

**Central Carolina RESA
Board of Directors Meeting
December 7, 2012**

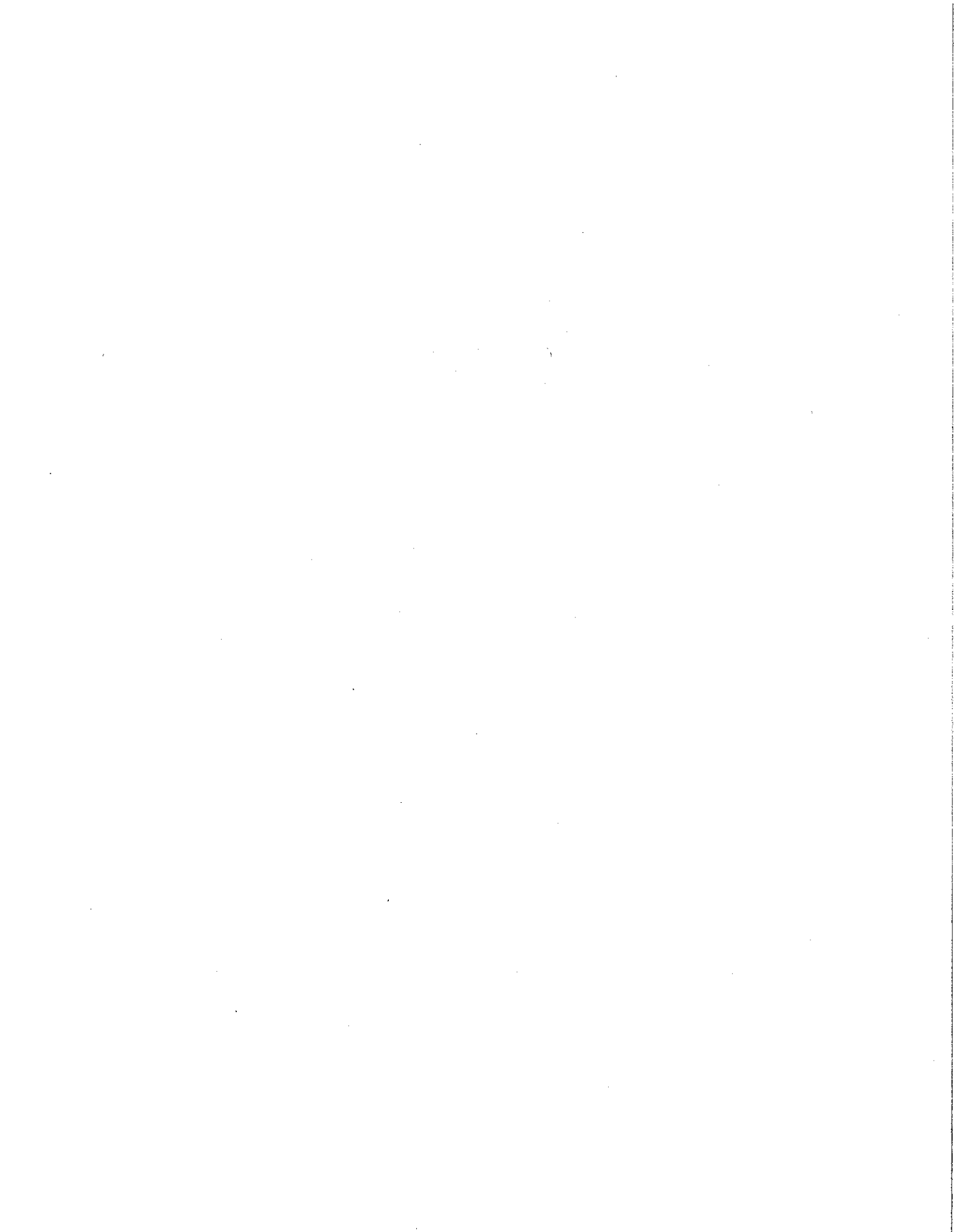
Discussion Questions

Pay for Performance

1. Should the Superintendents' Association take a stronger stand in terms of pointing out the consistent record of failure of Pay for Performance plans, especially in terms of making a difference in student academic achievement?
2. Should the white paper give greater emphasis to the need for an additional funding stream to support Pay for Performance so that it will not negatively impact the current compensation level that teachers receive, which is among the lowest in the nation?
3. Should the NCSSA advocate for a total revamping of the current teacher salary schedules that are based primarily on longevity and degrees?
4. What are your thoughts about who should participate in the proposed school-based award program (who should be eligible – principals, assistant principals, itinerant staff)?
5. Should the individual teacher awards be based on a percentage of the teacher's base pay or on flat dollar amounts that would be equal for all teachers regardless of where they fall on the state salary schedule?
6. Do you approve of the criteria for individual teacher awards (additional responsibilities, school assignments, and subject area assignments)? Are there other criteria that should be considered?

Charter Schools

1. Do you support the notion of charter schools going before local school boards to seek approval with the right to appeal to the State Board of Education?
2. Do you support providing charters with an incentive to participate in the half-cent sales tax if they are approved by their local boards?
3. Do you support including test scores of charter schools in the reporting of school districts' academic performance?
4. Do you support school boards being able to charter their own schools, what Don Martin is now calling portfolio schools?
5. Do you support encouraging more collaboration and purchase of services between school districts and charter schools?
6. How could legislation prevent ineffective, for-profit charter schools from taking advantage of the pro-charter atmosphere?



NCSSA Executive Sub-Committee on Pay for Performance
Response to Section 7A.10(a) Pay for Excellence

The committee reviewed various pieces of research prior to discussing the merits of a pay for performance plan. In one of these pieces from the National Governors Association which studied six states and the lessons learned, the following was identified as areas state leaders should consider when establishing a plan:

- Ensuring that assessment and data systems are capable of measuring student learning growth, providing estimates of value added, and linking student assessment scores to individual teachers;
- Identifying tools and measures for gauging teacher effectiveness that go beyond student test scores; evaluating based on multiple measures (such as classroom observations; aggregate, schoolwide student learning gains; teacher portfolios; student artifacts; teacher value-added scores; and student growth measures); and using evaluation results to identify professional development and other supports for teachers, to help them become more effective;
- Providing high-level leadership and engaging key stakeholders, especially teachers and principals and the organizations that represent them, to develop frameworks, guidelines, and details of new compensation structures; and
- Using reform efforts at the state level in ways that complement one another and maximize other opportunities, such as NGA policy academies or federal grant programs, to support the state's reform agenda.

These recommendations dovetail directly with Section 7A.10(a) which identifies the criteria for award of bonuses or adjustments to base salary to include the following:

- 1 Annual growth in student achievement of students assigned to a teacher's classroom
- 2 Annual growth in student achievement of students assigned to a specific school
- 3 Assignment of additional academic responsibilities
- 4 Assignment to hard to staff school
- 5 Assignment to hard to staff subject area

Using these recommendations as a guide, the committee would like to present a two tier approach to pay for performance. There was also consensus that prior to implementing a pay for performance plan three action items needed to occur in the following order:

- 1 Conduct a comprehensive study of pay for performance plans and identify pilot districts to implement with continuous monitoring, feedback, and adjustment.
- 2 Conduct a comprehensive study of the current teacher salary schedule. This should include modifications which appeal to current and potential teachers desiring to enter the profession of teaching.
- 3 Identify a dedicated funding stream which will pay for all licensed and support staff regardless of funding source; ie, state, federal or locally paid employees would be included in the plan and paid with state funding.

At each step there would have to be engaging and interactive conversations with ALL stakeholders for understanding and agreement of the plan. The following chart outlines the two tier approach for conversation.

