because Teaching Fellows had to explore a community of an ethnically diverse student with whom they had worked with at their schools. The purpose of the activity was to find out the strengths of the community. (Teaching Fellows had to take 10 pictures of perceptions of the community). More often than not, I sent them to public housing communities. [NOTE: I explored these communities myself. I would not

"Now I see that I can go a little further if I want to really know how my students live day to day. Going into their communities is a good way to do that."



Two High Point elementary school students lead Teaching Fellows on a tour of their community.

have sent them to a place I felt was unsafe. With some, I accompanied them]. Safety clearly stood out as a concern. As one Teaching Fellow stated, “thank God I brought along my friend. I figured I would be safe.” Others felt “entirely out of place.” Furthermore, they were afraid of how they would be perceived. Interestingly, some of their cooperating teachers refused to accompany the Teaching Fellows when asked. More specifically, the teachers thought I was “crazy” to even make such an assignment. The Teaching Fellows went anyway and most were pleasantly surprised at what they found. One surmised, “I was shocked at this point, at the sense of pride I felt swelling up in the community. The more time I spent there, the more it seemed that this was a good place to live.” Teaching Fellows also suggested ways of how they could use what they discovered in the communities in teaching to and building relationships with their learners.

The fifth activity – Walking a Mile in Another’s Shoes – caused another level of frustration and resistance. The purpose of this activity was to give Teaching Fellows experiences that families, particularly some cases, low income families might experience. One Teaching Fellow reflected on the food stamp activity. She said, “I didn’t want to do the food stamps activity . . . I just kept thinking, I hope I don’t have to ever go through this. When one Teaching Fellow anticipated completing a police ride, she thought, “It would be a waste of my time, to be honest.” Even a Teaching Fellow of color, thinking about taking public transportation – rid-

Fellows suggested ways to use what they discovered in the communities – teaching to and building relationships with their leaders.

ing the bus to apply for a job – was not exciting. She noted, “Buses to me have always been... icky... I didn’t want to get on. I didn’t want all those people staring at me.” For still another Teaching Fellow, applying for a job as a single mom in need of daycare “wasn’t my idea of fun either. I had always had less patience for ‘those kinds of people.’” My response to the Teaching Fellows after such comments were made – if you feel that way, think how these families appear to others. Imagine if the learners knew these feelings. Somehow, silence always followed.

As students began Debunking the Community, they were not as afraid as they had been before, for they “had been to this community before.” This activity encouraged some Teaching Fellows to appreciate students’ backgrounds more. Home visits allowed Teaching Fellows to personally learn more about students they were teaching. Going to venues (i.e., houses of faith, community centers, recitals, etc.) in which students and families felt loved, successful, and competent helped Teaching Fellows admit that the risks were worthwhile. One Teach-

ing Fellow concluded, “I took a risk going. I never would have gone unless required or if I knew someone in the vicinity. I learned I live behind a pale veil, being downtown and privileged.” Still another Teaching Fellow admitted that the activities showed him that “as much as I try to value all people, I have deep-seeded prejudices.” Finally, completing all the activities allowed Teaching Fellows to express a stronger commitment to understanding and helping their students. A Teaching Fellow recognized his new vision when he said, “Now I see that I can go a little further if I want to really know how my students live day to day. Going into their communities is a good way to do that.”

I strongly encourage institutions of teacher education to consider incorporating community-based learning into the formal preparation process. By doing so, preservice teachers can become aware of the strengths students bring with them to school, begin destroying preconceived notions about learners and their families, and begin to develop more cultural competence in an effort to practice culturally relevant teaching in the classroom and to build stronger relationships with learners, their families, and members of the community at large.

Editors Note: For a more detailed reading of the Teaching Fellows engagement in these activities, see: Cooper, J. E. (2007). Strengthening the Case For Community-based Learning in Teacher Education. Journal of Teacher Education, 58, 245-255. ❁

FELLOWS GOING PLACES

GRADUATE FELLOW ELECTED MAYOR

When the Teaching Fellows Program was established over 20 years ago, the visionaries involved in crafting the program included an emphasis on leadership development and instilling a sense of mission, service, and professionalism among the program goals. The following is an excerpt from an article published in the Franklin Times (a local newspaper based in Louisburg, NC which serves all of Franklin County) following the November 6, 2007 local elections.

