Food For Thought

"I think about baseball when I wake up in the morning. I think about it all day and I dream about it at night. The only time I don’t think about it is when I’m playing it."

~ Carl Yastrzemski (1939- )

Our Mission

Our mission is to promote education reform for the benefit of all North Carolina children while ensuring the recruitment, development and retention of qualified educators.

Scholarships and Grants

Applications are now being accepted for the 2013-14 New Teacher Grants, Continuing Education Scholarships, Professional Development Scholarships, National Board Scholarships, and the Scholarship for Children of PENC Members.

For more information, click here.

National Board Certification Process Changes

This year, 2013-14, will be the last year for the current National Board process. To apply under the current process, candidates must do so by December 31, 2013. Starting in 2014-15, the certification process will take place over a three year time period. Anyone beginning the process in 2014-15 will be notified if they have achieved National Board certification in November/December 2017. This will affect the 12% salary differential as it will take three years to receive the pay increase instead of the possible one year as it stands now.

The new process will be based on four components:

- Component One (phased in: 2014-15) will be the assessment piece, which will be completed at an assessment center and will have no more than 6 open-ended questions
- Component Two (phased in: 2014-15) will focus on using data to meet students’ needs by setting goals for them. This will include an analysis of student work similar to previous entries
- Component Three (phased in: 2015-16) will focus on classroom pedagogy and will include a video analysis.
- Component Four (phased in: 2016-17) will focus on the teacher as a reflective practitioner.

Candidates will pay only for the component(s) that they are working on at the time. Cost will be between $450 and $500 per component with a total of no more than $2000. The state will continue the loan program.

Candiate will have three years to complete all components and two years to do retakes if needed, and the renewal process will remain the same for now. Starting in 2017-18, all four components will be available for candidates at one time, and candidates can choose how many they want to complete at one time and can complete in as few as one but not more than three years.
The NB Standards, the Five Core propositions, and the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching will not change. NB Certification remains performance-based and peer-reviews, with an emphasis on content knowledge and commitment to student learning.

In the past, Take One! scores have been bankable toward certification. The forthcoming revisions will make the assessment process different enough that scores received for Take One! cannot be applied to the revised certification process. This means the 2013-14 candidate cycle is the last opportunity for Take One! scores to be applied to National Board Certification.

For more information, click here. Additional information will be released by National Board in the spring, and PENC will keep you up to date on information as it becomes available.

If you are currently working on your National Board Certification, do be sure to check out our National Board Scholarship!

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**News from the State Board of Education**

**READY Accountability**

On November 7, the READY accountability report will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval at its monthly meeting. Once the report is approved by the State Board, it will be made available online. In the meantime, a READY Accountability Brief is online for review. It briefly describes the READY initiative, lists the state assessments students take in Grades 3-12 in the READY accountability model, describes what you will see in the online report and explains how to understand the three accountability measures: Performance Composite, Growth and AMO Status. To view the READY Accountability Brief, click here.

NC Students and Teachers Earn More Than 100,000 Microsoft Certifications

Nearly three years after the launch of the nation’s first statewide Microsoft IT Academy, North Carolina students and teachers have earned more than 100,000 professional certifications through the innovative program. State Superintendent June Atkinson joined Microsoft executives, teachers and students to announce and celebrate this milestone at Microsoft’s YouthSpark Connections event at the Friday Institute on the campus of North Carolina State University in Raleigh on Wednesday, October 23. To read more, as well as access certification numbers by district, please visit [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) and click on the appropriate link under “News.”

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**NC Retirement Systems News**

Complete the All-Member Survey on the N.C. Retirement Systems (For active and retired members)

The N.C. Retirement Systems wants your feedback on its processes and communication, and wants you to share your experiences and expectations of retirement and financial planning. The web-based survey is being conducted by North Carolina State University, and is now available online until October 31 by clicking here. Completion of the survey by phone is available to retirees who do not have access to a computer. Retirees may call (919) 508-1018 to complete the survey by phone.

The top five reasons you should take the survey:

1) It only takes 10 minutes to complete the survey
2) Your feedback helps the Retirement Systems continually improve the services and communication we provide you
3) You are in the best position to tell us how, and if, our communication is assisting you to make informed retirement and financial planning decisions
4) Your feedback helps us set our goals for the future
5) We want to hear your opinion

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Please share this link with your fellow members of the North Carolina Retirement Systems – retirees and active members.