Tier 1 - School Based Award	Tier 2 - Individual Teacher Award (15% maximum additional award)
School Must Exceed Expected Growth (if possible factor in Free/Reduced Rate to equalize school performance)	Teacher Must Exceed Expected Growth (5% additional pay based on base salary)
All full time staff will receive the amount listed below under the following conditions: 1. Begin and end the school year - 100% of award. 2. Leave during the school year - pro-rated share of award. 3. Eligible personnel are full time employees assigned to the school; itinerant staff are not included.	Additional academic responsibilities (up to 5% additional pay based on base salary) - these responsibilities will be developed locally and approved by the teachers at the school level, then will receive board approval. - the responsibilities can cover multiple areas such as: mentoring, delivering professional development, instructional coordinator, technology coordinator and school improvement team leadership
Option 1: Licensed Personnel - \$2,500 Teacher Asst. (support staff) - \$1,650 Other support staff (office, custodians, \$ 850 cafeteria)	Assignment to hard to staff school (2.5% additional pay based on base salary)
Option 2: Principal - \$5,000 Asst. Principal - \$3,125 Licensed Teachers and Support - \$2,500 (music, art, PE, etc) Teacher Asst. (support staff) - \$1,650 Other support staff (office, custodians, \$ 850 cafeteria)	Assignment to hard to staff subject area (2.5% additional pay based on base salary)

All schools can compete for the Tier 1 Performance Pay. The rationale behind Tier 1 is schools improve when the entire staff work toward common goals and all are part of the outcome and success. This component would assist in creating a climate for collaboration among all teachers and staff, encourage the sharing of ideas and teaching strategies, and help to eliminate isolation when planning. The second option recognizes the impact a strong principal has throughout a school. It follows the theory principals make an impact on the success of a school.

In addition to or separate from a school exceeding growth, the Tier 2 allows individual teachers to earn additional performance pay. This could affect a teacher in a school which exceeded growth or a teacher in a school that made expected or no growth. Tier 2 is based solely on an individual teacher's performance for that school year. Up to an additional 15% could be earned if they meet the criteria outlined.

Draft #4 – A White Paper on Charter Schools – How can LEAs and Charter schools work together to better prepare all North Carolina students to be college and career ready?

While our country may be divided politically, there is one thing that Americans can agree upon - they like to make choices. In education, parents have many choices - home schools, private schools, public charter schools, and traditional public schools. Many traditional public school systems offer parents choice by creating choice zones and district-wide magnet schools. Public charter schools were created to offer more public choice for parents and to improve student achievement. After 15 years since the NC general assembly authorized the creation of 100 charter schools, the results have been mixed. In 2010, Stanford University's Center for Research in Educational Outcomes studied charter schools across the nation and prepared a supplemental report on charter school student achievement in NC. The researchers found that reading gains were significantly higher and math gains significantly lower for charter students as compared to traditional NC public school students. African-American students performed lower in math with no discernable difference in reading gains. Over time, NC charter students showed no significant difference or better gains in reading and math than traditional public school students.

One of the hallmarks of public schooling for the past 150 years has been equal access to programs that meet students' needs. The current charter school landscape in NC is not offering equal access to charter programs. Since few charter schools provide transportation, participate in the National School lunch program, or offer a wide array of special education or limited English proficiency services, a poor student who currently rides the bus, qualifies for free lunch, has a handicapping condition, or does not speak English, will not choose to attend a charter school. Put simply, we cannot have two unequal systems of public education where one state-regulated system serves all students regardless of need and the other system is not accessible to all students and operates with little regulation. In public education, "choice" must benefit all students.

This NCSA white paper on charter schools offers four recommendations: (1) Allow local boards of education to become the final approver of charter applications (hereinafter referred to as a "general" charter in order to distinguish them from a "portfolio" charter – see #2)); general charter applicants who are not approved by the local board could appeal to the State Board of Education. (2) Allow any school in a local education agency (LEA) to request charter status from their local school board (these "portfolio" charter schools would be governed by a school committee approved by the local school board). (3) Allow LEAs to request charter status from the State Board of Education if all schools in the district have achieved portfolio charter status. (4) Make the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) available to all students. Each of these recommendations will be discussed below:

(1) Allow local boards of education to have final approval of general charter school applications

Any group of individuals wishing to apply for a general charter school would identify members of a governing board (between five and nine members) and submit an application to the local board of education. Applications could be submitted anytime and would provide at a minimum (1) a transportation plan that guarantees equal access to all students;; (2) a facility plan that would include a review of whether the charter school could operate in an existing LEA school (or part of a school); (3) a

plan for how special education services would be provided; (4) a budget plan that articulates the way the charter school's budget and operational plan complies with student accounting and financial accounting rules and regulations; (5) a description of the academic program that demonstrates the uniqueness of the delivery model and the likelihood of academic success for students; and, (6) a description of the desired relationship between the general charter school and the LEA. Following a review of the application by the administrative staff, the superintendent would recommend approval or disapproval of the charter school application to the school board. If the application is not approved the general charter school applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education for re-consideration. (If approved by the State Board of Education, the applicant would not be entitled to any half cent sales allocations - see the finance section below.) If approved by the local school board the general charter school could open during the next school year, but no later than the following year. A contract would be issued for 5 years that would specify:

(1) the minimum student performance expectations (expressed in terms of student proficiency gains, value-added composite scores, and/or other student performance metrics);

(2) the transportation agreement (e.g., LEAs could choose to provide transportation in exchange for the general charter school's share of the LEA's state transportation allocation - in such cases, transportation of the general charter school students would not affect the transportation efficiency calculation for the LEA);

(3) the manner in which food service would be provided (the LEA's Child Nutrition Program would assist the charter school in completing an application with the National School Lunch program as well as assist the general charter school in completing monthly paperwork and verifying eligible students - or the general charter school could agree to pay the LEA Child Nutrition the actual cost of lunches and/or breakfast meals);

(4) the accountability service payments (the LEA would manage the testing/accountability program; i.e., train test coordinators, supervise the administration of all tests in accordance with DPI rules and regulations, and provide on-site assistance as needed to the charter school). To foster a spirit of collaboration, all test scores of the LEA and any general charter schools in the LEA would be combined for the purposes of district reporting (Individual school report cards would still be available on the Department of Public Instruction web-site and general charter school results would be provided as an addendum report);

(5) the communication process between the general charter school and the LEA regarding special education services (for students who have been identified as qualifying to receive Exceptional Children's Services, the general charter school would, at a minimum submit all final IEPs to the local school district for a compliance check. The agreement could specify that the LEA would send a representative to all general charter Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. If the LEA's Exceptional Children's representative believes that the child could be better served in another setting, then the parent of the EC child enrolled in the general charter would be notified and offered a different placement option; while the parent would make the final decision regarding placement, either the LEA or the general charter school could appeal the placement;

(6) audit reports would be shared with the LEA; and

(7) any other special conditions (the charter school could also choose to contract various services from the LEA (e.g., staff development, technology support, maintenance, bookkeeping services, etc.).

Students in other counties may attend any general charter school; however, transportation would not be available unless the parent delivered the student to a bus stop, if any, that served the general charter school. The student's resident LEA would be required to release the student to attend the out-of-county general charter school. For the purpose of state funding, the out-of-county student would be considered the same as if he or she resided in the district where the general charter school is located. Local funds from the resident district would follow the out-of-county student to the general charter school.

(2) Portfolio charter schools

Local boards of education would be able to convert one or more of its existing schools to a portfolio charter school. Upon approval or invitation of the superintendent, any principal may collaborate with his or her school staff, parents, and business partners to develop a portfolio charter application. The application could be submitted anytime and would identify members of a school committee (between five and nine members) that would serve as the governing/advisory body of the portfolio charter school. Each application would provide at a minimum (1) a transportation plan that guarantees equal access to all students; (2) a facility plan that would identify the building or area of a building that would house the portfolio charter; (3) a budget plan that would identify whether the state salary schedule would be used, proposed staffing, and the disposition of the existing staff; (4) a description of the academic program that demonstrates the uniqueness of the delivery model and the likelihood of academic success for students; and, (5) a description of the desired relationship between the portfolio charter school and the LEA. In addition to the portfolio charter school committee, the application would be signed by the principal, the president of the parent organization, and all members of the school improvement team. Following a review of the application by the administrative staff, the superintendent would recommend approval or disapproval of the portfolio charter school application to the local board of education. If the application is not approved the portfolio charter school may not appeal to the NC State Board of Education. If approved the portfolio charter could open the next school year or no later than the year following. All rules governing the operation of existing charter schools in NC would apply to the conversion charter except as specified in the charter's contract with the LEA or the portfolio charter funding section below.

