



North Carolina State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is charged with supervising and administering "the free public school system and the educational funds provided for its support."

[About the NC SBE](#)

[SBE Meeting Information](#)

[SBE Highlights](#)

[SBE Policy Manual](#)

[Advisory Councils, Boards and Commissions](#)

[Legislative Report](#)

[Legal Affairs](#)

[On the Road](#)

[Education News](#)

[Resources](#)

[HOME](#)

sbe highlights

Notes on the state board of education...

Feb. 4-5, 2004

Special Note: To review background materials on each item, please go to [/sbe_meetings/0402_sbagenda.html](#) Click on the appropriate agenda category, High Student Performance (HSP); Quality Teachers, Administrators and Staff (QP); Effective and Efficient Operations (EEO); Healthy Students in Safe, Orderly and Caring Schools (SS); or Strong Family, Community and Business Support (FCB).

Issues Session –

The Board continued its ongoing discussion of testing and accountability topics, focusing this month on the question regarding whether standards are sufficiently rigorous. There was discussion about the difference in the proficiency level set on state end-of-grade tests versus the proficiency level of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP's standard for proficient can be described as similar to the "Olympic times" established for athletes who want to compete in the Olympics. This type of proficiency cannot be compared to the proficient standard for state tests. In the case of the state tests, "proficient" refers to the level of skill and knowledge needed for minimum preparation to succeed at the next grade level. Discussion also centered around the state's ABCs regression formulas, the rigor of the state's testing program and the minimum competency standard. The Board discussed whether it was time to redo the formula used to calculate growth and whether other variables needed to be added to the model. The current formula is considered transparent and understood. Any addition to the already complex process would turn the formula into a "black box." The Board agreed to continue its discussion of testing issues at its March meeting.

Financial Update –

As a prelude to the upcoming legislative session, Board members received a preview of the 2004 "Highlights of the North Carolina Public School Budget." Key points include the three ways that North Carolina provides for schools: with position allotments for specific purposes, with dollar allotments for specific purposes, and with categorical allotments linked to the needs of specific populations or services. By providing positions rather than a block of funds for teachers, North Carolina is unusual among the states. This distinction also allows North Carolina districts to hire the most qualified teachers that they can recruit with a guarantee that the appropriate salary will be paid by the state. Approximately 91.2 percent of state funds are earmarked for salaries and benefits, so budget flexibility can frequently involve decisions about personnel. Although total appropriations for public schools continue to increase, they now represent a smaller percentage of the General Fund, 42 percent in 2003-04 as compared to 53 percent in 1969-70. The public schools receive a total of \$6.1 billion in state funding. Average daily membership in local school districts affects its funding primarily by affecting the number of positions for which they qualify. Per pupil expenditures can be misleading as they are distorting because of economies of scale issues.

Action Items

- *Revision of the North Carolina K-12 Computer/Technology Skills Standard Course of Study (HSP 1)* — Board members approved a revision of the Computer/Technology Skills Standard Course of Study to be implemented in 2004-05. A new Computer Skills Test based on the revised curriculum is scheduled for 2005-06.
- *Weighted Quality Point Policy and Proposed Changes (HSP 2)* — The Board's required study report of the weighted quality point issue was approved, with an endorsement of the proposal that has been approved through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Presidents of the University and the Community College systems.
- *Approval of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) as an Alternative to NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) (QP 2)* — The U.S. Department of Education has authorized the Teacher Education Accreditation Council as an alternative to NCATE in accrediting teacher education programs. After a lengthy discussion about adding this option to the N.C. Program Approval policy, the State Board also approved TEAC for use by North Carolina higher education institutions.
- *Approval of New Mentor Training Standards (QP 3)* — New mentor training standards were approved as directed by legislation. The new standards have been endorsed by the Professional Teaching Standards Commission and were discussed last month by the State Board.

Discussion Items

- *Recommendations for Recognition of Alternative Schools and Programs (HSP 3)* — A plan to recognize alternative schools for strong achievement was discussed this month. The recognition would provide plaques to alternative schools that achieve 5/5 in the ABCs model for Alternative Schools (analogous to High Growth) or that are considered as schools of promise in a competitive application process. Selected alternative programs would be invited to present as a Good News item on an upcoming State Board agenda. This item will be considered for approval in March.
- *Recommendations for Naming the Top Recognition Category for the ABCs Program (HSP 4)* — The most popular name for the new top designation of the ABCs recognition categories is Honor Schools of Excellence, according to a survey of members of the N.C. Youth Legislative Assembly and also of 18 Youth Council Advisors and their respective student groups. Other choices were Schools or Merit, second choice; and Schools of Excellence Plus (third choice). Board members plan to seek additional input from various advisory groups before making a final decision.
- *Recommendations from the SBE Ad Hoc Writing Committee (HSP 5)* — Regarding the 10th grade Writing Assessment, the Ad Hoc Writing Committee has recommended two actions: results of the writing assessment at grade 10 should be a part of the ABCs Accountability model in the Performance Composite score beginning in 2004-05; and the Student Accountability Standards should be amended to include using the results from the 10th grade writing assessment as a screen for identifying students that need additional writing instruction in the 11th grade.
- *Recommendations from the Compliance Commission Regarding "Most Improved" ABCs Categories (HSP 6)* — The Compliance Commission recommends eliminating the "Most Improved" categories from the ABCs recognition categories. Commission members believe that Most Improved categories are not as important as they were in the early days of the ABCs model and also that the idea of growth has taken secondary importance to the performance composite as federal requirements have changed. There was discussion among State Board members and DPI staff regarding whether the categories could be retained with a minimum threshold for the performance composite score.
- *2004-05 Supplemental Budget Request (EEO 3)* — Board members reviewed a draft supplemental budget request for the upcoming legislative session and discussed priorities. Board approval of this request is expected in March or April. The preliminary request includes funding for ABCs bonuses (currently non-recurring), approximately \$140 million; funds to reinstate vocational education program budget cuts, \$18.4 million; children with disabilities and behavioral support (move funding toward 230%), \$25.4 million; occupational course of study (additional options for exceptional children) \$6 million; academically or intellectually gifted (increase funding factor 5%), \$2.2 million; \$22.4 million for disadvantaged student supplemental funding; limited English proficiency (increase funding factors 10 percent), \$3.1 million; school testing facilitator (1:1,000 students), \$68 million; teacher assistants for every teacher in K-3, \$155 million; central office (reinstate reductions in 2002-03 and 2003-04), \$5.2 million; school nurses (1st installment to reach 1:750) \$4.8 million; and eliminate discretionary budget reduction, \$44.3 million.

Good News Items

- *Spring Creek High School's Science National Honor Society, Wayne County Schools* — The only chapter of the Science National Honor Society in North Carolina is at Spring Creek High School in Wayne County. Joyce Best, the faculty advisor to the group, and Graham Wilson, the student president of the group, gave a presentation on the activities and benefits of the science honor society. Students benefit from incentives to pursue science education, from opportunities to interact with scientists in the community and state and from the support of other students with a strong science interest.
- *Wayne Initiative for School Health (WISH), Wayne County* — Using a variety of partnerships and financial grants, Wayne County Schools has established four middle school health centers to help provide access to health care and wellness counseling. As a result, pregnancies have decreased 75 percent and there has been a 3.5 percent decrease in absenteeism. The centers are operated in collaboration with the primary care physicians in the community, as well as in partnership with East Carolina's School of Medicine and Wayne County Community College. Students, with parental permission, can take advantage of a variety of services, including immunizations, primary health care and referrals, mental health counseling and nutrition counseling.

[<Back to Top>](#)