



# Legislative Link

*A Publication for the Members of the N.C. Association of School Administrators*

**January 30, 2009**

## **Key Topics in This Edition:**

- 1. Cumberland Superintendent Tapped As K-12 Leader**
- 2. U.S. House Approves Federal Stimulus To Buoy Schools**
- 3. Legislature Begins 2009 Session With No Change In Leadership**
- 4. Summary Of This Week's Action On Bills Affecting Public Schools**

## **Cumberland Superintendent Tapped As K-12 Leader**

Gov. Bev Perdue on Monday named Cumberland County Schools Superintendent Dr. Bill Harrison as the state's Chief Executive Officer of public schools, a position that will combine the powers of the State Board of Education Chairman and the Deputy State Superintendent responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Perdue also announced that Howard Lee, current Chairman of the State Board of Education, will become Executive Director of the North Carolina Education Cabinet, a group that includes Perdue and top officials at all levels of education. J.B. Buxton earlier announced that he was leaving the post of Deputy State Superintendent, which previously has been in charge of daily operations of DPI.

Perdue has said in the past that there is no question that the Governor is in charge of public education in North Carolina, and the education changes she announced this week reflect her desire to have a strong, definitive leader of the state's K-12 school system.

"The buck is stopping right now, with me," she reiterated on Monday. She said her action to name Harrison as the state's K-12 leader helps clarify and streamline the line of authority and responsibility for the state's system of K-12 public schools.

The request to have one person as the leader and chief spokesman for public schools has been frequently requested by local superintendents and other educators, and that same feedback led to some of the recommendations that consulting group Evergreen Solutions announced this week for changing the leadership structure of DPI and the State Board of Education (SBE). The Evergreen report was presented Tuesday to the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Commission, which was charged by the 2008 General Assembly with reviewing the state-level governance structure of the K-12 public school system and identifying changes that would strengthen that system.

Gov. Perdue announced her plan for changing that structure the day before the Evergreen report was presented to the legislative commission. The consultants' report, which may be viewed at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=228>, calls for a clearly defined leader of K-12 education.

"A prevailing issue throughout this study is the tension among the roles of the elected State Superintendent, the appointed State Board of Education and its Chairman, and the Deputy Superintendent appointed by the State Board who reports directly to the Board," Evergreen wrote in the report's executive summary. "The one universal belief shared among all stakeholders was the lack of clarity about the authority of these education leaders."

“The readily apparent diffused leadership of public education during the past 14 years has resulted in an education system of governance which stakeholders feel is dysfunctional, confusing, and in need of change,” the report states. “This mixed governance arrangement does not provide the focused and sustained leadership to advance pre-K-12 education in North Carolina. In order for the Department of Public Instruction to be effective in its role of administering the policies of the State Board, responding to requests and needs of local districts, implementing state statutes and federal laws, and administering and monitoring billions of dollars of state and federal funds, there is a need for clear leadership; an identified individual at the helm; and a consistency of expectations, delivery, feedback, and quality control.”

The changes in DPI and SBE leadership announced this week by Governor Perdue mesh with this recommendation and have been well received this week by educators across North Carolina, including Bill McNeal, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA).

“We commend Governor Perdue for hearing our voices and taking visionary steps to strengthen K-12 public education,” McNeal said. “The selection of Bill Harrison was extremely wise given his experience in effectively leading multiple-sized school districts in North Carolina and improving the proficiency of students in each. We look forward to supporting him in his new leadership role and working with him to respond to the tough issues facing public schools.”

The State Board of Education is expected to formally choose Harrison as Chairman at the board’s regular monthly meeting Feb. 4-5, and he is expected to begin in his new role in March.

Harrison, a long-time member of NCASA, began his teaching career in Fayetteville and has been Superintendent of Cumberland County Schools since 1997. He also has been Superintendent of Orange County Schools and Hoke County Schools.

## **U.S. House Approves Federal Stimulus To Buoy Schools**

**WASHINGTON** – The \$819 billion economic stimulus plan that gained approval by the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday would shower the nation’s school districts, child care centers and university campuses with \$150 billion in new federal spending, a vast two-year investment that would more than double the U.S. Department of Education’s current budget.

All but 11 Democrats voted for the plan, and 177 Republicans voted against it. The 244-188 vote came a day after President Barack Obama traveled to Capitol Hill to seek Republican backing, if not for the package then on coming issues. Obama, in a statement hailing the House passage of the plan, did not take note of the partisan divide but signaled that he expects changes to be made in the Senate that might attract support.

"I hope that we can continue to strengthen this plan before it gets to my desk," he said. "But what we can't do is drag our feet or allow the same partisan differences to get in our way. We must move swiftly and boldly to put Americans back to work, and that is exactly what this plan begins to do."

The proposed emergency expenditures approved by the U.S. House could profoundly change the federal government’s role in education, which has traditionally been the responsibility of state and local government. The package would impact nearly every realm of education, including school renovation, special education, Head Start and grants to needy college students, and it would amount to the largest increase in federal aid since Washington began to spend significantly on education after World War II.

Responding in part to a plea from Democratic governors earlier this month, Congressmen allocated \$79 billion to help states facing large fiscal shortfalls maintain government services, and especially to avoid cuts to education programs, from pre-kindergarten through higher education.

