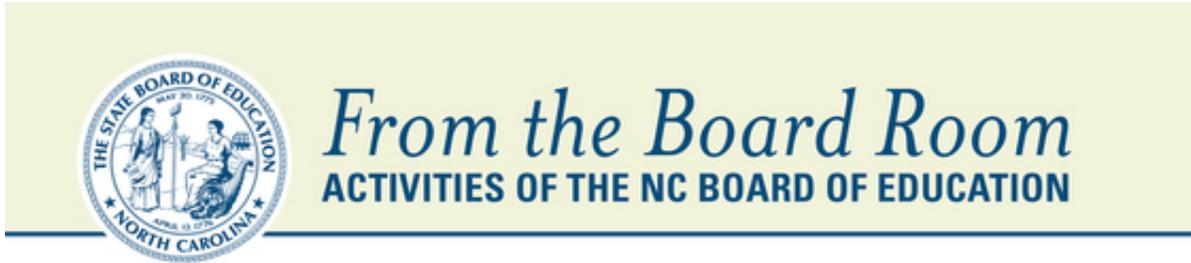


August State Board of Education News

North Carolina Public Schools <NCPublicSchools@public.govdelivery.com>

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To: Lynda Fuller <Lynda.Fuller@dpi.nc.gov>;



August 2015

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>. To access current and archived versions of From the Boardroom, visit <http://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/> and select the "SBE Newsletter" tab.



Efforts to Turn Around Lowest-Achieving Schools called Success

North Carolina's Race to the Top initiative on Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools (TALAS) was the most ambitious in the United States and resulted in improvements for the schools involved and for the students they serve. This evaluation was provided to the State Board of Education at its August meeting by Dr. Gary Henry, professor of Public Policy and Education, at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Henry's report was one of the evaluation reports for the Race to the Top project. His analyses showed that 60 percent of the TALAS schools outperformed the state average performance change and 75 percent of TALAS schools outperformed state average growth during the time of the initiative. The positive effects of the TALAS efforts were most pronounced in schools where there also were district transformation activities underway. The TALAS schools initially were selected because they were in the bottom 5 percent of schools in North Carolina based on the 2009-10 performance composite or they were high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent. One hundred and sixteen schools were served.

Proof of Concept Study Underway to Test New Approach to

Assessments

Work is well underway on the Proof of Concept Study to try a new system of student assessment that would provide four shorter assessments throughout the year in place of the one long end-of-grade assessment. The idea is to provide more immediate feedback to teachers, students and parents throughout the year so deficiencies can be addressed quickly. The new assessments also should mean the end of local interim or benchmark tests that many schools give to students to see if they are on track for success on state end-of-grade tests. Eighty schools and approximately 9,000 fifth and sixth grade students are participating in the Proof of Concept study. Professional development and test development are both underway in preparation for the interim assessment windows: Oct. 1-30, Dec. 8-Jan. 22 and March 3-31.

Halifax County Intervention Intensifies

Citing examples of unaddressed recommendations and heightened concern for the students, teachers, principals and staff in Halifax County Schools, the State Board of Education approved sending a letter to the Halifax Board of Education indicating that the SBE and NCDPI will take a more direct role in the district's budget, employment decisions and student course assignment decisions effective immediately. The Board stressed that it is acting on behalf of the students in the district to support their quality education. The Halifax County Board agreed to comply with a Court Order in 2009 to "fully cooperate with the State Board of Education to improve educational opportunities for students enrolled in Halifax County public schools." Since that time, NCDPI has placed employees of its District and School Transformation division in the schools and central office in Halifax County to support better instruction for students and to guide policy decisions that matter the most. To read more about this step, please see the [news release](#) and the [letter](#) sent to Halifax.



SBE Highlights: A checklist of Board actions is posted every month immediately after the meeting's end. Access that at <http://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/minutes-actions/sbe-minutes/2015-minutes>. The State Board of Education's next meeting will be Sept. 2-3 in Raleigh.



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