The contract between the portfolio charter school and the local school board would answer many questions such as the following: Will the staff be paid on the state salary schedule or a new schedule? Will the principal be evaluated by the LEA or the school committee? Will teachers retain their tenure status, experience as a teacher in the district, opportunity to transfer to other schools in the district, participation in the retirement system or other local benefit programs? Who will approve contracts between the portfolio charter and for how much? If a contract is signed between the portfolio charter and a private management provider, what will be the maximum management fee allowed? Will the Title 1 allocation remain with the portfolio school or require an application for funds like a private school does now?

Funding for general charter schools and portfolio charter schools

General Charters: Depending on the transportation agreement approved in the general charter application, state and local transportation allocations would remain with the LEA or be transferred to the general charter on a per-pupil basis. The general charter school would receive the state per-pupil EC allotment and the local EC per-pupil funds. The charter school would receive the state allocations for all school related staffing and support (calculated using the same DPI state formulas that determine LEA school allotments - note that this would mean that the general charter school would receive position allotments just like the LEA that would be valued at the state average teacher salary and benefits unless all teachers were licensed and paid on the state salary schedule. All district level state allocations (with the possible exception of those provided for transportation) would be awarded on a per-pupil basis to the general charter school. Other local allocations (except for the per-pupil cost of providing accountability services to the general charter, and the possible exception of those for transportation) would be allotted on a per-pupil basis unless the LEA provided local funding to schools based on the poverty level of the students who were being served in a school (e.g., funds for additional teachers, counselors, or social workers in high needs schools). The general charter school would receive these funds if the poverty level of the students served in the general charter school would qualify using the LEA's local poverty funding formula. General charter schools would receive the per-pupil share of the two portions of state half cent sales tax allocation for capital needs (the equivalent of one half cent of sales tax); charter schools would not receive any of the current per-pupil debt service support. (Charter schools approved by the State Board of Education would not receive any of the half-cent sales tax funds.)

Portfolio charters: While the portfolio charter contract with the LEA could specify specific changes, all infrastructure (e.g., facilities, maintenance, utility bills, and accountability services) for the portfolio charter school would be provided by the LEA. The only state funds that would be allocated (unless identified in the portfolio charter contract) would be school level staffing and support (calculated using the same DPI state formulas that determine LEA school allotments (see discussion above for general charter schools). All EC student services would be provided and supervised by the LEA, thus all EC funds would remain with the LEA. Other local funds not used to provide infrastructure (e.g., funds used to pay central office curriculum supervisors) would be allocated on a per-pupil basis (unless otherwise specified in the portfolio charter contract). If the district provides special funding to LEA schools to serve high poverty students (e.g., additional teachers, counselors, nurses, or social workers), those dollars would remain with the portfolio school as long as the population served by the portfolio charter qualified according to the LEA special funding formulas.

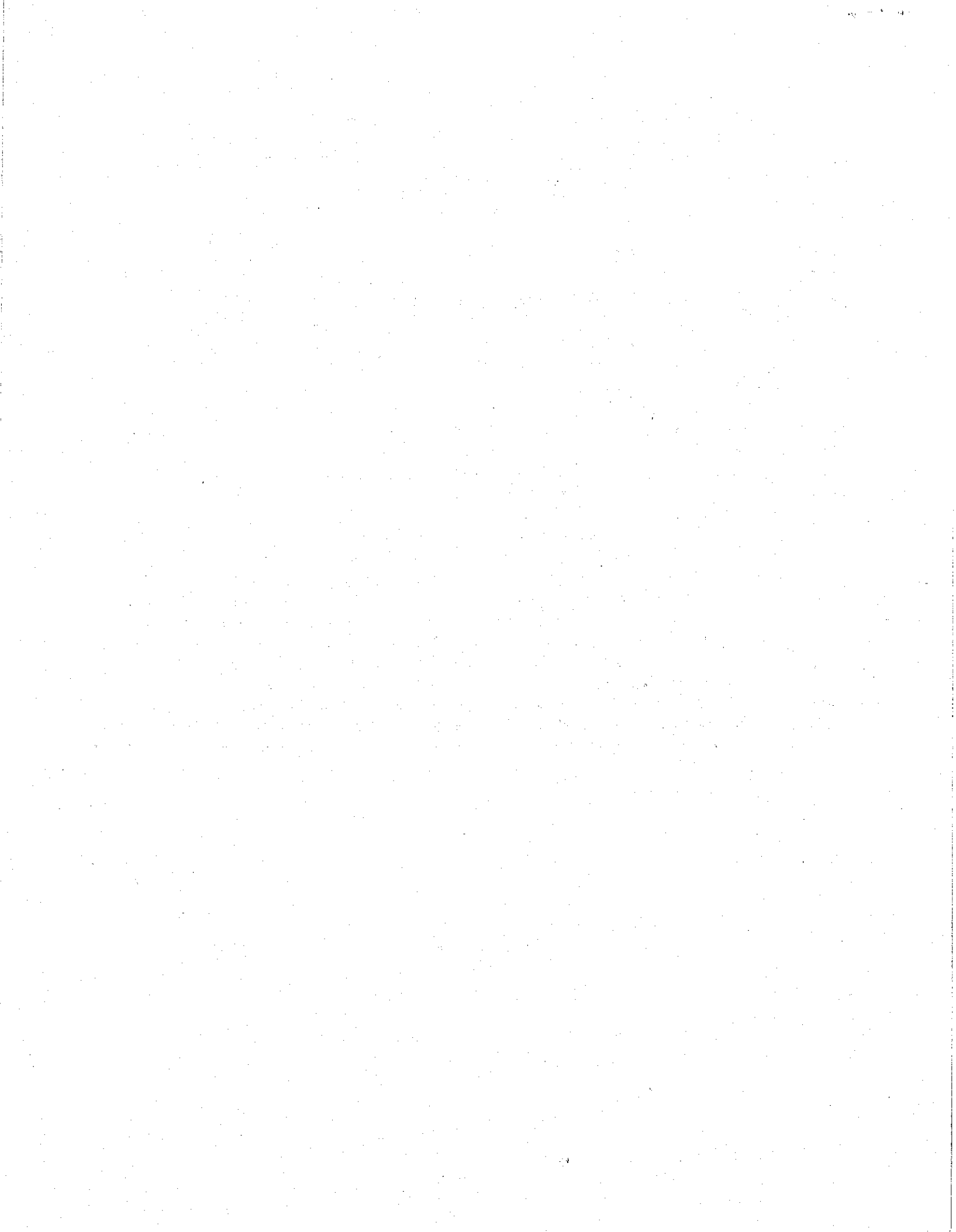
(3) Allow LEAs to request district charter status from the State Board of Education if all schools in the district have achieved portfolio charter status.

If every school in an LEA was approved as a portfolio charter, then the local board could request district charter status. At that time every school would be operating on five year contracts with specified performance indicators. Essentially the local board would be managing a "portfolio" of schools. If a school failed to meet its performance indicators, it could appeal its revocation to the local board and the state board if denied by the local board. Once the appeals were exhausted, then the charter would be

revoked and the local board would have two options: (1) close the school - students would have to attend other available general charters or conversion charters; or (2) create a request for proposals (RFP) for a group or other entity to apply to operate the school. State and local funds would be allocated to the LEA as if all the schools were LEA schools and then dispersed to the portfolio charters as specified by charter contract.

