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## sbe highlights

Notes on the state board of education...

**Feb. 2-3, 2005**

Special Note: To review background materials on each item, please go to [http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe\\_meetings/0502\\_sbagenda.html](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/0502_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** — There is no singular solution to the problem of recruiting and keeping high quality teachers in North Carolina public schools, but a focus on a variety of strategies is needed to address teacher shortages, according to a report issued by the State Board of Education's Task Force on Teacher Retention convened last fall in response to Session Law 2004-51. The report outlined 29 recommendations supporting work around the following issues related to teacher recruitment and retention:

- teacher working conditions;
- teacher leadership/differentiated roles;
- administrator support and accountability;
- enhancing the image of the profession/barriers to entering the profession;
- teacher preparation;
- beginning teacher induction, support and mentoring; and
- financial incentives.

Board members directed the Department of Public Instruction staff to work on an implementation plan for the recommendations for presentation at future meetings.

### Action Items

- *Changes to North Carolina's NCLB Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook* (HSP 1) — The Board approved changes to include the use of a combination of English I and Grade 10 Writing and the use of Algebra I to replace the NC High School Comprehensive Test in Reading and Mathematics in determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at the high school level for most students. It will include new starting points for annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics based on analyses of performance in these three areas.
- *Revision to SBE Policy on Alternate Assessment Portfolio* (HSP 2) — Revisions to the Board's policy on the Alternate Assessment Portfolio were approved. This reflects changes that have occurred since 2003 when the scoring procedure for the portfolio was revised and the fact that there is no longer a need to assign quality scores.
- *Changes to the ABCs Growth Standard for 2004-05 School Year* (HSP 3) — Board members considered a modification of the growth standards for the 2004-05 ABCs calculations. The proposed modification would have changed one coefficient at the sixth grade level to help ensure more representative growth at sixth grade reading. The Board discussed the pros and cons of taking action on the proposal and expressed concern that changing the coefficient would be reviewed as some as lowering the standard. The Board indicated that it might be more prudent to wait until the comprehensive review of the accountability program as mandated by HB 1414 is completed before taking action on modifying the growth standard. The Board did not take action on this item.
- *Report and Recommendations from the Professional Development Initiative Implementation Work Group* (QP 1) — The report and recommendations of the Professional Development Initiative Implementation Work Group were approved. This report was presented in January for information and outlines an action plan for implementing specific components of an enhanced professional development system. The complete report is online at <http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/>.
- *School Calendar Waiver to Accommodate an Educational Purpose* (EEO 1) — The school calendar law approved in 2004 allowed for waivers to be granted to schools that applied and demonstrated an educational need. Waivers were granted to 27 schools, mostly schools providing early college or middle college experiences.
- *Report and Recommendations from the Business Education Technology Alliance* (EEO 2) — This report and its recommendations were approved this month by the Board. DPI staff members are working on a framework for addressing the BETA recommendations.

### Action on First Reading

- *Approval of Federal Grants* (EEO 4) — Reading First Grant Awards (EEO 4) — Reading First grants totaling \$20.9 million were approved for distribution to a number of schools statewide.
- *Individual Class Size Exceptions Waiver Request* (EEO 5) — A total of 12 class size waivers were approved for several school districts and 28 were disapproved.
- *Calendar Waivers Requested by LEAs* (EEO 7) — Madison County Schools received a waiver from the school calendar law because of a history of school days lost to inclement weather. Other school districts qualifying for waivers because of a history of school missed due to inclement weather received approval for their waivers in January.

### Discussion Items

- *Proposed Modifications to the State Competency Testing Program to Include Alternate Means and Measures Including Alternate Assessments per HB 801* (HSP 4) — House Bill 801 from Session Law 2003-275 requires that the State Board modify the State Competency Testing Program to ensure that high school students who do not pass the competency tests are given an opportunity to take an alternate test or tests. Several options have been considered for both students with disabilities and for those without disabilities. These ideas, proposals and recommendations for short-term and long-term options were presented this month and include the use of several nationally-normed standardized tests that measure competencies in verbal and quantitative areas and several performance-based assessment options to serve as alternate means and standards for demonstrating minimum competency. Some options would be available by April 2005.
- *Waiver Requests Under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act* (HSP 5) — Applications from seven middle college/early college/collaborative college high school programs were considered for waivers from laws and rules under 115C-238.50, Part 9, Cooperative Innovative High School Programs. All of these schools are supported by the New Schools Project. The law establishing the Innovative Initiatives Act authorizes trustees of community colleges and local boards of education to establish cooperative innovative programs in high schools and community colleges to target at-risk high school students and students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction. Applying for the waivers were Early/Middle College High School at Guilford Technical Community College (Guilford County Schools, Guilford Technical Community College), Anson County Early College High School (Anson County Schools, South Piedmont Community College), Chatham County Middle College High School (Chatham County Schools, Central Carolina Community College), Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership (Iredell-Statesville/Mooresville Graded School District, Mitchell Community College), Davidson Early College High School (Davidson County Schools, Lexington City Schools, Thomasville City Schools, Davidson Community College), Edgecombe Early College High School (Edgecombe County Public Schools, Edgecombe Community College), Robeson County Early College High School (Robeson County Schools, Robeson Community College, UNC-Pembroke), and Sampson County Early College High School (Sampson County Schools, Clinton City Schools, Sampson Community College).
- *Recommendations for Final Approval of 2004 Charter School Applications* (EEO 9) — Two new school charters were considered for approval: Socrates Academy in Mecklenburg County and Two Rivers Community School in Watauga County. If these charters are approved in March, the schools would open for students in fall 2005. This would bring the total number of active charters to 99.

