



Legislative Link

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

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NCASA Day At Legislature To Focus On Budget

The North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) is planning a legislative visit in conjunction with our 2009 Annual Conference being held March 11-13 at the new Raleigh Convention Center. As part of the Annual Conference, attendees will spend the morning of March 11 at the General Assembly before the conference's first general session begins at 2:00 p.m. that same day.

"We know that there is strength in numbers, and if there has ever been a time when school administrators need to stand together and call on our state lawmakers to protect public schools from any additional funding cuts, that time is now," said Bill McNeal, NCASA's Executive Director. "Our members need to participate in the NCASA Day at the Legislature to help educate all our legislators about the detrimental impact that another round of budget cuts would have on our ability to deliver quality educational services to all students across the state."

The NCASA Day at the Legislature will give our member school administrators an excellent opportunity to talk one-on-one with your own Representatives and Senators about the need to prevent any additional cuts to public school funding as the 2009-2010 state budget is on the drawing board. Talking points that NCASA members are encouraged to use in their discussions with lawmakers are available at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=199> and will also be available in the conference materials provided at check-in.

Additionally, conference attendees will hear from top legislative leaders on how the state budget is shaping up for public schools, how the state plans to address the funding shortfall in the State Health Plan that affects all school personnel and retirees, and the status of legislation aimed at attracting and retaining quality principals and assistant principals, including an appeal to let National Board Certified teachers keep their 12 percent salary differential if they move into an instructional role as an Assistant Principal.

For those attending the NCASA Day at the Legislature, conference check-in will be held at the Raleigh Convention Center from 2:00-5:00 p.m. March 10 and onsite on the third floor of the Legislative Building on Jones Street in Raleigh from 8:30-10:30 a.m. March 11. These early check-in opportunities will enable you to pick up your name badge and conference materials without having to go through the main registration process that opens at the Convention Center at 12:00 noon on March 11.

All NCASA members participating in the NCASA Day at the Legislature should visit one of these two early check-in stations to obtain a packet of information that includes office and other contact

information for all legislators, information on how to get around the Legislative Complex, the schedule for the day's activities, copies of NCASA's 2009-2011 Legislative Platform and talking points on public school funding priorities and other helpful information.

The full agenda for the NCASA Day at the Legislature is available at http://www.ncasa.net/associations/2410/files/NCASALegislatureDay_Agenda_final.pdf and information about registration for the 2009 NCASA Annual Conference may be viewed at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=224>.

We hope to see all of you at this important legislative event on March 11 and the remainder of our 2009 Annual Conference, which is packed with learning and leading opportunities for all school administrators. For more information on any of the scheduled events, contact our office at 919-828-1426 or send an email to info@ncasa.net.

Harrison Takes Helm Of DPI; NCASA Honors Chairman Lee

Former Cumberland County Schools Superintendent Bill Harrison this week began his work as Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Public Instruction, and on Thursday, the State Board of Education elected him as its new Chairman to replace retiring Chairman Howard N. Lee.

"Dr. Harrison is strongly committed to improving our public schools and giving every child a chance to succeed," Governor Beverly Perdue said in a press statement. "As CEO and Chairman there will be a clear line of accountability and efficiency as North Carolina strives to make our schools the best they can be."

Harrison's work in his new capacity could not take effect until after Governor Perdue signed Senate Bill 198 into law on Wednesday. The bill, which was the first the new Governor signed into law, cleared the way for Harrison to serve in the new dual role she created with the intention of consolidating authority and accountability for the state's public schools. Previous law allowed only one individual who is paid with either state or local public school funds to also serve as a voting member of the State Board of Education. The new law signed this week now allows two public school employees to serve in that capacity, and current SBE members who meet this criteria include Harrison and Melissa Bartlett, a teacher in the Iredell-Statesville School System.

Just after Chairman Lee passed the State Board of Education gavel to Harrison, the North Carolina Association of School Administrators presented Lee with the organization's 2009 Champion for Children Award, which is one of the highest honors annually awarded by NCASA. The award was presented by NCASA Executive Director Bill McNeal, who cited the following educational accomplishments that Chairman Lee has achieved during his term as Chairman of the State Board of Education:

- Implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind law,
- Improving comprehensive services to low-performing schools and school systems,
- Revising standards for teachers and school leaders,
- Launching the North Carolina Virtual Public School,
- Revising the State Board's mission and goals to reflect 21st century thinking and demands,
- Revising the high school graduation requirements to the Future Ready Core and including the North Carolina Graduation Project
- Adopting a framework for a comprehensive re-visioning of the P-12 curriculum standards, assessment system, and accountability model.

Lee is assuming a new educational leadership role in Governor Perdue's administration to serve as Executive Director of the reinvigorated Education Cabinet, an entity comprised of leaders of the State Board of Education, the community college system, the public university system and the association of private and independent colleges and universities.

McNeal expressed NCASA's commitment to working with both Lee and Harrison in their new roles to support public schools and the students they serve.

House Panel Acts On Dropout, College Attendance Age Proposals

House Education Committee members met Tuesday and took action on the following bills:

- House Bill 65, Students Under 16 May Attend Community College
The legislation would re-enact an expired law to allow intellectually gifted and mature students who are 14 or 15 years old to enroll in community college courses and would allow students under age 14 to enroll in Learn and Earn Online courses through a community college. The limited exception created to allow intellectually gifted students under age 16 to attend community colleges was first enacted in 2001, applied beginning with the 2001-2002 academic year and expired Sept. 1, 2004. The 2005 General Assembly extended the sunset on that law to Sept. 1, 2008. The committee approved a revised version of the bill, which has been re-referred to the House Appropriations Committee.
- House Bill 187, Encourage Policies to Facilitate Graduation
As recommended by the Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation, this bill would direct local boards of education to encourage businesses to adopt personnel policies to allow parents to attend student conferences. It also encourages local boards of education to adopt policies to: use programs that assist students in making successful transitions from middle to high school, increase parental involvement in student achievement, and reduce suspension and expulsion rates and encourage academic progress during suspensions. Local boards of education would also be directed to modify their policy on pregnant and parenting teens to provide assistance and support to help them graduate. A revised version of the bill gained committee approval, and it now moves to the House Judiciary II Committee for further review.

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=227>. 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.*