(4) Virtual Charter Schools

In 2002 the General Assembly created the Business Education Technology Alliance that was charged with creating the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS). Currently NCVPS is funded by LEAs - every district pays a proportional share of the operating cost of the NCVPS and then pays a per course fee for every student who is enrolled. Home school and private school students are not allowed to take courses from NCVPS. To allow more access to NCVPS, any non-LEA student in a district could register with the district to take courses through NCVPS - the district would continue to pay the pro-rata share of the operating costs based on their share of all students participating in NCVPS but the State would pay for the per course costs. It is important to note that this increased access to the NCVPS would increase the cost of K-12 education in North Carolina since many students who have not been receiving services would begin receiving services. In addition, NCVPS is currently able to contract with private vendors to expand their course offerings and capacity as needed. It would seem that that this arrangement would meet the needs of virtual education in North Carolina for the foreseeable future. Before considering any virtual charter school applications, the General Assembly should conduct a study that would examine the funding formulas used in other states since it is much more expensive to educate a child in a brick and mortar school than in a virtual environment. Such a study could begin by comparing the per-course cost for NCVPS multiplied by four courses for semester courses (an average course load for a student) and compare that to the state per-pupil cost. In addition, the General Assembly should conduct a study regarding accountability in the virtual environment. Such a study could randomly assign groups of students with similar background to face-to-face classes, NCVPS classes, and some private sector virtual education classes to see if there are any statistical differences between the three different delivery systems and the performance of different groups of students. Nothing would prohibit an LEA or a general or portfolio charter school to create and deliver virtual courses for use within a school district or a charter school.



Public School Legislation and Policy: A Closer Look
NCASA Hopes To Help Governor-Elect McCrory Refine Education Plan
2nd of 2 in a Series on the New Governor's Plans for K-12 Education

*By Katherine W. Joyce, Assistant Executive Director/Lobbyist
From the December 3 Edition of In the Know*

The North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) has reviewed the slate of K-12 education reform proposals that Governor-Elect Pat McCrory put forward during his campaign, and the last edition of this column shared those proposals with school leaders statewide. In this edition, NCASA is providing some thoughts on how our organization and our more than 6,000 members can work with Governor-Elect McCrory and other state leaders to build on recent progress in public education and ensure the system continues to improve and remain viable for current and future generations of North Carolina students.

First, NCASA and our members applaud the theme of the new Governor's reform plan, which he entitled "A Passion for Education: The McCrory Plan for North Carolina Schools." We wholeheartedly believe that our next Governor must feel "passionate" about working with public school leaders to make our state's schools the best they can be to meet the needs of every child. NCASA's members share that passion, and most have spent their entire career committed to providing and improving educational services.

NCASA also embraces each of the four major components of the McCrory education plan that include: 1) Give Families and Students Educational Choices, 2) Set High Expectations, 3) Reward Success, and 4) Hold Schools Accountable.

The proposals the McCrory plan highlights to support each of these priorities offer some broad concepts for changes that he wants to work toward as Governor. As the old saying goes, "the devil is in the details," so it is likely that NCASA may not agree with the "how and when" of all the specifics that will be unveiled later as part of the implementation plan for these four priorities. However, even on proposals that NCASA cannot support, we remain committed to working with Governor McCrory and lawmakers to understand the rationale behind any objections we ultimately may raise and to help them refine their approach in a way that will be in the best interest of preserving and enhancing public schools and the education provided to the state's young people.

The information that follows first lists the McCrory education reform proposals and then highlights in blue NCASA's initial reaction to each, which the organization will be sharing with the Governor-Elect and his advisors.

A Passion for Education: The McCrory Plan for North Carolina Schools

1) Give Families and Students Educational Choices

Two Paths to Success

North Carolina high schools are failing to graduate 22% of our students. Young people who drop out of high school have few if any marketable job skills and are often so deficient in basic verbal and math competency as to be unable to complete a routine job application. Instead of the present system of providing only one pathway to a high school diploma, we need to reform the system and provide two pathways. One diploma would certify a student college ready, with the necessary skills to succeed in college. The second diploma would certify a student career ready, with the necessary skills to get a job or attend a community college. With this reform our goal would be that college bound students would no longer have to take remedial courses to compete on a college level and students entering the work force would no longer lack vocational skills and core competency.

NCASA Response: NCASA members have worked to help our schools achieve the highest graduation rate in our state's history, 80.4 percent for the last school year, and we remain committed to ensuring that rate continues to climb. NCASA also agrees that a diploma should be meaningful and that it should signify the graduate's readiness for the next phase of life beyond high school. We believe the state has moved in the right direction in recent years by increasing the number of college preparatory courses taken by all students to give them the basic competencies they need for whatever future path they choose. A recent proposal put forward by the General Assembly's Legislative Research Committee on Career-Technical Education would offer three possible "endorsements" for diplomas to designate a student's career-readiness, college-readiness or readiness for either choice. As this approach and the two-track system proposed by Governor-Elect McCrory are considered, state policymakers at a minimum should ensure that all high school students take a sufficient number of academically challenging courses that would enable them to move easily between career and college options if they decide to switch paths after graduation.

Virtual Education Choice

National studies show virtual learners make larger learning gains and have higher course completion rates. Twenty-first century technology makes it possible for high school students to choose from a wide range of online courses taught by the best public school teachers from across the state. I propose offering greater access and more flexibility to local school systems to our students – public, private and home-schooled – to a wide range of for-credit, online courses. We should also make expanding the use of hand held technology a priority for both teachers and students so both struggling and advanced students can learn at their own pace within specific disciplines. Teaching and education can no longer be limited to lectures, chalkboards, and brick buildings.

NCASA Response: While the academic progress of virtual learners varies greatly and depends in large part on the quality of the instruction provided, NCASA agrees that not all teaching and learning should be limited to "lectures, chalkboards, and brick buildings." That is why our 2013 Legislative Priorities call for the state to "assist with both student learning and teacher professional development by increasing funding for technology personnel and infrastructure as well as providing more flexibility for school districts to implement innovative learning tools, such as digital textbooks, online courses and collaborative electronic environments." We believe the blended learning model that embraces current technology and is delivered by a highly qualified and fully certified teacher enhances individualized instruction to help each student succeed. What NCASA does not support, and hopes is not part of this reform proposal, is a move to implement a virtual charter school like the ones that are problem-filled in other states. A virtual charter that offers only online instruction to all age groups, with the majority of instruction provided by a parent rather than a certified and qualified teacher, would detract from rather than supplement current online learning options that offer quality educational services to North Carolina students. NCASA believes that the expansion of virtual learning should occur through the existing framework that ensures accountability for

the public investment. This means all virtual learning should be determined and led by either a local school district or the N.C. Virtual Public School, which is held accountable by the State Board of Education and already has participation and support from school districts statewide. In addition, neither the state nor a local school district should operate a virtual charter school that pulls students from all over North Carolina and removes valuable resources from traditional public schools and the students they serve.

Charter-Schools Choice

While lifting the cap on charter schools was a great first step, we must be careful that a slow moving process for approving new charter schools would act as a de facto cap. Therefore, we must address the thousands of families on waiting lists for charter schools in addition to the dozens of charter schools waiting to open. We must implement a process to ensure that parents and students are not left in limbo on their school choice options.

NCASA Response: While opening more charter schools may increase the number of choices for at least some parents, a more important focus should be ensuring that all learning options – whether they are in charter schools or traditional schools – are providing a quality education that is accessible by all students in a community. NCASA is committed to working with lawmakers, the Governor, the State Board of Education and other stakeholders to ensure that all charter schools that are authorized or renewed are offering a high-quality education. To that end, law and policy changes are needed to enhance certification requirements for charter teachers and principals and to prevent arbitrary enrollment barriers if a charter school does not offer transportation, school meals, an exceptional children's program or other essential student services. By expanding opportunities for school districts and charter schools to partner to provide services to students, policymakers can improve the working relationship between traditional and charter schools as well as ensure all students have access to a high-quality school in the public education system.