Voters in Franklinton, NC chose a native son and a man with a family history of public service when it chose Elic Senter as its new mayor. Elic won the mayor's seat in this, his first experience with election based public service. His grandfather served the public through education and his father is retired Judge J. Larry Senter.

"I'm excited about being able to serve my town," Senter said after the results came in. "That's what I've always wanted to do."

Senter bested Commissioner Art Wright who will retain his seat on the town board of commissioners. "I'm going to support Elic," said Wright, who will continue to serve the town as a com-

missioner. "Franklinton could not lose, no matter what choice they made."

Senter was sworn in at the meeting of the Franklinton Board of Commissioners that took place at the Franklinton Town Hall on December 18, 2007 at 7:00 pm.

Elic is a 1999 Teaching Fellow graduate of (then) Elon College. He spent six years teaching upper level high school science courses in Forsyth and Wake counties. In 2003, Elic was a finalist for Wake County Teacher of the Year. Elic continues his service to the state working to enhance better public education through his current employment as an Instruction and Professional Development Specialist with NCAE. ✨



UNC-W FELLOW HONORED

UNC-Wilmington Senior Teaching Fellow Gina Guerrero was recognized as Most Outstanding Student at the 22nd Annual Academic Achievement Awards Program for the 2006-2007 academic year in October.

Gina says that she is very honored to receive this award, and that, "I am currently interning at Wil-

liston Middle School and I am a Senior Teaching Fellow graduating in December. I am currently interviewing all over the state, and I have been offered three jobs so far!"

Guerrero adds that she has not decided on a position yet, but looks forward to having her own classroom soon. ✨



ECU TEACHING FELLOW INTERNS IN DC

Jason Morton, an ECU Teaching Fellow completed an internship at the National Education Association (NEA) as a participant in the UNC in Washington Program. The Program allows students in the UNC system to have the ability to spend the summer living in the heart of Washington, D.C., while interning at an organization of their choice. Morton spent four days each week, interning at the NEA, and one day participating in a seminar on democracy with the rest of the participants from all across North Carolina.

While at the NEA headquarters, Morton had very diverse experiences that included but were not limited; to meeting and interviewing the President/CEO of NEA, Reg Weaver; the Executive Director of NEA and North Carolina native, John Wilson; the 2007 National Teacher of the Year, Andrea Peterson; and Democratic Presidential candidate, John Edwards.

As an intern, Morton participated in a number of conference calls, meetings, and discussions on education. He attended discussions on Capitol Hill dealing with bullying and harassment in schools, after-school programs, and career and technical education, as well as a discussion on early childhood education with Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton. Morton also attended the 2007 NEA Representative Assembly in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, where nine presidential candidates spoke to a delegation of 15,000 teachers.

As an intern, he worked on projects that NEA will use in the future, including designing a brochure for the NEA Internship Program. Morton wrote and composed a rap song about the NEA mission and core values, which was recorded by his department and given to all the NEA executives.

Morton shares that, "My biggest accomplishment and masterpiece was my extensive research project entitled, Creating Achievement Through the Arts in Education." This project showed how the Arts could be integrated into NEA's C.A.R.E. Program, which helps at-risks students which helps to close the achievement gap. The staff at NEA was so impressed with his project that they asked him to make a presentation of the project for a group of NEA staffer and other educators.

Morton says, "Interning at NEA expanded my knowledge of education, tremendously, and made me an even greater advocate for education and ensuring that every child has the ability to have the best education. The NEA really knows how to treat its interns." Morton stated, "I was treated with the utmost respect. They made me feel as if I were an employee. I would advise anyone who is interested in education to participate in the UNC in Washington Program." ✨

top to bottom: Mayor Elic Senter with outgoing Mayor Jenny Edwards after final results reveal he is incoming Mayor; Senior Teaching Fellow Gina Guerrero with Most Outstanding Student Award; Jason L. Morton interning at the National Education Association with Executive Director of the National Education Association, John Wilson.

2008 FELLOWS DATES & DEADLINES

MORE STUDENTS APPLY

TO TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM

The deadline for applications for the Teaching Fellows Scholarship to be received in the Forum office was November 19. The Teaching Fellows Commission staff has been frantically processing applications and reports that there is a substantial increase over 2006. The total number of applications in 2006 was 1,869. In 2007, the number of applications increased to 2,156.

