



From the Board Room

ACTIVITIES OF THE NC BOARD OF EDUCATION

OCTOBER 2014

The State Board of Education is comprised of the State Treasurer, the Lieutenant Governor and 11 citizens appointed by the Governor. This newsletter highlights the Board's activities on behalf of the 1.5 million public school children in our state and the more than 100,000 educators who provide services to children. View all State Board of Education member and advisor information online at <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx?S=10399&TID=1>.

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GRADING SCALE STANDARDIZED STATEWIDE; AFFECTS 2015-16 NINTH GRADERS FIRST

Students who begin ninth grade in the fall of 2015 will be graded on a 10-point scale, and their final numerical grades will be listed on their transcript to clearly display performance levels. The State Board of Education approved the change this month at its October meeting at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The 10-point scale will bring uniformity to all high school grading scales in North Carolina and address concerns about student competitiveness with students from other states and how to handle students transferring between school districts while in high school.

High School Grading Scale, 2015-16 ninth graders forward:

90-100 = 4.0	80-89 = 3.0	70-79 = 2.0	60-69 = 1.0	< 59 = 0.0
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READ TO ACHIEVE FIRST YEAR REPORT PRESENTED

Read to Achieve, the initiative to ensure that elementary students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade, got off to a tough start in its first year, 2013-14. As a result, implementation was tweaked throughout the year to address local concerns, and this month, Board members noted that the strengthened focus yielded positive results.

Seventy-nine percent of North Carolina public school third graders met the reading proficiency standards under the program according to the *Improve K-3 Literacy Accountability Measures Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement* report. These third graders demonstrated reading proficiency through one of five assessment options or by completing a reading

portfolio. Another 8.1 percent of students were exempt from third-grade retention for good cause (impacts English Language Learners and some students with learning disabilities). In total, 87.3 percent of students were promoted to the fourth grade. The remaining 12.7 percent of third graders were either retained in the third grade or placed in a transitional class or an accelerated class with a reading label and identified to receive additional help.

The North Carolina Read to Achieve Program is a component of the Excellent Public Schools Act passed by the NC General Assembly during its 2012 session. The goal of the program is to ensure that every third grade student is reading at or above grade level by the end of the school year. Students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade receive extra support, including reading camps, guaranteed uninterrupted blocks of reading time, and intensive reading interventions so they will be more prepared to do fourth grade work.

STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: AMERICAN HISTORY

State Board of Education members began a discussion this month concerning alignment of current graduation policies with SL 2011-273: The Founding Principles Act. Currently, SBE policy permits certain college-level courses in lieu of American History I: the Founding Principles course. SBE members are discussing the implications of the Founding Principles Act on graduation requirements. Approximately 20,000+ students annually enroll in a college-level American History course (AP, IB or college/university course).



Board members met at UNC-Charlotte in October and heard presentations from area superintendents and UNCC's School of Education Dean.

From left, John Tate, SBE Region 6; Chairman Bill Cobey; State Superintendent June Atkinson; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Superintendent Heath Morrison; UNCC Dean Ellen McIntyre; Cabarrus Superintendent Barry Shepherd; Vice Chairman Buddy Collins.