2) Set High Expectations

End Third Grade Social Promotions

My plan for North Carolina schools is based on the expectation that our students can achieve. The first step is to stop social promotions for third grade students and create a tough-love strategy to improve literacy. Third grade is a critical time when students transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” in other subjects and in their life outside the classroom. In order to proceed to the fourth grade, students will be required to attain a minimally acceptable score on a state reading test. Students who fall short will be given additional test-based opportunities to demonstrate reading proficiency. Students who still cannot demonstrate reading skills will be retained and provided with aggressive remediation and the opportunity to learn fundamental skills necessary for future success.

NCASA Response: The General Assembly in its 2012 session approved the mandatory retention of third-graders who do not demonstrate reading proficiency, and that new law takes effect with the 2013-2014 school year. This well-intended law needs further refinement before implementation. NCASA encourages lawmakers and the Governor to consider the following adjustments to facilitate school district efforts to help struggling readers: 1) Allow superintendents to work with principals to evaluate each child's unique circumstances and determine additional exceptions to the mandatory retention requirement not already delineated in the law; 2) Provide all school districts with adequate resources for implementing the mandatory retentions and the supplemental reading services through after-school tutoring and summer reading camps; and 3) Revise the mandate for summer reading camps for retained students to allow school districts, especially those on year-round schedules, to expand remediation services to struggling readers throughout the school year. In addition to these changes, state leaders should consider increasing the

investment in quality pre-kindergarten services that facilitate school readiness and remediation efforts that can be provided during the regular school day to students in early grades.

High School Reading and Math Guarantee

The state of North Carolina must be able to assure colleges and potential employers that a high school diploma means the student has successfully mastered a proficiency in reading and math. Too many employers today report high school graduates are unable to complete a job application or calculate change for money. Both four-year and community colleges complain that too many students advancing to higher education must be provided reading and math remediation before they are ready for college level courses. Therefore, every student entering the ninth grade will be tested for proficiency in basic reading and mathematics. Any student not able to pass the test will receive intense remedial courses to give them the tools to graduate and get a job or continue their education.

NCASA Response: NCASA agrees that students need to demonstrate proficiency in reading and mathematics before they enter high school as well as when they graduate. We also believe that the eighth grade end-of-grade test is the appropriate measure of a student's readiness for ninth grade and that transitions under way through the Common Core and Essential State Standards are ratcheting up the expectations for student achievement, both for high-school readiness and success after graduation. Finally, NCASA recommends that higher education entities and K-12 leaders continue collaborative efforts to update and provide consistent measures for prescribing remediation in college, since current measures are not widely viewed as the best indicators of a student's need for remediation.

3) Reward Success

Better Pay for Better Teachers

Researchers identify teacher quality as the main in-school factor affecting students' academic achievement. Therefore, the most important reform North Carolina could implement would be to keep the best teachers in the classroom. Some teachers are able to ignite a spark in a student that will have an impact on his or her learning from that point forward. North Carolina is blessed with many outstanding teachers who should be rewarded for the impact they have on the lives of our young people. Every student, every parent and every principal knows who the good teachers are. We will reform our pay system to reward teachers for the job they do instead of just the number of years they teach.

NCASA Response: *NCASA agrees that reforms are needed in the process for paying North Carolina teachers as well as in the amounts of state-funded pay needed to attract and retain individuals who are highly qualified. These reforms require a cautious and methodical approach to avoid problems experienced by several other states that have transitioned to performance pay. NCASA, therefore, proposes the following: Phase in a performance-based pay system with competitive compensation that enhances public school efforts to attract and retain a high-quality workforce with the skills needed for providing all students with a sound, basic education. The process should begin with a task force to examine the current pay structure and identify sustainable performance pay criteria to be tested in a pilot project in several diverse school districts prior to statewide implementation. The performance-pay system, at a minimum, should be funded by the state and include bonuses for principals, teachers, and other staff based at a school that exceeds basic expectations for effectiveness as indicated through multiple performance measures, and a separate tier of bonus pay applicable to all full-time licensed teachers who exceed student-growth expectations.*

4) Hold Schools Accountable

Grading Our Schools

The only way to measure success is to test student achievement in reading and mathematics in an unbiased and objective exam based on basic skills rather than curriculum. Each school's test results will be evaluated for both proficiency and learning gains of students. Half the grade a school receives will be based on students' achievement levels – the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level in reading and math. The remaining half will be based on individual student learning gains – the percentage of students who made progress in reading and math from his or her achievement level the prior year. By making progress as important as proficiency, we will provide a powerful incentive for schools to get even the most disadvantaged students moving in the right direction. Grading schools will establish transparent, objective, and easily understood data to parents, educators and the public, and will spur improvement among all schools.

NCASA Response: NCASA agrees wholeheartedly that progress and proficiency should be equal measures of a school and school district's efforts to educate students. The new A-F grading system that the General Assembly enacted as law to begin with the 2012-2013 school year currently is based only on proficiency, although the law indicates the legislature's intent to add a student growth component. NCASA encourages lawmakers to follow through on that intent as well as adopt the recommendation from Governor-Elect McCrory to make student progress count as much as proficiency in the grading system for schools. State leaders also should work with superintendents and other education leaders to determine the appropriate components and weighting system to be used in grading schools and districts. In addition, the new grading system should take effect with the 2013-2014 school year, since results from the new tests students will take in 2012-2013 will not be available until October 2013, well after the next school year begins.

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Core Affiliates

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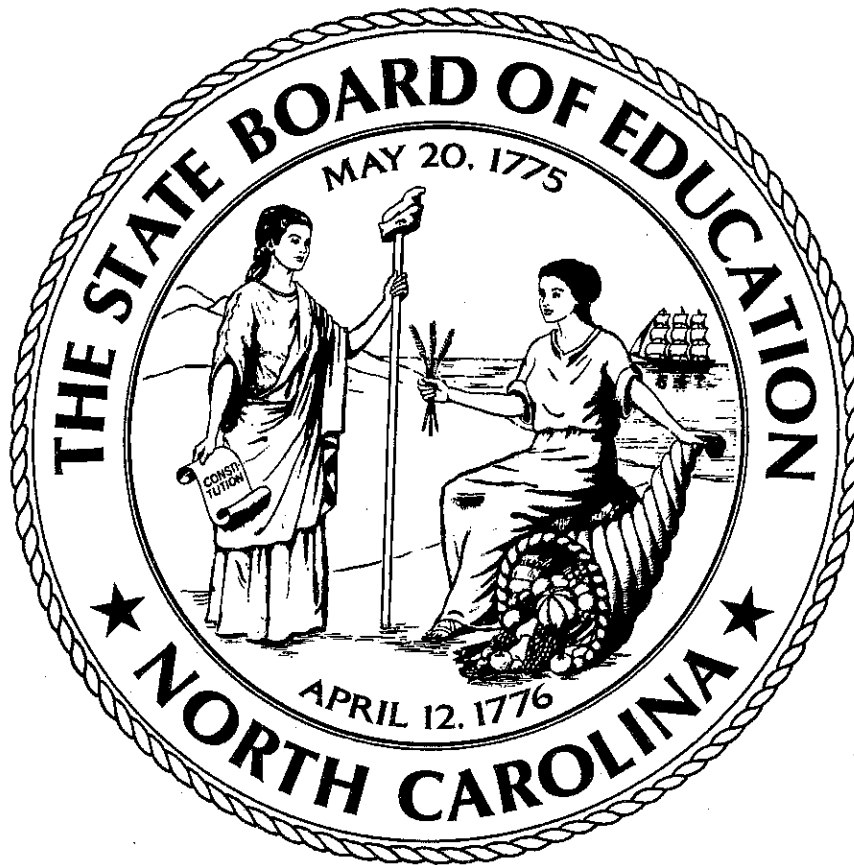


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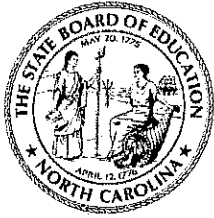




VISION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA:

A Great Public Education System For A Great State

October 4, 2012



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION | William C. Harrison, Ed.D., *Chairman*
WWW.NCPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

Dear Friends,

On Oct. 4, 2012 the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted the "Vision of Public Education in North Carolina: A Great Public Education System for a Great State" to guide our work. It is our hope that this vision will encourage a shared commitment to assuring a strong, flexible and coherent education system that serves all students and that is geared toward the promotion of the public interest.

