

Food For Thought

"You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it."

~ Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013)

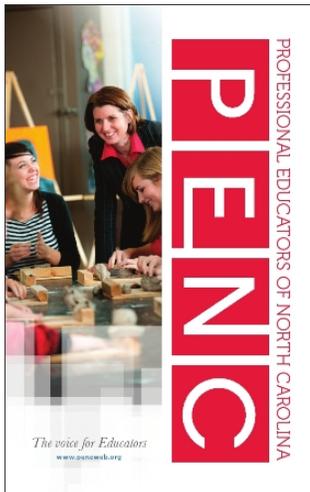
Our Mission

Our mission is to promote education reform for the benefit of all North Carolina children while ensuring the recruitment, development and retention of qualified educators.

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Membership Form

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Who We Are

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Contact PENC

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PENC Legislative Update

House Unveils Comprehensive School Safety Proposal

A bipartisan coalition of House Members released a proposal to address school safety deficits in North Carolina's schools with [H452, School Safety Act](#). The bill was cosponsored by Representatives Bryan Holloway (R-Stokes) and Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland) in response to recent acts of mass violence such as what happened in Newtown, Connecticut. It would provide as much as \$34 million to address a number of safety improvements. One initiative would match funding for the hiring and training of more School Resource Officers. Another would fund emergency security improvements in existing schools, including "panic buttons," which would silently connect classrooms with local law enforcement to facilitate emergency response. Panic buttons would be required to be implemented into all schools' emergency response plans. The proposal also would provide funding for additional school counselors and psychologists. It also directs that school emergency and crisis training modules for school employees be developed as soon as practicable, spearheaded by Gov. McCrory's Center for School Safety. The bill will be heard in the House Education Committee meeting to be held on April 9. PENC has school safety improvements as the first item on our [legislative agenda](#) and supports the thoughtful approach taken in [H452](#). Since this bill's introduction, a bipartisan coalition of Senators introduced [S589](#) which is identical to [H452](#), indicating support on both sides.

School Performance Grades

The House approved [H435, School Performance Grades](#) on April 4. The bill would amend the changes made in the Excellent Public Schools Act provisions included in the 2012 budget that required A-F school performance grades. [H345](#) would delay implementation of school performance grades until next year and would direct the State Board of Education to take into account student growth as a factor that goes into the grade calculations. The growth factor would account for the challenges some schools face by virtue of the populations they serve, such as low-wealth communities. The bipartisan measure was approved overwhelmingly and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Multiplication Tables Memorization, Cursive Writing Competency Passes

The House of Representatives approved [H146, Back to Basics](#) on April 4. Sponsored by Rep. Pat Hurley (R-Randolph), the bill would require the addition of the instruction of cursive writing and the memorization of multiplication tables to the North Carolina school curriculum. The bill was unanimously approved by the House and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Senate Proposes Separate Charter School Board

The Senate Education Committee approved [S337, Public Charter School Board](#). Sponsored by Senator Jerry Tillman (R-Randolph), the bill would set up a separate board to consider applications for new Charter Schools. In addition, the bill would amend the process by which new Charter Schools would be created. The changed process includes bypassing the local school board, which is currently the first step. Another component is the elimination of the requirement of charter schools to hire certified teachers. PENC supports the employment of certified teachers in North Carolina public schools. If that requirement is loosened, then non-certified teachers should be trained in classroom management and pedagogy prior to teaching in any school. The bill will be considered next by the Senate Finance Committee.

Senator Berger's Excellent Schools Act to be Heard in Education Committee

The Senate Education Committee is set to hear [S361, The Excellent Schools Act of 2013](#) during its meeting on April 10. The cornerstone of the bill proposes to eliminate teachers' career status – tenure – which has been a part of North Carolina's education laws for decades. Other proposed changes include modifications to the way teachers are prepared for the classroom, school performance grades and teacher performance. PENC met with Senator Berger's staff to express concerns and offer suggestions for the proposal. PENC expressed its continued opposition to abolition of tenure and strongly encouraged the Senate to allow the reforms to career status enacted in 2011 to have some time to work.

Please remember that just because a bill is filed or discussions occur, it does not mean that the issue or bill will necessarily make it to the point of becoming a law.
[What do you think?](#)

If you have questions or concerns, please share your thoughts and ideas with us.
Contact us at penc@pencweb.org.

Submitted by Evelyn Hawthorne

For more information about the North Carolina General Assembly, [click here](#).
To identify and contact your legislators, [click here](#).
For information about specific issues, please contact PENC government relations consultant Evelyn Hawthorne at lobbivist@pencweb.org.

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