



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

May 1, #674

Crossover Over; Things Slowing

Frenzied Activity, Class Size: We don't generally like to start at the end in this Legislative Newsletter, but check out the Quote of the Week below to put things in perspective for the breakneck speed of work leading to the April 27th crossover deadline. With that noted, the biggest legislative item involving public education last week was a bill, quickly signed by Gov. Roy Cooper, that would ensure new class-size requirements did not eliminate PE, music and art specialists of a job.

[House Bill 13](#) cleared the Senate 112-3 Thursday afternoon before the governor affixed his signature to the measure at 4:55 p.m. The bill will "put a one-year delay on the class-size restrictions that have been much discussed here and in the media," said Rep. Chuck McGrady, R-Henderson. During that year, the General Assembly will collect data about elementary school teachers and teacher specialists.

"What this information will allow us to do is formally define them and then determine how to make their allotment work," said Rep. Jeffrey Elmore, R-Wilkes. He said there is no formal definition for art, music, and physical education specialists under current state law. That makes paying for those positions difficult. Lawmakers in both chambers have vowed that if necessary, they will create a separate funding stream to pay for the elementary school specialists.

Lighter Load this Week: With crossover over, this week's pace slows with both the House and Senate having no-vote, skeletal sessions today. House Speaker Tim Moore told members there may be no floor votes on Tuesday. Both chambers will come together for a joint on Wednesday to honor the Coach Roy Williams and the University of North Carolina Tar Heels after their sixth NCAA Championship win. Look for some interesting dynamics as Williams, along with Duke Coach Mike Krzyzewski, turned up the heat on their criticism of House Bill 2, the so-called bathroom bill, before the GOP-run legislature recently repealed part of the bill.

Senate Budget Bill: Senators hope to put final changes on their budget plan this week. That would mean the chamber could roll out its full spending proposal for the week of May 7. "The money report is pretty much done," Senate Appropriations Chair Harry Brown told reporters Thursday, according to news reports. His committee, he said, is bird-dogging legal "budget

provisions" language that will come accompany spending details. The Senate, which this year starts with the budget plan, then would pass its approved budget bill to the House for its turn at the budget before conferees are appointed from both chambers to resolve differences.

Other Legislative Action

Low Performing Schools: Hundreds of schools each year would avoid the indignity of being considered by the state as low-performing under [House Bill 826](#), legislation unanimously approved by the state House on Wednesday and referred to Senate Rules. Under the bill, the definition of low-performing schools would exclude schools with D and F performance grades that meet growth targets on state exams. Supporters said the twist gives a more realistic and fair view of how North Carolina schools are performing.

"Rather than putting schools that are meeting growth in with the low-performing definition of a host of other schools, this bill simply strikes that and lets them stand in a little bit better status," Rep. Dennis Riddell, R-Alamance, and a primary sponsor of the bill, at a House Education Committee meeting. If the definition had been used this past school year, 242 fewer schools would have been listed as low performing.

Some Legislation We're Watching

While NCACTE is monitoring dozens of bills, several of significance 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. Primary sponsors are Reps. [Horn](#); [Johnson](#); [Dixon](#); [Williams](#).

NCACTE strongly supports the measure, which has been sitting in Senate Rules since April 10th. 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.

[HB 751](#): The bill, which on April 26th cleared the House and now is in Senate Rules, is titled "Career and College Ready/High School Grads. It would require all students to demonstrate a certain level of reading achievement to accompany high school diplomas. Primary sponsors are Reps. [Blackwell](#); [Horn](#); [Johnson](#).

[Senate Bill 599](#): "Excellent Educators for Every Classroom," which would establish the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission, would hold accountable the educator licensure process. Some concerns have been expressed about how a teacher could get a license if not affiliated with an educator preparation program.

The bill has a long way to go. It did not make crossover but could still be eligible for consideration. It was withdrawn from Senate Rules, re-referred to Senate Education/Higher Education and, if it receives a favorable vote there, would be re-referred to Senate Finance then Senate Rules. Primary sponsor is Sen. [Barefoot](#).

[SB 421](#): The bill, "Use of Career & Technical Funds/Onslow County," would appropriate \$5 million for Onslow County to retrofit and buy equipment for a regional CTE center. The bill's primary sponsor is Sen. Harry [Brown](#); R-Onslow, and Senate Majority Leader. Not surprisingly, the bill breezed through the Senate on April 11 and now sits in House Rules.

[HB 600](#): "School Construction Flexibility" passed the House on April 26th and now sits in Senate Rules. Concerns remain on this bill concerning CTE funding. Primary sponsors are Reps. [J. Bell](#); [Lewis](#); [Brenden Jones](#); [Goodman](#).

[SB 169](#): "Teaching Excellence Bonus Expansion" cleared the Senate on March 23 and has been sitting in House Rules since. CTE funding here needs to be addressed. Primary sponsors are Sens. [Berger](#); [Harrington](#); [Wade](#).

Quote of the Week

"Let's do our job, vote on the bills, and get the hell out of here."

- Rep. Greg Murphy, R-Pitt, responding to 11th hour political gamesmanship before the crossover deadline (The Insider, 4/27/17)

Editor - Dave Simpson, NCACTE Lobbyist, P. O. Box 30998, Raleigh, N.C. 27609
Phone: (919) 781-3270, #5724; Email: dsimpson@carolinasagac.org