The vision statement and the accompanying 10-page paper is the culmination of work that began at the State Board of Education planning session held in August 2011 in which Board members discussed the need to shift the conversation about public education in North Carolina. Following this meeting, State Board of Education Legislative Director Ann McColl met with superintendents and other members of the state's Regional Educational Service Alliances and hundreds of other education, business and community leaders to gather input.

Also during this time, Edward "Ted" Fiske, former education editor for the New York Times, and Helen "Sunny" Ladd, Edgar Thompson Professor of Public Policy Studies and professor of economics at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, agreed to work with the State Board in developing a paper that would express a vision that was emerging through these sessions.

The development of the vision paper then became an important part of the conversations that followed. On April 3, about 100 superintendents met with Board members in Raleigh to share their challenges, ideals and aspirations for public schools. At the end of April, another group of education and other leaders met at the Friday Institute to continue the conversation about the purpose and importance of public education. Following this meeting, the Board received feedback on the vision paper from members of the Governor's Education Transformation Commission as well as other state and national education and policy experts.

The following two-page summary formally adopted by the State Board of Education and the longer paper written by Fiske and Ladd are a collection of values that support our current work as well as statements that will serve as a solid foundation for the creation of one coherent system of education that benefits all. When we discuss education, we often talk about the need to support the nearly 1.5 million children in our public schools today, but this is not enough. We must use this vision to guide us in taking a collective responsibility for providing every child in the state access to a quality education, whether they attend a private school, home school, charter school or traditional public school.

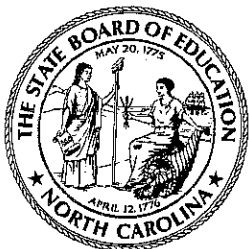
I hope you will share these documents with educators, administrators, policymakers and others in your community as you continue the conversation about public education and how we can work together to meet the needs of every child in our state.

Sincerely,

Bill Harrison

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER



State Board of Education Vision of Public Education in North Carolina: A Great Public Education System for a Great State

Adapted from the report submitted by Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd

Great states have great public education systems, and great public education systems require great states. A great state boasts a dynamic and diverse economy with economic opportunities for all of its citizens. A great state enjoys a culture of innovation and creativity as well as vibrant arts, its natural resources and other cultural and recreational opportunities. The State Board of Education's vision of a public education system builds on the state's constitutional commitment to education and emphasizes the state's responsibility for assuring a strong and coherent system that serves all students and that is geared toward the promotion of the public interest.

Public education: the foundation for democratic institutions and economic prosperity

A forward-looking vision for education in North Carolina must be grounded in a continued commitment to public education as the foundation of our democratic institutions and the engine of economic growth. Public schools equip students with the knowledge, skills and perspectives they need to engage in reasoned and civil debate of public issues. A strong public school system provides a steady flow of skilled workers, especially in emerging areas such as advanced manufacturing where many employers are struggling to find workers.

Ambitious and evolving educational standards

A great public education system is one that prepares all students for postsecondary education, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning. It sets high standards and fosters the critical thinking and other skills needed in today's global economy. A great state education system must evolve over time in response to changes in the state's economic, technological, and social contexts as well as in response to developments in other states and the world.

Public and individual benefits

The State Board's vision fosters both a spirit of individual freedom and a sense of common purpose. The children who are educated receive the opportunity to maximize their potential and pursue their personal dreams and aspirations. These benefits include the opportunities to attend post-secondary education, enhanced employment opportunities, higher earnings, better mental and physical health, greater political, social and cultural awareness and a higher quality of life. A public education system builds connections between public schools and the civic and social purposes for which they were established and that justify the use of taxpayer dollars to fund them. It provides a structure that allows the various stakeholders – students, teachers, administrators, parents, state and district policymakers, the business community and others, schools and universities – to work together in pursuit of common goals.

The importance of diversity and equal opportunity

A strong public education system in North Carolina promotes the state's civic and economic functions by celebrating the diversity of our population and providing a high quality educational opportunity to all children regardless of their backgrounds or where they live. Public schools are most successful in promoting democratic traditions when they embody important values such as fairness, equity, inclusiveness and respect for diversity of opinion in their own operations. And in many cases, publicly-funded schools are one of the few places in our society where young people have the opportunity to learn, work and play with those whose backgrounds and perspectives differ from their own.

A coherent and flexible system

The State Board's vision encourages diverse and innovative means of delivering education while assuring that each element of the system shares a commitment to the broad purposes of public education, including the maximizing of opportunity for all students. A strong state public education system offers a wide range of content that serves the needs of students with varying academic and career/technical interests, and it offers students and parents the opportunity to make choices among a variety of schooling options with differing missions and educational philosophies.

This vision emphasizes community and cooperation. It provides a mechanism for promising improvements and innovations to be widely distributed. It will require that relevant policymakers and practitioners – both those within the education sector and those in related areas such as family and child services – work together to make strategic decisions about how best to organize the delivery of education in each community to meet the public interest.

Charter schools, Cooperative and Innovative High Schools, the North Carolina Virtual Public Schools and other recent educational innovations can serve as sources of experimentation and innovation and provide quality educational alternatives. These schools have a legitimate claim on taxpayer funds to the extent that they further the overall purposes of the state education system. In practical terms, this means these options must be accessible to all students and held to the same high standards of academic, fiscal and other forms of accountability as traditional public schools.

Because many students move between the private and public sectors, some form of coordination between these sectors is appropriate. If public funds were to be made available – whether in the form of school vouchers for parents or state revenue foregone in the form of tax credits for scholarships – the private and religious schools benefitting from such funds would need to be incorporated far more explicitly into the public school system. That would be necessary because state policymakers have a responsibility to the state's taxpayers to assure that the funds are being used to promote the public interest and not just the interests of the direct beneficiaries.

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A Vision of Public Education in North Carolina

Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd

1. A great public education system for a great state

Great states have great public education systems, and great public education systems require great states. North Carolina deserves a great public education system.

A great state boasts a dynamic and diverse economy with economic opportunities for all of its citizens. Its population is healthy, well-fed, well-educated and productive. It attracts people and investments from other states and other nations and values its connections to the wider world. A great state enjoys a culture of innovation and creativity as well as vibrant arts, natural resources and other cultural and recreational opportunities. It embraces and takes pride in its diversity along multiple dimensions, including race and ethnicity, political orientation and income.

A great public education system is one that prepares all students for postsecondary education, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning. It sets high standards and fosters the critical thinking and other skills needed in today's global economy. A great education system offers multiple opportunities and options for success – respecting private educational interests and aspirations while promoting the public interest. Through its own operations it models the state's values of inclusion and opportunity.

Without a great public education system, a state will be wasting its most precious resource: its people. Poorly-educated citizens are less healthy, less innovative and creative, less productive, more likely to be incarcerated, and more likely to become financial burdens on their fellow citizens. Without strong public education, a state will lack the foundation of a strong democracy, a vibrant political culture and a flourishing middle class.

Without a great state, it is hard to have a great public education system. Effective public education requires a thriving and growing economy that generates revenues to pay for education. It needs the support of a successful and engaged business community that is strongly committed to the state's economic health and the development of its future workers and customers. A great state maintains a diverse and open political culture that in turn serves as a model for the knowledge, skills and values promoted within the schools. By maintaining a culture of openness and supporting opportunity for all, a great public education system transmits those values to the next generation.

The fortunes of North Carolina and those of its public school system are inextricably intertwined. Our aspirations for North Carolina should be nothing less than to be a great state with a great public education system. To achieve those aspirations, we must focus on the common good and the public interest in education. Only in that way will North Carolina be in a position to support the personal goals and aspirations of all its citizens, both now and in the future.

