

Wake County Board of Education 2015 Legislative Agenda **(DRAFT3)**

The Wake County Board of Education (WCBOE) serves as the governing body for the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), which is the largest school system in North Carolina and the sixteenth largest in the country. Along with the NC School Board Association (NCSBA), we agree that “legislative and policy making bodies must dedicate themselves to maintaining the common system of public education available to all children from all walks of life and socioeconomic backgrounds.”

The Wake County Board of Education supports the NCSBA Legislative Agenda as written on the following issues:

- Teacher Pay and Teacher Assistant Funding
- NC Pre-K Program
- School Technology – Fines and Forfeitures
- School Board Fiscal Accountability
- School Vouchers
- Sales Tax Refund/Exemption
- Inter-/Intra-District Open Enrollment
- Read to Achieve
- Principal/Assistant Principal Compensation
- Protection of Retirees

The WCBOE also supports the following NCSBA legislative agenda items, but does so using the following language:

Drivers’ Education Funding - Restore G.S. 20-88.1(c) that was repealed by SB 744, Session Law 2014-100 to restore funding for Drivers’ Education or allow LEAs to charge a fee that covers the full cost of the training. The \$65 student fee that may be charged covers only a small portion of the actual cost of providing this service. Repeal of G.S. 20-88.1(c) has created a largely unfunded mandate.

School Construction/Capital Funding - Provide alternative funding resources such as State funding, local sales tax and/or transfer tax dedicated to school construction enabling LEAs to keep pace with enrollment growth.

School Calendar - Amend the Calendar Law to provide greater flexibility for LEAs to create school calendars that meet the needs of students.

Charter Schools – Modify legislation that would allow local boards of education to authorize their own charter schools. All other provisions of the law would remain in place for school systems, such as the establishment of a 501(c) (3), an independent governing board, as well as review and recommendations by the state charter school advisory board.

A-F Grading of Schools – Abolish the current A-F grading system for schools, scheduled to be released for the first time in February of 2015. The current school report card, collected and managed by the Department of Public Instruction, is more than sufficient to provide the public with successes and challenges of all the schools in North Carolina. The School Report Card includes information about school size, student performance by sub-groups, safety, discipline, textbooks and technology, and teacher quality and demographics. A single grade for a school is not as revealing as the current abundance of data provided for each school on the report cards. The report cards already allow for comparisons across schools and across school districts in North Carolina. The WCBOE believes that the current state report card for schools not only provides sufficient data to grade schools and report out school specific outcomes, but actually far exceeds what would be a single data point under the current legislation.

ADM Funding/Continuation Budget – Restore the definition of Continuation Budget that was repealed by SB 744, Session Law 2014-100 to include projected student growth in the continuation budget. The definition of the Continuation Budget that has been in place since the 1930's has served local school systems well.

In addition to NCSBA Legislative Agenda items noted above and additional language provided for particular items, the WCBOE requests consideration of the following:

Public Records Requests - Revise G.S. 132-6(c) to reduce the significant amount of time and taxpayer expense involved in reviewing and redacting email that contains confidential student information as defined by federal law. Separately, this same statute should be revised such that it cannot be abused by “for profit” companies that make blanket requests for information solely in support of their marketing efforts.

Aerial Drones – Modify any applicable laws that prohibit or curtail the use of drones by students. It is critical that curriculum and extra-curricular activities enable and foster creative thinking, problem solving and the use of technology to assist in that student growth. High school students are currently prohibited or highly restricted in their STEM- based courses or clubs from the use of aerial drones. Coordination with the FAA, NC Office of Technology, and the Department of Transportation, as well as the legislature may be possible partners in enabling this student opportunity.