More Minority Applicants

The Forum's Director of Teacher Recruitment, Danny Bland, has worked with 22 school systems to reach more minority students. In addition, newspaper ads ran for six weeks from August 13 through October 19. 800 Radio spots on the sports Flash Radio Network were used extensively this year prior to the application deadline. Bland also participated in the CACRAO tour (High School College Fairs) which traveled to North Carolina high schools over a three week period. Other Teaching Fellows staff members met with other groups and organizations to share information about the Fellows Program. As a result, minority applications increased from 341 in 2006 to 469 this year. All of the state's 115 school systems had applications this year.

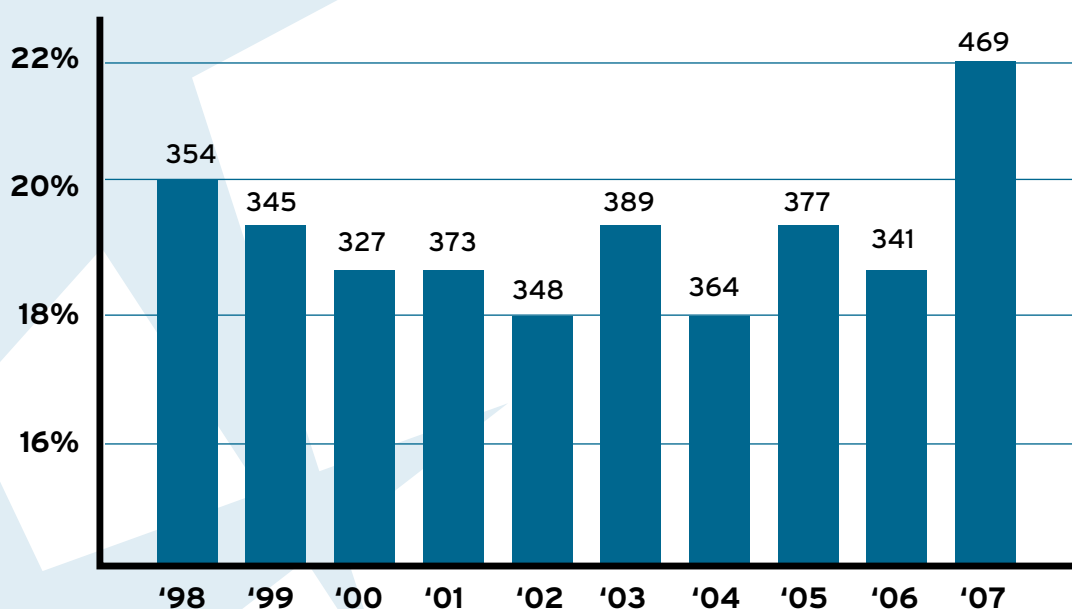
New Website a Plus

The new Teaching Fellows website made it possible for the Commission to share applicant information with the Teaching Fellows campuses this year. This will provide the colleges and universities early access to students who have indicated an interest in teaching.

Applicant Statistics for 2007

- Total number of Teaching Fellows applications this year is up from 2006 by 287 for a grand total of 2,156.
- 2007 figures mark the highest number of applicants in the last 10 years.
- Minority applicants is up this year from last year by 128; for a total of 469. (see chart below)
- Number of minority applicants this year is the highest in the program's history!
- This year minority applications make up 22% of the total applicant pool; another 10 year high.
- In the 22 school systems that have Project Teach, total applicants are up from the prior year by 97, while minority applicants are up 47.

Minority Applicants Up



The chart above indicates the number of minority applicants as a percentage of the total number of applicants.

| | | |
|-----|----|---|
| JAN | 4 | Commission Meeting |
| | 11 | 2008 Regional Finalists Notified |
| | 16 | Campus Directors Meeting |
| | 18 | 2008 Regional Finalists List Online (www.teachingfellows.org) |

RECRUITMENT DAYS

| | | |
|-----|----|---|
| JAN | 26 | Campbell 9am-3pm ECU 9am-4pm Lenoir-Rhyne 9am-3pm NCA&T 1-4pm Queens 10am-2:30pm UNC-G 10am-2:30pm |
| | 27 | NCSU 12 noon-4pm |
| FEB | 2 | ASU 9am-4pm ELON 8:15am-2pm UNC-C 8am-12 noon UNC-P 8:30am-1:30pm NCCU 1-4pm |
| | 9 | ECSU 1-5pm Meredith 12:30-4:30pm UNC-A 9am-1pm UNC-W 12 noon-4pm WCU 10:30am-4:30pm |
| | 10 | UNC-CH 2-6pm |

