



## PENC Legislative Update

### Education/Educators involved in State Legislative Activity - Making Headlines

Unless you've been on a remote island, you've surely read the headlines or heard the news through television, radio or social media – education is a hot topic. It has been the focus of campaigns and legislative recommendations constantly since the spring thaw. Consider the following:

#### Food For Thought

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

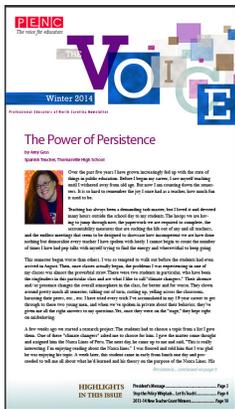
#### Our Mission

*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.*

#### 2014 Winter Voice

The Winter 2014 Voice is here! To access the issue, click the image below .

For print copies, email us at [admin@pencweb.org](mailto:admin@pencweb.org).



#### Join or Renew

Click [here](#) to join or renew .

Check out PENC's brochure:

#### Legislative interim commissions issued education recommendations for consideration during the upcoming short session, convening Wednesday, May 14

Educator Effectiveness and Compensation Task Force: [Ed Compensation Final Report](#)

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee: [Ed Oversight Final Report](#)

House Study Committee on Education Innovation: [Ed Innovation Final Report](#)

Program Evaluation Committee – report on several education recommendations: [PED Report](#) Rep. Bryan Holloway (R-Stokes) and Rep. Edgar Starnes (R-Caldwell) successfully tabled the controversial proposal to allow "open enrollment" across school district lines. That effort also tabled a proposal to allow home school parents to selectively enroll their children in certain classes in public schools.

Committee on Common Core Standards: [Common Core Final Report](#)

#### Lawsuits aimed at educator compensation, tenure and vouchers have enjoined reforms made during the 2013 Session

The proposal to raise salaries of an elite group of educators (25 percent in a county) in exchange for giving up tenure ahead of 2018. The Superior Court judge ruled that those lawsuits in Guilford and Durham will be confined to those school districts, even though the provision was ruled unconstitutional. Lawsuits seeking statewide applicability will surely be filed. [WRAL coverage](#)

The proposal implementing Opportunity Scholarships – vouchers for qualifying parents to use at private schools – is the subject of two lawsuits. Superior Court Judge Robert Hobgood issued an injunction prohibiting awarding of the scholarships while the lawsuits are pending.

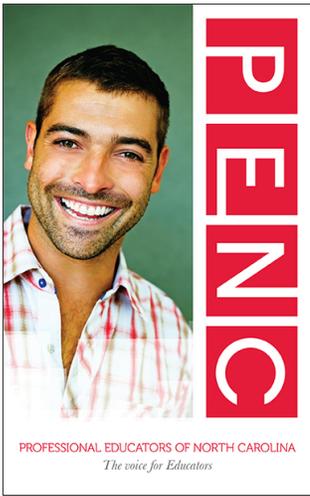
#### Two members of the North Carolina's Executive Branch - Gov. McCrory and Lt. Gov. Forest - released initiatives addressing educator compensation on same day, May 7

Gov. McCrory claimed teachers could expect to see an average raise of 2%, and for those in years 0 through 7 on the salary scale there would be the possibility of earning up to an additional 7%. Educators in steps 0 through 7 on the salary schedule can expect a greater percentage increase as his initial proposal of raising beginning teacher pay to \$33,000 this year still stands. The starting teacher salary would be moved, over time, to \$35,000. In the coming years, Gov. McCrory proposes to change the methodology of teachers' pay by changing the teacher salary schedule to one that has 6 bases or bands that span 3 years each – with a \$3,000 salary increase in moving from base to base. Teachers' salaries would be capped at \$50,000, with the opportunity for teachers to make more money if they achieve certain benchmarks, take on additional leadership roles, teach certain subjects or hard to serve areas, or gain additional training. State employees were also included in his proposal and would receive an average 2% salary increase.

Read the releases shared by Gov. McCrory's office [here](#). You will find the Charlotte Observer's report on the proposal [here](#).

While several House members and Superintendent June Atkinson joined Gov. McCrory when he announced his plan at NC A&T State University in Greensboro, Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) was guarded in his response to questions about it during his Pre-Short Session Press Conference. Sen. Berger said there were parts of the plan that he liked, but wanted to see how the plan would be financed over the long term. To hear Sen. Berger's comments in full, watch Raleigh's WRAL-TV's coverage [here](#).

Lt. Gov. Forest's plan would create a framework for an endowment fund that would be used to supplement teacher salaries. According to Lt. Governor Forest's testimony before the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, corporations could donate to the foundation. Individuals could direct that their state income tax return be directed to the foundation and North Carolinians could opt for "I Support Teachers" vehicle tags, which would direct \$20 annually per tag to the foundation. The license plate idea is modeled on vanity plates used for other charitable purposes like the Blue Ridge Parkway fund. No information was provided about how the funds would be distributed, only that the Lt. Governor is



proposing a framework to collect funds. WRAL-TV in Raleigh covered the story – you may read its coverage [here](#).

### Gary Robertson's Short Session Preview

AP Reporter Gary Robertson has covered the NC General Assembly and NC state government for many years. You may read his Short Session Preview [here](#). He covers the myriad of issues likely to be considered in what lawmakers said would be a session lasting six weeks or less.

Finally, Mr. Robertson reported earlier in the month that state revenues were running about 2 percent short, or about \$445 million, of projections. You can read the article [here](#).

The daunting budget task becomes vivid when you consider the following: Medicaid shortfalls are a moving target, but that estimates run at least at \$140-180 million, and lawmakers are looking for about \$500 million in new recurring dollars to support salary increases for all teachers and state employees.

## PENC's Perspective

PENC has devoted a lot of time and energy not only to following the numerous legislative committees considering all of these issues, but also to offer constructive input and to forge relationships with other groups that share our members' aims. In doing so, the overwhelming priority became advocating for a teacher pay plan that makes sense in both the short and long term. What also became clear was that educators do not want to be dictated to, but want to participate in finding solutions. So PENC has consistently advocated for fairness and for a seat at the table. PENC has asked that teachers "be made whole" first, before implementation of further changes to teacher compensation. That means honoring the commitments that the Teacher Salary Schedule reflected – put in place funding to restore where teachers should be on that schedule as quickly as possible while, at the same time, engaging educators through PENC in plans to modernize the schedule for the future. We said as much as possible to anyone who would listen – you can see a copy of the communication [here](#).

At the same time, we've also pleaded with lawmakers for a "time out" on further curriculum changes. We conveyed *what members said* – that is, Common Core isn't a curriculum. It's a set of standards. It's not perfect, but please give it time to work and allow teachers the training and support they need to make it work.

We've worked hard to convey those messages.

But lawmakers have seen fit to develop plans in a vacuum to generate potentially competing plans. They've sought affirmation and confirmation of their ideas. They've not always welcomed comments offering changes, no matter how constructive.

We'll continue to work and to convey the messages. And, we'll continue to partner with others when doing so makes sense. We will stay the course and represent you.

Thank you for what you do in classrooms across North Carolina every day.

### 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).