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**News from the State Health Plan**

Ways to Save in 2014: Have You Completed your Wellness Premium Credits?
For active/Non-Medicare retirees engaging in your wellness activities offers you a way to save on your monthly premiums if you enroll in the Enhanced 80/20 Plan or the Consumer-Directed Health Plan (CDHP) for 2014. You can complete one, two, or all three of the wellness activities listed below to save! Make sure to complete these activities by October 31, 2013, to receive the credit.

1. **Complete your Health Assessment:** You can complete your Health Assessment online through your enrollment system (BEACON or eEnroll), on your Personal Health Portal or by phone at 800-817-7044. By completing the Health Assessment, you will receive a personalized health plan to help improve your overall health and wellness. The more information you enter, the more precise your health risk status and action items will be.

2. **Select a Primary Care Provider (PCP) for yourself and all covered dependents:** To select your PCP, please log into your enrollment system (BEACON or eEnroll). You may not select a specialty care provider as your PCP. Your PCP may be a physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant from any of the following practices:
   - General/Family Medicine,
   - Internal Medicine,
   - Pediatrics, and
   - Obstetrics and Gynecology.

3. **Attest that you and your covered spouse (if applicable) do not smoke, or commit to a smoking cessation program by January 1, 2014:** To complete the attestation, please log into your enrollment system (BEACON or eEnroll). If you commit to participate in a tobacco cessation program, QuitlineNC is an available NC HealthSmart resource that offers free cessation support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in both English and Spanish. Additionally, if you enroll in the multi-call program, you will receive free nicotine replacement patches, gum, or combination therapy to increase your chances of quitting for good. To start living a tobacco-free lifestyle, call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).

To learn more about Wellness Credits and how to complete them, click here.

New 2014 Plan Options and ACA Preventive Medication Coverage

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as health care reform, was signed into federal law in 2010. The ACA requires that certain health plans make preventive benefit changes in order to maintain compliance.

Under the ACA, certain health plans are required to cover recommended preventive services and medications without charging a copayment, coinsurance or deductible. For the State Health Plan, the Enhanced 80/20 Plan and the Consumer-Directed Health Plan (CDHP) will cover the defined preventive medications at 100%, which means at no cost to the member.

The State Health Plan, in consultation with Express Scripts, the prescription benefit manager for the Plan, has developed a list of medications and criteria (i.e., gender and age) to support preventive medication requirements based on the recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be covered under the pharmacy benefit. If a member is prescribed a prescription medication which does not meet the specified criteria, it will still be a covered product requiring the necessary copayment or coinsurance.

To learn more about the new Consumer-Directed Health Plan, see the recently posted CDHP video here.

Learn more about the new 2014 plan options and ACA preventive medication coverage.

Healthy Change is Coming to the State Health Plan

The State Health Plan is introducing an exciting new range of health plan options for all Plan members, including Active members, non-Medicare retirees and Medicare Primary retirees.

The Plan’s Board of Trustees approved these new options for 2014 to give you more choices for coverage and financial incentives for taking steps to improve your health. After all, few things are more important than your health, and the Plan wants you to have the information and resources you need to lower your risk for illness and live a healthy and productive life.

Watch your mail for detailed information on these changes. Open Enrollment will take place during the entire month of October. Meanwhile, here’s a brief overview of the information you will be receiving over the next couple of months.

**Active Members/Non-Medicare Retirees**

Besides offering more options for 2014, the Plan will provide opportunities in two of the options to lower your premium and receive Affordable Care Act preventive care services and medications covered at 100 percent — which means no charge...
to you. Plus, these options will include additional incentives. Your 2014 plan options include:

- **Enhanced 80/20 Plan**: the current Standard 80/20 Plan with a new name, enhanced benefits and incentives to encourage decisions that are good for your health
- **Consumer-Directed Health Plan**: a new option that includes a high deductible health plan, a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) and incentives to also encourage decisions that are good for your health
- **Traditional 70/30 Plan**: the current Basic 70/30 Plan with a new name but no other changes.


