



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Crossover Coming Over

Legislative Work Revving Up: With the crossover deadline looming Thursday, state House members approved nearly 40 bills last Thursday before adjourning, most passing with little debate after heaving vetting previously in committees. Crossover is a deadline set every session, generally for non-budget bills, that most legislation must pass one chamber and "cross over" to the other chamber to remain alive for the rest of the two-year session.

Leaders of the House and Senate say they don't intend to extend the crossover deadline past Thursday. Specifically, bills that raise or spend money, local bills, and agency bills are not bound by crossover. Lawmakers often find ways to resurface legislation that didn't make the cut, but the deadline is traditionally respected. The crossover deadline results in long days and late nights for lawmakers this week. he next week.

Superintendent Hires: Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson could hire up to five additional executives without State Board of Education approval under a bill that cleared the House Education Committee Thursday morning. The bill allocates money for the additional positions by eliminating eight positions that have been vacant for a year or more. Johnson currently has three positions that report directly to him at his discretion.

"Out of the 800 or so employees at (the Department of Public Instruction), if he can have eight or nine of these without having to justify his choices to somebody else, that's appropriate," Rep. Hugh Blackwell, R-Burke, told the committee.

In December, lawmakers gave Johnson more latitude in hiring and firing in the department and the department's operations. But that new law has been challenged by the state school board, with a hearing pending in May.

Other Action

Partisan BOEs: In the past couple of decades or so, partisan politics haven't been much of a factor in most school board races in North Carolina. Historically, a small minority of state's 112 school boards have been elected on a partisan basis, WUNC reports. However, in the last five

years, the GOP-run state legislature has more than doubled the number of school boards elected on party lines.

Before 2013, there were fewer than 10 school boards in the state that held partisan elections. Now there are 25, with more possible. This year, state Republican lawmakers have filed bills to add another ten boards to the list. Rep. George Cleveland, R-Onslow, recently got a measure passed in the House to make boards in his district partisan. "Nonpartisanship is a fantasy, OK?" he said. "We have partisanship across the school boards, in the cities, the local delegations, the whole bit. It's honesty. Let's do what's actually going on, and have the public understand who they're voting for."

But many school boards resist efforts at partisanship, saying they don't may have parallels with more dysfunctional, Washington-like politics. Rep. Cleveland said his bill has nothing to do with a national GOP effort to sweep up seats in local races.

Class Size: School advocacy groups were hopeful Friday that the Senate would soon act on a bill that school districts say is badly needed to avoid thousands of potential teacher layoffs and cuts in art, music and physical education classes in North Carolina elementary schools. House Bill 13, which school officials say allows them to save arts and PE classes, was removed from the Senate Rules Committee and sent to the Senate Education Committee.

State lawmakers lowered maximum class sizes in kindergarten through third grade from 24 students to between 19 and 21 students as part of last year's budget. School officials say the change, which goes into effect in the 2017-18 school year, removes their flexibility to pay specialists such as art, music, foreign language and physical education teachers out of the state.

Some Legislation We're Watching

While NCACTE is monitoring dozens of bills, several high on our radar include:

* **CTE Legislation, [House Bill 450](#):** In a 110-0 vote, the N.C. House on April 4th approved and sent to the Senate a bill, the "Future Ready Student Act of 2017," that would expand CTE, award competitive grants of up to \$5 million and broaden CTE to some lower grades.

NCACTE strongly supports the measure, which is in Senate Rules. The bill – as noted in a [legislative summary](#) – also would establish business advisory councils as well as:

- Establish the CTE Expansion Program: Effective upon appropriation of funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Program would expand CTE by prioritizing the inclusion of students in 6th and 7th grade through grants administered by the NC Education and Workforce Innovation Commission.

-Funding: Used to award competitive grants in a total amount of **up to \$5 million** to be allocated as non-reverting funds to an LEA over seven years. Funds would be used only

for employing additional licensed personnel in CTE areas, career development coordination areas, and support services to **expand CTE to 6th and 7th graders**, and maybe used for multiple schools in an LEA.

- Award of Grants: LEAs must include the in applications (1) a plan for expansion of the CTE program to 6th and 7th graders, including specific programs to be expanded, the significance of CTE in the LEA, and how the grade expansion would enhance the education program and the community; (2) a request for funds description of how the funds would be used, and other sources of funds available for the program and (3) a proposed 7-year budget with details on use of funds to add personnel, increase CTE efforts, and provide support services; (4) a meaningful strategy.

Quote of the Week

“Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react.”

- Overheard

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