



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Issue 637

August 8, 2016

What's Up Politically

Charter Schools Application Rejections: The rise of charter schools across the state will slow in 2017, the Charlotte Observer reports. That's because the state Board of Education on Aug. 4 rejected several applications that members thought may end in failure.

Bottom line: Only eight of 28 charter school applications for 2017-18 were approved, including two in Mecklenburg County and one in neighboring Gaston County. That will bring about 1,200 new seats for students in the Charlotte region, fewer than the area has seen in recent years. The game plan for the 2016-17 school year -- as the approved schools find buildings, hire staff and recruit students -- will result in Charlotte having a new "quasi-military" school and a Westside replica of the successful Sugar Creek Charter School. And the Charter Schools USA chain, which already operates several schools in the region, will add one in the Belmont-Mount Holly area.

Breaking Tradition, Background: In something of an about face, the Board of Education rejected six applications that had won approval from the Charter School Advisory Board, which reviewed applications and interviewed board members this year. Members of both boards expressed concern about schools that have opened and quickly failed, including three Charlotte schools that collapsed under academic and financial problems in their first year.

Since the state lifted its 100-school cap in 2011, there has been a surge in charter schools. North Carolina will have 167 charter schools in 2016-17. Charter schools, which are public schools run by independent boards, can take students across county lines.

Legislature's Legal Bills Mounting: Law firms have billed Republican legislative leaders \$9.3 million for legal services since January 2011. More than half of that amount involves defending voter ID legislation struck down last month by a federal appeals court. GOP leaders blame the attorney general, who decided against defending some of the cases. Click [here](#) for more details.

Other News

NC, a Must-Win State: North Carolina is becoming a big focus for presidential campaign spending and candidate visits these days as it is seen by some observers as a must-win state for GOP presidential hopeful Donald Trump. The national political attention here is new for North Carolina, a solid Republican state in presidential elections until Barack Obama's surprise win in 2008. Obama was the first Democrat to win the state since 1976. But he then lost it to Republican Mitt Romney in the 2012 election.

The News & Observer reports that polls show that Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton have been running close races here for months. As of late last week, the Real Clear Politics polling average had Clinton with a scant 0.5 percent lead in the state, and some polls have given Trump a narrow lead. The candidates and their running mates have been holding rallies here nearly every week, and their visits will likely continue to the Nov. 8 election.

Last week, GOP vice presidential candidate Mike Pence held a town hall event in Raleigh, while Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Kaine visited Guilford County. Bill Clinton also turned up in Raleigh at Shaw University as well as fund-raising appearances.

Meantime, the Wilmington StarNews reports that Trump will visit the Port City Tuesday afternoon. The New York businessman will hold a 2 p.m. rally, although a site in Wilmington has yet to be selected.

Gubernatorial, Local News

Governor's Race: Gov. Pat McCrory, who often crosses swords with The Charlotte Observer's editorial board, is featuring a video of the recent demolition of the newspaper's former building in a new fund-raising pitch. An email last week asked for a \$5 contribution to help the Republican governor's re-election campaign fight against what it claims is media bias in favor of Attorney General Roy Cooper, McCrory's Democratic opponent.

"Every day, the media is doing Roy Cooper's job for him, shielding him from questions, rushing to his defense and attacking Governor McCrory," it said. Then, above the demolition video, it adds: "Their credibility is crumbling faster than the Charlotte Observer's office building!"

Elections Board: The State Board of Elections filled a vacancy on the Wake County Board of Elections Sunday night so the county board could respond to a federal court order in a long-simmering redistricting case that involves the [local school board](#).

NCSU Student Wakes Up Today an Olympic Champion: NC State swimmer Ryan Held enjoys winning Olympic gold yesterday. [Click here for more info.](#)

Quote of the Week

"Everybody that wants to run for governor in 2020 is going to make their plans known somewhere around Nov. 9. We believe the foundation we're laying, a grassroots foundation across the state, would be beneficial to that."

- Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, in an [article](#) that featured his old-school political style, including a 36-foot-campaign bus often in tow (The News & Observer, 8/6/16)

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