**Please note:** If you do not choose an option by Oct. 31, 2013, you and any enrolled dependents will be enrolled in the Traditional 70/30 Plan for 2014.

If you have questions and want more information, the Plan is here to help. You will have several resources to help you make an informed decision, which will all be available on the Plan’s [website](http://www.pencweb.org/associations/4811/enews/?nbr=104).

**State Health Plan Open Enrollment for All Retirees**

State Health Plan Open Enrollment is underway and lasts through October 31, 2013. The State Health Plan’s Board of Trustees approved new options for 2014 that give you more choices for coverage and financial incentives for taking steps to improve your health! The choices you make in October will become effective January 1, 2014.

**You must take action during October** to make sure you are enrolled in the plan that is right for you! [Learn more](http://www.pencweb.org/associations/4811/enews/?nbr=104).

**NOTE:** Retirees can make changes to their health plan coverage in ORBIT during Open Enrollment or by calling 855-859-0966.

**Medicare Primary Retirees Encouraged to Keep Current Dental and Vision Coverage During 2013 Health Care Open Enrollment**

During the upcoming 2014 Open Enrollment, Medicare Primary retirees (65+) have the option to enroll in one of the State Health Plan’s Medicare Advantage plans. If retirees are considering enrolling in one of these plans, it is recommended that they keep their current dental or vision coverage, as the Medicare Advantage plans will not provide the same level of coverage as the plans in which they are currently enrolled.

The services/coverage under the group Medicare Advantage plans with Humana are primarily discount programs and not full insurance protection.

We encourage Medicare Primary retirees who still wish to cancel their current vision or dental coverage to call Humana or UnitedHealthcare and speak to a representative to obtain a better understanding of what would or would not be covered under their plans.

- **Humana toll-free number**: 1-800-944-9442
- **UnitedHealthcare toll-free number**: 1-866-747-1014

**Supplemental Insurance Open Enrollment Underway**

Now through October 31, North Carolina Retirement Systems benefit recipients may participate in Supplemental Insurance Open Enrollment. Product offerings are dental, vision, life and accident insurance with guarantee issue. For questions about the products or to enroll, please contact Pierce Insurance Agency at 1-855-627-3847 (toll-free), or by email at info@pierceins.com, or visit [www.ncsretiree.com](http://www.ncsretiree.com). No action is necessary if you do not wish to make changes to your supplemental insurance plans. The choices you make in October will become effective January 1, 2014.

**Legislation that Affects You**

The 2013 session of the General Assembly adjourned July 26, 2013. [Click here](http://www.pencweb.org/associations/4811/enews/?nbr=104) for summaries of retirement-related legislation that affected the Consolidated Judicial, Legislative, Local Governmental Employees’, and Teachers’ and State Employees’ Retirement Systems.

### News from IEI

2014 SECU Emerging Issues Education Prize for Innovation
The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) is now accepting applications for the SECU Emerging Issues Prize for Innovation, which will award four $50,000 prizes to student teams. Students may select one of four topics to respond to, representing challenges specific to education, health, the natural and built environments and the economy. This is a great opportunity for students at two- and four-year colleges and universities throughout NC to develop new and innovative ways to support our state’s K12 teachers.

The deadline for submissions is December 1.

For additional information, visit the IEI website.

IEI Prize for Innovation

The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at NC State University is thrilled to announce its fourth annual Prize for Innovation for high school and early college students in North Carolina. They are once again looking forward to engaging our state’s young people in issues that matter most to North Carolina’s future.

The fourth annual Emerging Issues Prize for Innovation challenges students across the state to come up with a creative process, environment, or tool for a K-12 classroom that will increase student engagement. Up to five finalist teams will receive $1,000 and IEI will award the winning team an additional $5,000 to go toward product development. The winning team will also receive one consultation with Bryan Setser, a partner at 2Revolutions, an education design lab that designs and launches Future of Learning models.

An informational webinar will be held September 23, applications are due November 8, finalists will be announced December 4, and a public vote in February will determine the winner. The winning team will be announced at IEI's 29th Annual Emerging Issues Forum, February 10-11, 2014.

To learn more, including how to apply, contact IEI at emerging_issues@ncsu.edu or 919-515-7741.

