



### Food For Thought

"Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward."

~ Kurt Vonnegut (1922 - 2007)

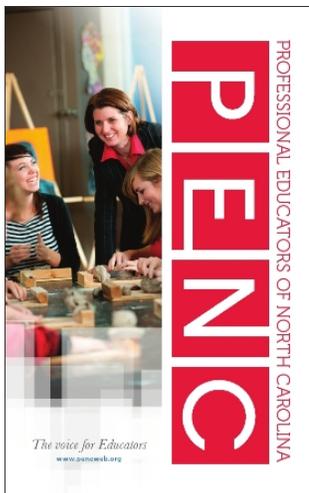
### Our Mission

*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.*

### Join or Renew

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Check out PENC's brochure:



### Membership Form

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### Who We Are

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### Contact PENC

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## PENC Legislative Update

### House Approves Reform Bill

On April 18, the State House approved **H719, Education Improvement Act of 2013**. This bill received wide bipartisan support and takes a different approach than Senate measures to reforms in teacher tenure and school performance grades, as well as creating a task group to examine performance and merit pay. Of the reform proposals under consideration at the General Assembly, PENC prefers this bill to others that would eliminate tenure for classroom teachers and the corresponding protections. The bill would use a modified version implemented in Colorado, replacing tenure with non-probationary or probationary status. The approach in **H719** would put the emphasis on working with struggling teachers while preserving their appeal options, while at the same time giving LEAs the tools they need to dismiss habitually low performing teachers. Teachers who currently have career status will maintain it unless they receive a status rating of "in need of improvement" for two consecutive years. The provisions that address school letter grades would postpone implementation for another year and allow other factors that PENC agrees should be considered in assessing school grades, if they are to be graded. The bill would also require that competency in digital learning be added to professional development requirements for teachers. The bill passed the House with an overwhelming vote of support and now goes to the Senate.

### Other Education Reforms Continue on Path toward Senate Approval

At the same time, the Senate's reform measure, **S361, Excellent Public Schools Act**, is working its way through the Senate. The Senate's approach simply eliminates tenure and replaces it with one, two, three and four year contracts. Teacher dismissals are streamlined. School grades are also included, but the Senate proposal does not take into account student growth in its calculations. Rather, student growth data would be provided separately to the public for their information. PENC has communicated members' concerns about this approach, which would not provide an accurate view of how public schools serve children. PENC also expressed concern about the outright elimination of tenure and raised questions about due process during the dismissal process. While PENC still has significant concerns about the provisions in **S361**, we are grateful that the Senate restored language protecting appeal rights for teachers whose dismissals were on grounds that were arbitrary or capricious. Other provisions would change the way teachers are prepared, emphasizing literacy instruction as a larger part of the teaching curriculum. The bill awaits consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

### Senate Proposes to Eliminate Cap on Classroom Size

The Senate Education Committee approved **S374, NC Public Schools Budget Flexibility Act**. The bill would strike the limitations on transference of teacher assistant and teaching slot, the limits on teaching loads and most of the special allotments. Most troubling is the proposal to eliminate the cap on class size. PENC has communicated its concerns about this proposal to Senate staff and is communicating with the bill sponsor, Sen. Jerry Tillman (R-Randolph).

Please remember that just because a bill is filed or discussions occur, it does not mean that the issue or bill will necessarily make it to the point of becoming a law.  
[What do you think?](#)

If you have questions or concerns, please share your thoughts and ideas with us.

Contact us at [penc@pencweb.org](mailto:penc@pencweb.org).

Submitted by Evelyn Hawthorne

For more information about the North Carolina General Assembly, [click here](#).

To identify and contact your legislators, [click here](#).

For information about specific issues, please contact PENC government relations consultant Evelyn Hawthorne at [lobbyist@pencweb.org](mailto:lobbyist@pencweb.org).