Obama administration officials, teachers unions, and associations representing school boards, school administrators, colleges and other institutions in American education said the aid would bring crucial financial relief to the nation’s 15,000 school districts and to thousands of campuses otherwise threatened with severe cutbacks.

"This is going to avert literally hundreds of thousands of teacher layoffs," Education Secretary Arne Duncan was quoted in media reports as saying on Tuesday.

Rep. George Miller, D-Calif. and Chairman of the U.S. House Education Committee, said, "We cannot let education collapse; we have to provide this level of support to schools."

Under the proposed federal stimulus package which now must clear the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Department of Education's discretionary budget of \$60 billion for the 2008 fiscal year would increase to roughly \$135 billion for 2009-2010, and to about \$146 billion in 2010-2011. Other federal agencies would administer about \$20 billion in additional education-related spending.

A document summarizing the education components of the federal stimulus measure as currently proposed is available at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=229> and includes the education funding levels highlighted below for North Carolina.

<b>North Carolina's PROPOSED Funding Under the Federal Stimulus Package</b>		
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2009-2010</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2010-2011</b>
Title I-A Grants (Schools with 30% or More Free & Reduced Lunch)	\$143,798,000	\$143,798,000
Title I-A School Improvement Grants	\$25,558,000	\$25,558,000
Title II-D Education Technology Grants	\$12,634,000	\$12,634,000
Individuals with Disabilities Act Part B Grants	\$166,943,000	\$202,403,000
Grants for Education of Homeless Children & Youth (McKinney-Vento Act)	\$858,000	\$858,000
Grants for School Facility Modernization, Renovation & Repair	\$363,695,000	N/A
Grants for Higher Education Facility Modernization, Renovation & Repair	\$187,457,000	N/A
Grants for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (At Least 61% Earmarked to Maintain State Education Funding at 2008-09 Funding Levels)	\$919,198,000	\$919,198,000
<b>N.C. Proposed Education Funding Total</b>	<b>\$1,820,141,000</b>	<b>\$1,304,449,000</b>
Head Start (Early Childhood Education Program)	\$8,411,914	\$8,411,914
Child Care & Development Block Grants	\$33,771,566	\$33,771,566
Community Services Block Grants	\$13,122,630	\$13,122,630
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance	N/A	\$18,421,107
Elderly Nutrition Services	\$3,047,894	\$3,047,894
Preventive Health & Health Services Block Grants	\$4,301,241	\$4,301,241
PELL College Grants For Low-Income Students	\$645,333,557	N/A
Employment & Training	\$81,338,934	N/A
Infrastructure & Transportation (Highways, Bridges, Transit, Railway & Clean Water)	\$996,163,687	N/A
<b>N.C. Proposed Non-Education Funding</b>	<b>\$1,785,491,423</b>	<b>\$81,076,352</b>
<b>Total of All Proposed Funding for N.C.</b>	<b>\$3,605,632,423</b>	<b>\$1,385,525,352</b>

## **Legislature Begins 2009 Session With No Change In Leadership**

State lawmakers returned to Raleigh on Wednesday beset with financial problems all around. But whether buoyed by the prospects of federal help or a belief that state programs need some re-

examination, legislators generally sounded positive that they could find ways to meet a budget gap expected to exceed \$2 billion.

"We have weathered the economic downturns of the past and we have, with careful planning, nurtured deficits into surpluses over time; I believe that this crisis will be no different but for the numbers," House Speaker Joe Hackney told his colleagues.

Hackney, D-Orange, and Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, D-Dare, were re-elected to new terms in their respective positions. For Basnight, it is a record ninth term as the leader of the Senate.

The House and Senate also chose deputy leaders. Rep. William Wainwright, D-Craven, was selected House Speaker Pro Tem; Sen. Charlie Dannelly, D-Mecklenburg, was chosen Senate Deputy Pro Tem.

After the leadership votes in each chamber, both chambers adopted operating rules for handling the flow of legislation, and those rules were not well received by House and Senate Republicans.

In the House, Minority Leader Paul "Skip" Stam, R-Wake, complained that House rules don't allow the minority party enough input on a budget bill and allow House leaders to prevent votes even when legislation is favored by a majority. Senate Minority Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said Senate Democrats' refusal to accept any Republican suggestions on rule changes reflect "an extremely partisan Senate" content to operate behind closed doors.

The bill filing process opened, and deadlines for when new legislation must be filed already have been established. Lawmakers adjourned mid-day on Thursday for the weekend and will return to Raleigh on Monday night for their first full week of work. The next major actions expected to occur in each chamber will involve the announcement of the House and Senate committee structure and the leadership and membership of each committee.

## **Summary Of This Week's Action On Bills Affecting Public Schools**

For a complete summary of this week's legislative actions on legislation affecting public schools and their personnel, please see this week's "Weekly Bill Action Summary" at: <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=215>. The same site offers a status report on all bills NCASA is tracking for our members during the 2009 legislative session, and that information is arranged in categories to make it easier to locate specific legislation of interest.

---

*For additional information on these or other legislative issues, contact  
NCASA Assistant Executive Director Katherine W. Joyce at 919-828-1426 or [kjoyce@ncasa.net](mailto:kjoyce@ncasa.net).*