2. Public education: the foundation for democratic institutions and economic prosperity.

North Carolina has a long and proud tradition of excellence in public education. It became one of the first states to lay the groundwork for public education in the 19th century and boasts one of the strongest legal foundations for public education of any state. Ever since the reconstruction constitution of 1868, the North

Carolina Constitution has recognized education as a fundamental human right alongside others specified in the Declaration of Rights. "The people have a right to the privilege of education," it declared, "and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right." The State Constitution mandates a "general and uniform system of free public schools" and charges the state with the responsibility not only to oversee this system but to provide financial support. These provisions remain in force today.

The State Board of Education believes that a strong public education system is the foundation upon which our democratic society and our democratic institutions are built. Schools are the principal means by which the civic traditions and public values first enunciated by the Founding Fathers, including the rights, privileges and obligations of citizenship, are transmitted from one generation to the next and communicated to newcomers in our midst. Public schools equip students with the knowledge, skills and perspectives they need to engage in reasoned and civil debate of public issues. They are most successful in promoting democratic traditions when they embody important values such as fairness, equity, inclusiveness and respect for diversity of opinion in their own operations. And in many cases, publicly-funded schools are one of the few places in our society where young people have the opportunity to learn, work and play with those whose backgrounds and perspectives differ from their own.

The Board also recognizes that, by producing an educated population and workforce, publicly-funded schools function as engines of economic growth and development. The days are long gone when North Carolina could thrive with a low-skill/low-wage economy. Even an industry such as textiles, which has traditionally been viewed as a predominantly low-skill enterprise, now requires workers with sophisticated technological expertise and critical thinking skills.

The North Carolina business community has long understood the central role that a strong public school system plays in providing a steady flow of skilled workers, especially in emerging areas such as advanced manufacturing where many employers are struggling to find workers with the skills they need. The state's business leaders also recognize the link between quality public schools and future economic investment. At the 2007 Emerging Issues Forum in Raleigh, Bill Amelio, then the chief executive officer of Lenovo, told participants that a key reason that his high-tech firm chose to operate in North Carolina was "the well educated workforce here."

Business leaders also understand that North Carolina is becoming more diverse in terms of racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and that such diversity is one of the state's strengths in today's globally-competitive market. The mix of children in the state's schools today provides a window into the mix of its future workers and consumers.

3. Public and individual benefits

A central feature of public education is that it generates both private and public benefits. A strong public school system enhances the life chances of individuals while contributing to the health and vitality of the local and statewide communities of which we are all a part.

The children who are educated receive the opportunity to maximize their potential and pursue their personal dreams and aspirations. These benefits include the opportunities to attend postsecondary education, enhanced employment opportunities, higher earnings, better mental and physical health, greater political, social and cultural awareness and a higher quality of life. Education helps individuals to

become fully functioning workers, consumers, citizens and family members. Education, in short, enhances the lives of individuals.

As individuals, we are also members of multiple communities, including neighborhoods and counties, and we share a common identity and destiny as North Carolinians. In our various roles as students, parents, citizens and taxpayers in each of these communities, we all realize collective public benefits from investments in education over and above the sum of the private gains that accrue to us as individuals. Communities with successful public schools enjoy enhanced public safety and greater cultural and leisure activities, which often translate into higher property values. Longer-term public benefits to counties and the state as a whole include a more innovative, dynamic and flexible economy, flourishing research and scientific enterprises, vibrant arts and cultural activities, and the broad citizen participation that undergirds a strong democracy.

A public education system builds connections between public schools and the civic and social purposes for which they were established and that justify the use of taxpayer dollars to fund them. It provides a structure that allows the various stakeholders – students, teachers, administrators, parents, state and district policymakers, the business community and others – to work together in pursuit of common goals.

As in other states, North Carolinians have also turned to public schools to carry out a variety of essential tasks ranging from providing driver education to assimilating immigrants into American society and providing safe and supportive learning environments for children from poor families.

The public and private benefits of education are realized in multiple ways and at different times. Some of these benefits appear immediately, such as the knowledge and skills that children acquire while they are in school. Others take many years to be felt. Economists typically describe education as an investment in “human capital,” parallel to investments in physical capital such as highways. Investments in public education generate benefits that accrue for many years after the initial investment. Failure to address the common good aspects of education today will jeopardize the quality of life for our local communities and the state as a whole both now in the future.

4. The importance of diversity and equal opportunity

A strong public education system in North Carolina promotes the state’s civic and economic functions by celebrating the diversity of our population and providing a high quality educational opportunity to all children regardless of their backgrounds or where they live.

The story of public education in North Carolina over the years is one of growing recognition of the importance of education for the prosperity and well-being of the state and its residents, and of growing commitment to the notion of universal access to education for all its citizens. In the early 19th century North Carolina became the first Southern state to publicly fund education for all white children, and, following the Civil War, schooling was extended to African Americans. Education first became compulsory for all children in North Carolina up to the age of 12 in 1913, and in 1942 the schooling age was raised to 16. This requirement is consistent with the Board’s view that education is critical to the life chances of individuals and to the overall health of a democratic society.

The trends toward inclusiveness and equal opportunity continued during the 20th century with the provision of new educational opportunities for students with special needs, including non-English

speakers. In recent years, educators have become increasingly sensitive to the special challenges that students from impoverished homes often bring with them when they come through the schoolhouse door, such as poor health or the lack of enrichment activities after school or during school vacations. While continuing to push for improvements in teaching and learning, educators have also been working with health, social welfare and other organizations to address the challenges that impede the learning of many disadvantaged children.

Race relations have been a continuing issue in North Carolina education. Even when schools were established to serve black students following the Civil War, public schools remained segregated and far from equal in quality for children of different races until the late 1960s and early 1970s. Re-segregation is a current concern, both between and within schools. While efforts have been made to bridge the gaps, test results confirm that performance gaps between students of different racial backgrounds, low and high wealth communities, and low and high income families remain a persistent problem in the state.

The State Board of Education acknowledges how far the state has come in promoting access to education, but is also acutely aware of how far the state still has to go to achieve the goal of equal opportunity. Much work remains to be done to assure that all North Carolina children – regardless of their heritage, race, ethnicity, income or place of residence – receive the educational foundations they need to flourish fully as productive citizens and to enhance the rich culture of this state and the country.

5. Ambitious and evolving educational standards

Just as education evolved during the 19th and 20th centuries to meet changing circumstances, federal requirements, and public expectations, so must the state continue to update and reinvent the system to meet the new demands of the 21st century. The state education system and the infrastructure required to support it must continue to evolve in order to meet North Carolina's needs for informed citizens and educated workers.

The new global economic order has redefined what today's young people must know and be able to do in order to take their places as participants in a fast-moving and highly interconnected global economy. Significant segments of this emerging global economy demand what are frequently described as "21st century skills" – including high order thinking and problem solving skills and the ability to work in teams. A strong education system in North Carolina sets high standards as defined by traditional academic measures and is forward-looking with regard to 21st century skills.

Today's graduates will also be living and working in an interconnected world where knowledge of other countries and respect for persons from other backgrounds and cultures is the new normal. Solutions to most of the major problems confronting the U.S. and other countries – environmental sustainability, nuclear proliferation, dealing with rogue nations, developing new markets for goods, and many others – transcend the borders of any single nation. As workers and citizens, today's students will be called upon to cast votes and participate in conversations and decision-making that require increasingly sophisticated knowledge and skills, including familiarity with other nations and cultures and the disposition to collaborate even with those whose language, customs and beliefs may differ from their own. Central to this process is familiarity with other languages as a means of understanding how persons from other cultures view the world.

6. A coherent and flexible system

A state education system is more than a collection of students, staff, teachers and administrators going about their appointed tasks, and it is more than a collection of self-sufficient independent schools. It is a “system” – an organic whole with multiple and mutually dependent and interdependent parts interacting and working together over time toward common goals.