### News from NC CAP

**The Path to Progress: Evaluating Needs and Expanding Opportunities in North Carolina**

This interactive session will feature the Public School Forum’s Education 24/7 study and NC CAP’s Roadmap of Need. The 2013 Roadmap of Need is an in-depth needs assessment for North Carolina counties to evaluate child well-being in their communities. After evaluating where your community stands in child health, youth behavior, educational attainment, and economic development, the session will turn toward finding solutions through the creation of expanded learning opportunities. The Forum's Education 24/7 study showcases the value of expanded learning opportunities such as afterschool programs, Pre-K, summer school, mentorship programs, and digital learning. The study serves as a start-up guide for communities to develop expanded learning opportunities that address the specific needs of children in their community.

If you are interested in a facts-based analysis of the well-being of children in your community, you won’t want to miss this unveiling of the 2013 Roadmap of Need, which explores 20 different indicators of well-being in the areas of health, youth behavior and safety, education, and economic development. If you think children in your community would be well-served through additional opportunities to learn and explore in safe, productive environments, you won’t want to miss this opportunity. We hope you will join us for the chance to meet like-minded individuals in your community and begin the process of working together to ensure every child has the best opportunities for learning and growing. These sessions will be a great forum for elected officials, schools, community leaders, and afterschool providers to learn more about their own communities and connect with each other to solve problems.

Meetings will be held across the state in October and November. All meetings will be held from 10am-2pm, with registration beginning at 9:30am. The cost to attend is $20 per person, and covers lunch. To register for a meeting, [click here](http://www.pencweb.org/associations/4811/enews/?nbr=104).

Save the Date: 2014 SYNERGY Conference

NC CAP has officially set the date for the 2014 SYNERGY Afterschool Conference, which will be held March 24-26, 2014, at the Hilton Charlotte University Place in Charlotte, NC. Last year’s conference in Raleigh brought together over 450 afterschool supporters for training and sharing of best practices. The 2014 conference is expected to sell out, so be sure to mark your calendars and be on the lookout for registration information coming soon!
CEU Opportunities from the Hill Center

The Hill Center is offering professional development workshops this winter to help educators better understand learning differences by sharing research and evidence-based methodology to improve student success.

Upcoming Workshops
October 28, 2013: HELP (Hill Early Literacy Program)
October 29, 2013: HillWrite (Hill Written Language Achievement Program) - 2 Days
November 14, 2013: HillStrategies for Reading
November 15, 2013: HillStrategies for Writing
November 19, 2013: iPads for Literacy Instruction
November 21, 2013: HillMath (Hill Math Achievement Program) - 2 Days
November 22, 2013: HillStrategies for Math
January 14, 2014: Teaching with Technology
January 15, 2014: Phonological Awareness, Spelling, and Handwriting
January 24, 2014: Writing in the Content Areas
January 27, 2014: Don’t Water Down the Content! Enhance Student Learning!

Hill also offers online courses which are available here.

Scholarships may be available for public school educators. Register today at www.hillcenter.org or contact Outreach Specialist Pam Hoggard, at 919-719-7551 or phoggard@hillcenter.org.

GEEO Teacher Travel Programs

Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that runs summer professional development travel programs designed for teachers.

GEEO is offering the following travel programs for 2014: India Spring Break, Morocco Spring Break, India/Nepal, Italy, Portugal/Spain, Amalfi Coast, Greece, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Thailand/Laos, Cambodia, China, Russia/Mongolia/China, Turkey, South Africa/Mozambique/Zimbabwe/Botswana, Morocco, Australia, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Peru, and The Galapagos Islands. The registration deadline is June 1st, but space is limited and many programs will be full well before the deadline.

Educators have the option to earn graduate school credit and professional development credit while seeing the world. The trips are 8 to 24 days in length and are designed and discounted to be interesting and affordable for teachers. GEEO provides teachers educational materials and the structure to help them bring their experiences into the classroom. The trips are open to all nationalities of K-12 and university educators and administrators, as well as retired educators. Educators are also permitted to bring along a non-educator guest.

Detailed information about each trip, including itineraries, costs, travel dates, and more can be found at www.geeo.org. GEEO can be reached 7 days a week, toll free at 1-877-600-0105 between 9AM-9PM EST.