



Food For Thought

"Hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated."

~ Coretta Scott King (1927-2006)

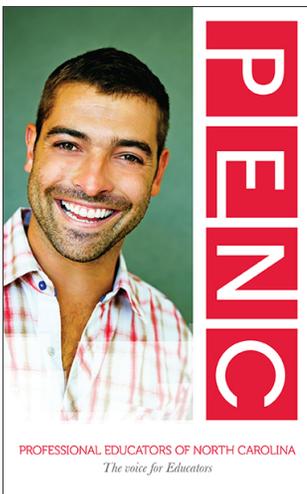
Our Mission

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.

Join or Renew

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Check out PENC's brochure:



Membership Form

Click [here](#) for a printable Membership Form.

Who We Are

To learn more about PENC, click [here](#).

Contact PENC

For a listing of PENC Staff, click [here](#).

PENC Legislative Update

Senate Budget Release Unveils Education Reforms; No Salary Increase

The NC Senate released its version of the budget very late on May 19. A cursory read of the budget reveals that many of the education reforms considered by the Senate – including tenure repeal, school grades, class size changes – will be a part of the Senate's budget. [S402](#) and the corresponding [Money Report](#) provide the details of the Senate budget.

The Senate's budget includes the following provisions:

- NO Salary increases
- Expression of legislative intent to implement performance pay
- A reserve for merit pay to be awarded at the end of the 2014-2015 school year with a \$500 annual pay raise for teachers that opt to enter into a four-year contract (goes with proposal to eliminate tenure)
- More cuts to Teaching, Teacher Assistants positions ([Money Report, p. F-2 and p. F-3](#))
- Phasing out of M Salary Schedule, except for school nurses, beginning in 2014-2015 school year ([p. 64](#))
- Lottery funds for school construction reconfigured and appropriated for classroom teachers, PreK, and UNC scholarships ([p. 18](#))
- NCCAT is to close and the property transferred to Western Carolina University ([p. 55-56](#))
- The LEA flexibility bill – including the class size changes ([p. 56-58](#))
- Directive to study how Grade Point Averages are calculated
- Teach for America would receive \$5.1 million expansion funds and serve as the collaborator with UNC on the Teacher Corps
- Phase-out teacher salary supplements ([p. 64](#))
- Excellent Schools Act of 2013, [S361](#), is in the budget ([p. 74-102](#)), including tenure repeal, changes to teacher training curriculum, school performance grades, teacher and principal evaluations.

PENC is relieved that the Senate's budget does not include proposals to implement a private school voucher program of any kind. Neither does it include the governance changes for charter schools.

PENC has grave concerns about the Senate's budget and the inclusion of major education reforms within it. PENC believes that education reforms should not be implemented in the context of the budget debate, but rather as a distinct conversation of what is right for North Carolina's children. Furthermore, PENC is disappointed that the [S402](#) does not recognize the contributions of educators and state employees by including any type of salary increase. Gov. Pat McCrory included at least a 1 percent cost of living increase, which is not a lot, but is better than nothing.

Voucher Bill Hearing May 21

[H944, Opportunity Scholarship Act](#) will be considered May 21 during the House Education Committee. PENC sent an alert on [H944](#) asking PENC members to communicate their concerns about the bill to their legislators. PENC opposes vouchers for use in private schools, which [H944](#) would authorize and fund. Indications via social media indicate that a new version of the bill will be unveiled during the meeting. That version will likely lower the maximum allowable family income to qualify to around \$45,000 and require that half of the scholarships go first to children who qualify for free and reduced lunch, which is 185 percent of poverty. The current version of the bill would provide grants of up to \$4,200 per year to students who fit fairly broad criteria – up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level, which equates to an annual income of \$69,150 for a family of four.

PENC members are concerned about how [H944](#) could harm North Carolina's Public Schools, which are *constitutionally-required* and in which taxpayers have invested so much money and hope. PENC members believe that the estimated cost of \$90 million per year would be better directed to strengthening **all types** of public schools by addressing class size issues and the need for additional resources – such as enhanced technology – and professional development for the educators in whom taxpayers have invested already.

Please [click here](#) for the full text of the alert, which was distributed last week.

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 lobbyist@pencweb.org.

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