REGIONAL FINALISTS SCREENING

| | | |
|-----|----|--|
| FEB | 16 | Region 1 ECU <i>Mendenhall Student Union</i> Region 2 UNC-W <i>School of Education</i> Region 3 NCSU <i>Poe Hall, Room 216</i> Region 6 UNC-C <i>Bonnie Cone Center</i> |
| | 23 | Region 4 Campbell <i>Taylor Hall</i> Region 5 NCA&T Region 7 LRC <i>Cromer Center</i> Region 8 UNC-A <i>Karpen Hall</i> |
| MAR | 5 | Region 9 Meredith Statewide Make-up Day |

SUMMER EXPERIENCES

| | |
|-----------|---|
| May 17-24 | DISCOVERY 2008 NCCU, Durham Registration: May 18, 12 noon-2:30pm |
| Jul 18-20 | Senior Conference Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory Registration: July 18, 1-2:30pm |
| Jul 25-27 | Junior Conference Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory Registration: July 25, 1-2:30pm |

GRIER HONORED

AS SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR



Dr. Terry B. Grier

Dr. Terry B. Grier, Superintendent of Guilford County Schools, was named the 2008 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year at an awards presentation and reception held Tuesday, Nov. 6 at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The award was given jointly by the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA). TE21, Inc. sponsored the event and provided a \$5,000 award to the winner.

Dr. Grier has been superintendent of Guilford

County Schools (GCS) since 2000, a district with 119 schools that serve over 71,400 students. Prior to coming to Guilford County, Dr. Grier served as superintendent in several schools systems across the country, including districts in Tennessee, California and Ohio.

During his tenure as superintendent, Dr. Grier has been credited with leading GCS to become one of the first districts to address the educational crisis of teacher turnover and shortage in highly impacted schools with the nationally recognized incentive program "Mission Possible," increasing student participation in higher-level courses such as the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula, cutting the district's dropout rate in half from six percent to three percent, initiating the district's first middle college high school program and improving district AYP and ABC test results.

A statement written by the 14 superintendents who represent the Piedmont Triad area says this about Grier, "Creativity, innovation and the ability to mobilize people to tackle really difficult problems sets Terry apart from many of his peers. He surrounds himself with people who share common beliefs and values. He is unusually gifted in managing conflict. He and his team constantly seek ways to help students, especially those who struggle to succeed." The statement continues, "The success of a genuine leader can never be calibrated in isolation. A leader truly becomes a

hero when he is graciously willing to share his ideas and resources in a selfless manner with others. Terry is such a leader..."

"Terry Grier personifies what the late President John F. Kennedy meant when he said, 'a child miseducated is a child lost,'" said NCASA Executive Director Bill McNeal. "He has spent his career saving children through the creation of innovative programs and visionary leadership. He is a role model for twenty-first century educational leaders."

Dr. Ed Dunlap, Jr., Executive Director of NCSBA, said, "Terry is an innovative leader and outstanding superintendent with a successful tenure in Guilford County."

Along with Dr. Grier, the 2008 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year nominees included:

- Mr. David C. Burlison, Burke County Schools
- Dr. Samuel A. DePaul, Stanly County Schools
- Mr. Clifton B. Dodson, Buncombe County Schools
- Dr. Rufus Gene Hales, Clinton City Schools
- Dr. Susan Joy Richardson Purser, Moore County Schools
- Dr. Norman W. Shearin, Jr., Vance County Schools ❄️



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Public School Forum of North Carolina
Glenwood Place, Cumberland Building
3739 National Drive, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27612
TEL (919) 781-6833
FAX (919) 781-6527
www.ncforum.org

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Katie Dorsett, Chair

John N. Dorman, President/Executive Director

Jo Ann Norris, Associate Executive Director

Claire Ancelet, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

Danny Bland, Director, Teacher Recruitment,
Teaching Fellows Program

Melissa Churchwell, Coordinator of Special Programs,
Teaching Fellows Program

Kristen Dibble, Administrative Assistant,
Collaborative Project

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Teaching Fellows Program

Lynne Stewart, Program Officer,
Teaching Fellows Program