



# Legislative Link

*A Publication for the Members of the N.C. Association of School Administrators*

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## **Budget Shortfall Awaits Legislators' Return**

The 2009 General Assembly will begin its legislative long session at noon Jan. 28 and is expected to begin work almost immediately on crafting the state budget for 2009-2010. The start of that budget work will focus on the \$2 billion shortfall in the current year's state spending plan and steps that already have been taken to address that deficit. One major component of the current year's shortfall that will require legislative action early in this session is the \$300 million deficit in the State Health Plan that serves almost 660,000 people, including all active and retired state agency and school personnel and their families.

With these funding concerns looming, and no changes expected in the leadership ranks of either the House or Senate, the newly elected General Assembly most likely will quickly appoint committees to begin work on the state budget and on a variety of policy issues affecting state agency and school operations.

The North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) will maintain a constant presence in the General Assembly to monitor developments on all issues affecting public schools, to advocate for the legislative priorities identified by our membership and included in our 2009-2011 Legislative Platform that may be viewed at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=3>, and to keep our membership informed on legislative actions that need NCASA member involvement at critical times. The organization will prepare and distribute this electronic newsletter, NCASA's *Legislative Link*, each week during the duration of the legislative session to provide timely information on legislative actions as they occur. In addition, we will send out special email bulletins labeled "NCASA Legislative Alert" when member actions to contact your own legislators could be critical to the outcome of a specific public school issue.

NCASA also will track the movement of all pieces of legislation that impact public schools, and we will publish weekly updates on that bill activity on the legislative portion of our website at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=227>, where bill actions are arranged by subject .

NCASA encourages all our members to stay in contact with your own legislators during this legislative session to emphasize the funding needs and public school policy concerns that impact your school district and your daily work with public schools. For information on contacting your legislators, talking points on key issues of concern, past editions of our *Legislative Link* newsletter or information on legislation that is being considered this year, frequently visit the legislative portion of NCASA's website at: <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=3>.

# NCASA Day At The Legislature Planned For March 11

The North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) is planning a legislative visit in conjunction with our 2009 Annual Conference being held March 11-13 at the new Raleigh Convention Center. As part of the Annual Conference, attendees will spend the morning of March 11 at the General Assembly before the conference's first general session begins at 2:00 p.m. that same day.

"We know that there is strength in numbers, and if there has ever been a time when school administrators need to stand together and call on our state lawmakers to protect public schools from any additional funding cuts, that time is now," said Bill McNeal, NCASA's Executive Director. "Our members need to participate in the NCASA Day at the Legislature to help educate all our legislators about the detrimental impact that another round of budget cuts would have on our ability to deliver quality educational services to all students across the state."

The NCASA Day at the Legislature will give our member school administrators an excellent opportunity to talk one-on-one with your own Representatives and Senators about the need to prevent any additional cuts to public school funding as the 2009-2010 state budget is on the drawing board. Additionally, conference attendees will hear from top legislative leaders on how the state budget is shaping up for public schools, how the state plans to address the funding shortfall in the State Health Plan that affects all school personnel and retirees, and the status of legislation aimed at attracting and retaining quality principals and assistant principals, including an appeal to let National Board Certified teachers keep their 12 percent salary differential if they move into an instructional role as an Assistant Principal.

For those attending the NCASA Day at the Legislature, conference check-in will be held at the Raleigh Convention Center from 2:00-5:00 p.m. March 10 and onsite on the third floor of the Legislative Building on Jones Street in Raleigh from 8:30-10:30 a.m. March 11. These early check-in opportunities will enable you to pick up your name badge and conference materials without having to go through the main registration process that opens at the Convention Center at 12:00 noon on March 11.

All NCASA members participating in the NCASA Day at the Legislature should visit one of these two early check-in stations to obtain a packet of information that includes office and other contact information for all legislators, information on how to get around the Legislative Complex, the schedule for the day's activities, copies of NCASA's 2009-2011 Legislative Platform and talking points on public school funding priorities and other helpful information.

The full agenda for the NCASA Day at the Legislature is available at [http://www.ncasa.net/associations/2410/files/NCASALegislatureDay\\_Agenda\\_final.pdf](http://www.ncasa.net/associations/2410/files/NCASALegislatureDay_Agenda_final.pdf) and information about registration for the 2009 NCASA Annual Conference may be viewed at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=224>.

We hope to see all of you at this important legislative event on March 11 and the remainder of our 2009 Annual Conference, which is packed with learning and leading opportunities for all school administrators. For more information on any of the scheduled events, contact our office at 919-828-1426 or send an email to [info@ncasa.net](mailto:info@ncasa.net).

## Legislative Panel Wants 90% Graduation Rate By 2015

The Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation met this week to add a new objective to recommendations it is sending forward for consideration by the 2009 General Assembly. The panel is recommending that the State Board of Education aim for a 90 percent high school graduation rate by 2015. as well as asking each school district to have its own yearly graduation goals beginning with the class of 2010.

"Everyone knows how serious this is," said Rep. Earline Parmon, D-Forsyth and the commission's co-chairman. "We should be working together to achieve this goal."

Based on the commission's action this week, the "commission strongly recommends" the following:

- Prior to the 2009-2010 school year, the State Board of Education develop a growth model establishing annual goals for continuous and substantial improvement in the cohort graduation rate by local school administrative units.
- The State Board establish as a short-term goal that local school administrative units meet the annual growth model goals for improvement in the cohort graduation rate beginning with the graduating class of 2010 and continuing annually thereafter.
- The State Board establish as a long-term goal a statewide four-year cohort graduation rate of 90 percent by 2015.

The recommendations, if approved by the 2009 General Assembly as a directive for the State Board of Education to follow, would seek to improve the state's current four-year graduation rate of roughly 70 percent.

Other recommendations endorsed by the commission include the following:

1. The General Assembly shall appropriate funds for the 11 Learn and Earn early college high schools that received a planning grant in the 2008-2009 fiscal year and are ready to begin operations in the 2009-2010 school year.
2. The General Assembly shall appropriate funds for Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Inc. to place no fewer than 100 graduation coaches in either middle or high schools and give priority to schools that have a 4-year cohort graduation rate of less than 65%.
3. The General Assembly shall direct the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, in conjunction with the Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, to direct the appropriate entity to study raising the compulsory attendance age for public school attendance prior to completion of a high school diploma from 16 to 17 or 18. At a minimum, the study shall examine other states that have raised the compulsory attendance age to determine all impacts, including the effect on the dropout rate and the fiscal impact.
4. The General Assembly shall encourage local boards of education to adopt policies to encourage local businesses to adopt personnel policies to permit parents to attend student conferences, implement programs that assist students in making a successful transition between the middle school and high school years, increase parental involvement in student achievement, reduce suspension and expulsion rates and encourage academic progress during suspensions, and provide assistance and support to encourage pregnant and parenting students to graduate.
5. The General Assembly shall appropriate sufficient funds for Dropout Prevention Grants in the 2009 session to continue some of the more successful initiatives and also to provide the opportunity for a new round of proposals to be funded.

All proposals adopted by the commission must receive approval by the full General Assembly before they may be implemented. NCASA will provide our members with updates on the status of these proposals as they move forward in the legislative process during the 2009 session of the General Assembly.

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*For additional information on these or other legislative issues, contact  
NCASA Assistant Executive Director Katherine W. Joyce at 919-828-1426 or [kjoyce@ncasa.net](mailto:kjoyce@ncasa.net).*