### Information Agenda

- *Revision of Essences for the NC Standard Course of Study – Mathematics* (HSP 6) — No Child Left Behind legislation requires that all students be assessed in reading and math. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 1997, requires that all students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum and be included in general state and district-wide assessment programs. To comply with these requirements, extensions to the Standard Course of Study in Mathematics have been revised by DPI staff. This assures direct alignment with the Standard Course of Study's goals. Teachers will use these extensions for instructional purposes and for assessment with the Alternate Assessment Portfolio of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and 10.
- *Dropout Data Report, 2003-04* (HSP 7) — North Carolina's annual high school dropout rate was released for the 2003-04 school year, showing that 3.29 percent of students in grades 7-12 and 4.86 percent in grades 9-12 dropped out of school in that year. These rates represent slight increases over the data for 2002-03 when the dropout rate was 3.23 percent for grades 7-12 and 4.78 percent for grades 9-12. The overall trend line since 1988-89 has been positive with a smaller percentage of students dropping out over time. In 1988-89, the first year of an actual counted dropout rate rather than an estimated one, the rate was 4.85 percent for grades 7-12 and 6.66 percent for grades 9-12.

State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee said Board members were concerned about the dropout rate and about losing any student. This concern is a driving force behind the Board's recent work to reinvent high schools. The State Board and Department of Public Instruction are involved in a variety of efforts in this area. The New Schools Project and Learn and Earn are projects directed at high school reform and are programs designed to meet the needs of students who might not be successful in traditional high schools. Also, the State Board's Ad Hoc Committee on Rigor, Relevance and Relationships is studying high school issues including ways to enhance the rigor of learning and the high school curriculum.

- *How Many Students are Attending NC Public Schools and How Close, Historically, are Our Projections?* (EEO 10) — Engin Konanc, DPI statistical researcher, gave an informational presentation on how average daily membership growth is projected. Currently, nine counties have average annual growth in the 3.0-5.99 range from 1995-2005. These counties include four counties in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, two in the Triangle area and two on the Outer Banks.

### Good News

- *Blue Ribbon Schools* — Recipients of the 2004 Blue Ribbon Schools awards were recognized this month. These schools are being recognized for fostering a climate of academic excellence and enrolling all students to reach their highest level of scholarship. These schools are among 205 public schools and 50 private schools to achieve this honor. The schools are Claxton Elementary, Asheville City; North Hills Elementary, Winston-Salem/Forsyth; Pisgah Forest Elementary, Transylvania County; Shadybrook Elementary School and Claxton Elementary, Guilford County; and Sunny View Elementary, Polk County.
- *Milken Awards Presentation* — Recipients of the Milken Awards were recognized at the Board meeting. Jennifer Brodeur, a third grade teacher at Hunters Creek Elementary School in Onslow County, and Stephanie Pearson Lemon, a kindergarten teacher at Murphey Traditional Academy in Guilford County, were recognized for receiving this national award. The national award includes a \$25,000 check for each recipient to use as they wish.
- *Recognition of Outgoing Compliance Commission Members* — Several outgoing Compliance Commission members were recognized and thanked for their service. They include former chairperson Karen Banks; Emmett Highsmith, and Robert Patton, a charter member of the Commission. Other outgoing members who were not able to be present were Scott Gardner, Mary Madden, Susan McHugh, James McKeithan, Manual Vargas and Martha West.
- *Southeast Center for Teacher Quality* — Barnett Berry, director of the Southeast Center for Teacher Quality, and Patric Nash, president of the Teacher Support Network of the U.K., presented information to the Board about a new, non-profit pilot project for teachers modeled on the similar program in the United Kingdom. With support from Wachovia and John Burke, the U.S. affiliate for the Teacher Support Network, the Southeast Center for Teacher Quality will begin a three-year pilot phase to provide teacher support telephone lines and other teacher assistance services staffed by licensed clinicians in a variety of disciplines (psychological counseling, financial counseling and others). In the U.K., 10 percent of all teachers use this service, which is operated apart from the schools' human resources offices and provides anonymity for teachers using the services.
- *SECU Foundation Scholarships* — Board Chairman Howard Lee announced that high school principals had been sent information regarding the availability of \$10,000 scholarships for every public high school. These are being awarded by the State Employees Credit Union Foundation to worthy students to attend a North Carolina public university.
- *Education Governing Boards* — Chairman Lee also announced that the annual meeting of the N.C. Education Governing Boards will be held on Feb. 16 at the North Carolina State University Football Center. The theme of this year's meeting is High School Reform – The New Economic Imperative!

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