



### Food For Thought

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.

~ Dr. Seuss (1904 - 1991)

### 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

Click [here](#) to join or renew .

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

### Budget Goes to Conference Committee

As expected, the N.C. State Senate rejected the House's changes to [S402, Appropriations Act of 2013](#). Both chambers appointed members to a Conference Committee, which is charged with resolving the vast differences between the two versions of the bill. Consider, for example, that the House version of the bill is 100 pages shorter than the Senate's version. The [conferees](#) are expected to meet throughout the week of June 24.

In the meantime, House Speaker Thom Tillis (R-Mecklenberg) announced to House members that work has begun on a Continuing Resolution, which aims to continue the operations of State Government should work on the budget – including a signature by Gov. Pat McCrory – not be concluded by the end of the Fiscal Year, which is June 30, 2013. The "CR" is expected to materialize as early as the evening of June 24 to begin its process in advance of the June 30 deadline.

In meetings with lawmakers, PENC asked them to please recognize the need for a significant cost of living increase for teachers in 2013. North Carolina's teachers are among the most poorly paid in the country. This hurts recruitment and retention of high quality, caring and effective teachers. Both versions of the budget have provisions to enable a small – 1 percent – increase in FY 14-15.

At the same time, PENC has been working to gain support for several House provisions that are more favorable to children in public schools and to educators who work there. Those provisions include:

- Opposition to private school "vouchers" (Opportunity Scholarships). Problems with the proposal include:
  - Shifting of taxpayers' investments in public schools to private schools that don't have the same requirements or accountability to taxpayers.
  - Private school option won't be available to all students across all areas of North Carolina. Urban areas have private schools; rural areas don't.
  - A voucher system sets up potential for abuse because of lack of accountability (virtual schools; home schools).
- Opposition to Advanced Placement "per head" bonuses. Concerns include the following points:
  - North Carolina shouldn't be paying for such initiatives while it still addresses remediation when students begin college at either the community college or university system.
  - These bonuses are unfair. Teachers in the earlier grades have contributed so much in preparing students to be ready for AP material. They would not benefit from the bonuses, but the AP teachers would benefit.
  - Students who pass the AP exams aren't necessarily fully prepared for those particular college courses or ready to skip entry level college courses. They were, however, well prepared to pass the AP exam.
- Support for the House changes to the Masters supplement; PENC asks legislators to amend the provision to enable teachers who are enrolled in Master' programs (by Fall semester of 2013) to also be grandfathered in for the supplements.
- Support for the House School Safety proposal. PENC believes that this proposal is a reasonable, common sense approach that is based upon experience.
- Support for the House Task Force to Study Teacher and School Administrator Evaluation and Compensation. PENC believes that educators need to be a part of plans to make evaluations and compensation changes. If they participate in the process, they will have a greater likelihood to abide by and support the results.

### Tax Reform in Limbo

At the same time, and critical to the budget negotiations, no agreement has yet been reached between the Senate and House on tax reform. A budget cannot be drafted with any confidence if lawmakers don't know how much money they'll have to spend.

The Senate rewrote the House tax plan, [H 998](#), and calendared it for a vote multiple times. On June 19, Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham), removed it from the calendar and sent it back to the Senate Finance Committee for more work.

In the days that followed, House and Senate Republican Caucus meetings featured rare appearances by the leaders of the "other body" – Sen. Berger visited with the House Republicans and Speaker Tillis and House

Finance Chairman David Lewis (R-Harnett) visited with the Senate Republicans. The purpose of those closed door meetings was to determine what, if any, areas of agreement exist on the different versions of the bill. A comparison of the different version, compiled by WRAL News, can be seen [here](#).

The only "sure thing" is that the week of June 24 will be a busy, drama-filled one.

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## Senate OKs Bill to Refund Substitute Teacher Fees When One Isn't Hired

The Senate approved H 249, [Substitute Teacher Deduction/Personal Leave](#), June 20. The PENC-requested bill requires that \$50 fee collected by a school to pay for a substitute teacher to cover for another teacher's personal leave must be refunded if the substitute is not hired. PENC heard from members expressing the need for this issue to be addressed and sought sponsors for the bill. The bill was sponsored by, among others, Representatives Bryan Holloway (R-Stokes), PENC's Immediate Past President Jeffrey Elmore (R-Watauga), Hugh Blackwell (R-Burke) and Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland). The bill will go to Gov. Pat McCrory for review and, hopefully, approval. PENC thanks the primary cosponsors for their support of **H 249**.

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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](mailto:penc@pencweb.org).

Submitted by Evelyn Hawthorne

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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](mailto:lobbyist@pencweb.org).