

## Educator Input: The Key to Meaningful PreK-12 Reform



Before any successful “Reform” efforts can be implemented, input, ideas, feedback, etc., must be sought from the entire education community especially classroom teachers. Input and involvement from teachers and other educators are the “keys” to any meaningful PreK-12 education reform measure. NCAE will work with lawmakers to ensure that educators representing the entire education community are at the table to provide vital feedback, offer suggestions, and share ideas and resources that have a proven track record, so meaningful PreK-12 “Reform” can be achieved.

The Association will also fight for educator’s rights to be at the table any time legislators are considering “any” education reform measure, and when budgets are being crafted with legislation that affects or impacts PreK-12 education, educators or students.

Bad things happen when laws impacting educators are passed without their input. A case in point is House Bill 720, which sought to eliminate prepayment of teachers’ full salaries in August. Many educators would have been late in paying mortgage, car and other household and personal payments. Health insurance premiums would not have been paid, and in many cases, our lowest paid teachers would not have had adequate funds for basic needs such as food, utilities and gas. After much debate and finally hearing the detrimental impact this bill would have on teachers, lawmakers repealed the law. NCAE was at the forefront of getting teachers’ voices heard!

Following are a few additional pieces of faulty legislation that negatively impact teachers and other educators:

- Changing the five “protected” teacher workdays to student days;
- Removing the option for local school districts and educators to set the “opening” and “closing” dates of school;
- Proposed legislation that would have required all educators to work to age 60 for full retirement pension benefits;
- Eliminating School Improvement Teams (SIT) and Personal Improvement Plans (PEPs) for students in the 2011 adopted budget were restored in a budget technical corrections bill;
- Proposed legislation to eliminate “Career Status” and “Due Process Rights” for teachers;
- Implementation of five years of discretionary budget cuts;
- Eliminating funding for staff development, instructional supplies, and mentor pay, while reducing the amount needed to provide an adequate supply of school textbooks.

NCAE believes that anytime educators (teachers, principals, assistant principals, media and guidance staff, along with teacher assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians and other non-certified support staff) are included in the legislative process, better laws are established. When educators have “buy-in,” they rally behind laws that impact them and their students. Maintaining fair and equitable laws will keep quality educators employed in North Carolina’s PreK-12 public schools!

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AND  
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