



NCACTE Legislative Newsletter
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The short session officially begins May 16th, and legislators seem determined for this short session to be truly brief. The latest word is they intend to be out of town by June 15th, and from my time around the building, I think it could happen. Our team has been working hard meeting with legislators from both parties to make sure they know your priorities. However, because of their plans for brevity this session, it will be challenging to for them to consider funding new ideas, etc. Regardless, we will keep up the hard work pursuing your goals and representing your interests.

Please remember the NCACTE Legislative Day on May 22nd. It will be a good time to meet legislators who are the education decision makers as well as meet your legislator. Come and help make the day a success!

The following is an overview of recent North Carolina General Assembly activity of interest to stakeholders of public education in North Carolina.

8 May 2018

The following are items that the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee recommends to the full General Assembly.

1. Virtual Charter Schools:

In 2014 the North Carolina General Assembly directed the State Board of Education to establish a Virtual Charter School pilot program. This directive authorized 2 virtual charter schools in the state serving students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The schools, North Carolina Connections Academy and North Carolina Virtual Academy, opened in 2015-2016 and are set to close at the end of the 2018-2019 school year under current legislation. Although the committee acknowledges that student achievement outcomes have not been favorable they do agree that the schools have provided a valuable choice to those families throughout the state that do not live close to traditional charter schools or whom are seeking different schooling options for personal reasons. On that basis, the committee has recommended that the pilot program be extended 4 more years and that the charter schools should remain open until the 2022- 2023 school year so that lawmakers can then reconsider the data regarding student outcomes and virtual charter schools over time.

2. University of North Carolina Laboratory Schools:

The UNC lab schools were established as a partnership between local LEAs and constituent institutions of the UNC system. The purpose of the lab schools is to offer public schools of

choice a unique focus on three areas. First, improving student achievement with student populations who have previously been enrolled in low performing schools. Second, strengthening teacher and principal preparation. Third, providing a laboratory for current academic research on teaching and learning. The committee believes that the UNC Laboratory Schools provide additional choices for parents while providing LEAs with access to quality academic research as well as entrance to the teacher education and preparation programs at the UNC schools involved. The committee positively views this program as an opportunity to advance student achievement while also improving teacher educator programs within the state.

3. North Carolina Teaching Fellows:

The North Carolina General Assembly revived the popular NC Teaching Fellows program in 2017 choosing to focus on Special Education and STEM licensure areas. The committee believes the Teaching Fellows program will provide a steady and quality stream of teaching candidates from a diverse pool of students and professionals. The committee believes the renewed Teaching Fellows Commission has had a successful first year of operation and looks forward to ongoing success.

4. Department of Public Instruction -Licensure Review:

The committee, following the concerns raised by teachers and employers in LEAs and Charter Schools, regarding the time it takes for DPI to issue licenses wishes to instruct DPI to embrace the New Teacher Project recommendations for improving the licensure process. The committee supports prioritizing making the licensure process and policies clear and understandable to all stakeholders. The committee supports improving the online presence of DPI and keeping prospective applicants and their employers informed during the process. Finally, the committee supports strengthening the Licensure Section at DPI and improving its functionality and timeliness in processing licensure applications.

5. Schools That Lead:

The committee, believing that quality professional development for teachers is critical to student success, supports measures to promote those ends. Schools That Lead (STL) is designed to partner principals and teachers across schools and school systems to focus on student learning and achievement outcomes. STL provides professional development that allows teachers to be practitioners of their craft while enabling principles to assess the student learning process. The committee supports STL and its use of improvement science and the measurement of student outcomes.

6. ENC STEM:

The committee views the Eastern North Carolina STEM program (ENC STEM) as a positive program for its participants and stakeholders. The residential model has allowed students to take classes in science, technology, math, leadership and team development. The data shows that 82% of the students who participated are still in college while 81% of stem instructors have stayed in the teaching field.

7. Medical Education and Medical Residency Programs:

The committee wishes to have more time to study medical education and medical residency programs. Therefore, the committee recommends that there be continued study of the initial plan that assesses healthcare needs in the state. The committee recommends objectives be developed to provide guidance for funding these programs as well as providing guidance to the NC Department of Health and Human Services to design programs which correspond with stated goals.

8. Cursive Writing and Multiplication tables memorization:

The committee believes that the report on cursive writing and multiplication tables submitted by the State Board of Education does not provide adequate detail on these two provisions. Therefore, the committee recommends an annual report on the implementation of cursive writing and multiplication table requirements. The committee would like to know the percentage of LEAs that are in compliance with cursive writing requirements and memorization of multiplication table requirements as well as a list of strategies used by LEAs to meet their goals. In addition, the committee would like information on those LEAs that do not provide data for the report.

The following are 14 items that the **House Select Committee on School Safety** recommends to the full General Assembly.

For the full committee report and additional details regarding the Finding and Recommendations of the Committee, please see the link below:

https://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/House2017-190/5-10-2018/01_Draft%20School%20Safety%20Committee%20Report.pdf

Committee Recommendations

1. To meet the growing demand for School Psychologists, the committee recommends accepting the **NATIONALLY CERTIFIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST CREDENTIAL** as a sufficient credential to increase the available number of licensed Psychologists in public schools.

2. To meet growing social and emotional needs of students, the committee recommends increasing the number of student support personal in the schools. This would include additional counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses.

3. The Committee recommends that the state of North Carolina require threat assessment teams in all public schools based on findings from the Center for Safer Schools. The teams would consist of key school safety stakeholders in the individual schools.

4. To better meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of public school students, the committee recommends Peer to Peer counselling programs be implemented in the state's Middle and High schools.

5. The committee recommends the development of an efficient plan of coordinating the mental health community to be better equipped to identify mental and behavioral health concerns.

6. To allow for the anonymous reporting of potential threats and other similar social concerns, the committee recommends funding be provided to expand the use of the Speak Up application or similar tool(s) that would allow students to anonymously report school safety concerns.

7. The committee, in recognition that non-public schools have fewer tools for providing campus security, propose that all options be explored to better find security options for non-public school intuitions. The committee recommends listening to the law enforcement community for best practices in this area.

8. The committee recommends studying the expansion and requirements of the Volunteer School Resource Officer program. Currently, the program has not been fully utilized, therefore the committee suggests modifications be made to expand successful training and education for program volunteers.

9. The committee recommends extending mandatory safety plan and drill requirements for public schools. In addition, the committee encourages the same from non-public schools.

10. The committee recommends implementing training and continuing education requirements for School Resource Officers. The training will be supported by the NC Criminal Justice Training and Standards Commission and the NC Sherriff's Training and Standards commission.

11. The committee supports an appropriation of an additional 1.8 million dollars to fund grants for Schools Resource Officers to serve elementary and middle schools.

12. The committee recommends the requirement of a facility vulnerability assessment of each building on a school campus. Through a collaboration of the Center for Safer School and NCDPI an assessment tool should be developed for the use of school based administrators. The committee recommends updating this yearly.

13. The committee recommends that local School Boards report annually on School Resource Officers (SROs). This report will be sent to the Center for Safer Schools to then be reported to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee annually.

14. The committee understands that suicide prevention efforts are a critical part of delivering mental health services to youth in schools. The committee supports enacting house Bill 285 Suicide Prevention/Awareness School Personnel.