To function as an organic whole, a state education system must provide students with a curriculum – or, at a minimum, a developmentally appropriate curricular framework – that builds knowledge and skills in a systematic manner as children progress through schooling and that provides challenging, high level instruction for all students. Such a curriculum must provide continuity to the educational experiences of the many children who move from one school to another from year to year or during an academic year. A coherent and productive education system provides resources for early childhood programs to prepare children for elementary school, funding for a sufficient number of spaces in elementary, middle and high schools, and, as appropriate, provisions for alternative programs and schools for students who might otherwise fall through the cracks. Such a system also prepares students for careers and education beyond high school.

By paying attention to the ways in which key elements interact, an effective system assures that policies and practices such as teacher training programs are designed to support statewide curricular objectives. A system makes possible efficient and effective use of resources and assures that educational opportunities are not adversely affected by factors such as where children happen to live. It provides a mechanism for promising improvements and innovations to be widely distributed.

To say that a state education system must be coherent, however, is not to say that it must be monolithic. The days of the “factory model school” that borrowed assembly line techniques to bring large numbers of students to minimal levels of proficiency in an industrial era are long gone. Educators and policymakers no longer accept the notion that “one size fits all” or even that there is a “single best way” to provide children with the knowledge and skills they will need to take their places in tomorrow’s world.

A strong state public education system offers a wide range of content that serves the needs of students with varying academic and career/technical interests, and it offers students and parents the opportunity to make choices among a variety of schooling options with differing missions and educational philosophies. The most visible of these current options are public charter schools, which receive public funds but enjoy more legislative and operational independence than traditional public schools. Other options include regional schools, Cooperative and Innovative High Schools, as well as the North Carolina Virtual Public School, which is not a school per se but offers students the opportunity to take online courses for credit.

Charter schools, Cooperative and Innovative High Schools, the North Carolina Virtual Public School and other recent educational innovations have increased the educational options available to students and families and have the potential to continue to do likewise in the future. Appropriately authorized and monitored, they can serve as sources of experimentation and innovation and provide quality educational alternatives to disadvantaged students. For such options to play such positive roles, however, it is important that they maintain their status as an integral part of the larger state education system. They have a legitimate claim on taxpayer funds to the extent that they further the overall purposes of the state education system. In practical terms, this means that charter schools, virtual schools and other

new options must be accessible to all students and held to the same high standards of academic, fiscal and other forms of accountability as traditional public schools. To justify state support, they must also embrace the central values of the public school system of which they are a part.

We note that, as recipients of public funding, these and other new schooling opportunities differ in important respects from private and religious schools that do not currently receive public funding. Because their funding comes primarily from private tuition, the private and religious schools have not been subject to the state's accountability program or other requirements that promote access and fair opportunity. Although these schools often foster community service and other democratic values, they are not explicitly part of the larger publicly-funded system of schools. Nevertheless, because many students move between the private and public sectors, some form of coordination between these sectors is appropriate.

As long as such schools receive no public funding, the lack of accountability may continue to be acceptable. If public funds were to be made available – whether in the form of school vouchers for parents or state revenue foregone in the form of tax credits for scholarships – the private and religious schools benefitting from such funds would need to be incorporated far more explicitly into the public school system. That would be necessary because state policymakers have a responsibility to the state's taxpayers to assure that the funds are being used to promote the public interest and not just the interests of the direct beneficiaries. This public interest is especially compelling in the case of elementary and secondary education that is so central to the economic vitality of the state and the health of its democratic institutions.

7. A vision for public education

The State Board of Education's vision of a public education system builds on the state's constitutional commitment to education and emphasizes the state's responsibility for assuring a strong and coherent system that serves all students and that is geared toward the promotion of the public interest.

This vision recognizes that public education involves multiple – and sometimes conflicting – values. Publicly-funded schools operate at the intersection of two sets of legitimate rights: those of parents to direct the upbringing of their children and those of society as a whole to perpetuate democratic values and to promote collective prosperity. Parents have the right – indeed, the obligation – to seek out the best possible education for their children, but they should be free to do so only within a context that permits other parents to do likewise.

The State Board's vision fosters both a spirit of individual freedom and a sense of common purpose. It respects individual choice while promoting equity. The relative importance of these values ebb and flow in different periods, and each generation needs to redefine its own set of values to meet the needs of its time. In this sense, each generation needs to rethink the meaning of a great public education system, and a great state education system must evolve over time in response to changes in the state's economic, technological, and social contexts as well as in response to developments in other states and the world. The one constant, however, is that an education system in a democracy must model and inculcate those values, skills and dispositions that are critical to such a society.

This vision emphasizes community and cooperation. The goal is to promote the public interest by having groups work together toward common goals rather than having them compete with one another in ways that could potentially generate losers as well as winners. Such cooperation might take the form of state policymakers working closely with local school boards and educators when authorizing charter

schools or other educational options so as to assure that both statewide and community-specific interests are furthered. It might take the form of district leaders reaching out to school operators or private firms to help assure that high quality educational opportunities are available to all children. In all cases, it will require that relevant policymakers and practitioners – both those within the education sector and those in related areas such as family and child services – work together to make strategic decisions about how best to organize the delivery of education in each community to meet the public interest.

The Board's vision requires that state policymakers assure adequate resources are available throughout the state so that every child has access to a quality education, including a high quality curriculum and quality teachers, and that no child is denied educational opportunities because of his or her place of residence or family circumstances or background. It requires paying salaries to North Carolina's teachers that are more competitive with other states than they are now, and it will require ongoing investments in early childhood programs and other programs to assure that even children from low-income families enter school ready to learn. And, of course, adequate funding for education in this rapidly changing world cannot be achieved without adequate revenue.

The challenge of raising tax revenue for public education is nothing new to this state, especially at times when the economy has been weak. With some notable exceptions, state policymakers have historically been reluctant to raise taxes for education, and the greatest gains to the education system have come during periods when the state's economy was growing, such as during the 1920's. When the Great Depression seriously threatened the prevailing system of local funding for education at the end of that decade, however, the General Assembly in 1931 took the courageous step of assuming responsibility for funding a free and uniform education for all children in North Carolina. This step paved the way for considerable educational progress in the following years. More recently, in the early 1960s, state policymakers showed similar courage in expanding the state sales tax to fund education. As at that time, the attainment of this part of the vision will require strong leadership and a strong commitment to the public interest.

The Board's public education vision acknowledges that public schools in North Carolina have not always lived up to the ideal of serving all groups of students well, including African Americans, Native Americans and, more recently, the state's rapidly growing Hispanic population. Nevertheless, this vision celebrates the general trend over the last 150 years toward a more inclusive public education system while looking for new ways to realize the collective stake that all North Carolinians have in extending quality education to all of its young people, and especially to those from groups that have been unfairly treated in the past.

A forward-looking vision for education in North Carolina must be grounded in a continued commitment to public education as the foundation of our democratic institutions and the engine of economic growth. Such a vision encourages diverse and innovative means of delivering education while assuring that each element of the system shares a commitment to the broad purposes of public education, including the maximizing of opportunity for all students. It operates schools and other institutions while working with other agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the educational needs of all the state's children. It seeks to unite various communities around common purposes rather than to divide them through competition and privatization.

8. A call to action.

The stakes are high for the state's current and future children. The knowledge and skills required to function in today's information society are far more demanding than they were in the past, and a high school degree no longer guarantees access to a good job. As educational requirements increase for individuals, the social costs of dropouts also increase. The choice that North Carolina faces is clear: Students either become educated and develop the means to become lifelong learners and productive tax-paying citizens, or they become dependent on the state. Our vision for the future of education in North Carolina must assure a high quality education for all the state's children. We cannot afford to pursue a vision in which some children are destined to be winners and others losers.

Education is an investment in the future of our children and in the future of our state. If we underinvest in education or fail to assure fair access to quality education for all students today, we cannot hope to have the great public education system required for a great state in the future. Great public education systems take years to build, but they can be quickly destroyed. If we underinvest in education today, North Carolina will eventually face the daunting and perhaps impossible task of reinventing a system that has served the state so well in the past.

North Carolina needs and deserves a great public education system. We must expect and strive for nothing less.

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