

# NEWS BULLETIN

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NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

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## Working together, Scotland County leaders and reps set goals to strengthen their local

Acting Scotland County President Melanie Meredith and Vice President Priscilla Tyson are on a quest this year to increase the number of members in their local and get them involved in the work of the association. As a first step, the two new leaders are establishing a close working relationship with association reps and ensuring they are armed with the tools they need for a successful year.



“Scotland County once had a strong core, but over time with people retiring or leaving, our membership has suffered,” said Meredith, a fifth-grade teacher at Pate-Gardner Elementary School. “We need to revive that core and Priscilla and I, along with our reps, are looking forward to that challenge.”

Meredith and Tyson know that building a strategy for success begins with association reps, who play a large part in membership recruitment. “As we began planning for the year, one of the things we focused on was an incentive program for ARs,” Meredith said. “Each time they attend AR meetings, a school board meeting, or bring an existing member or a new member with them to a meeting, their name will be entered into a drawing for prizes. We want to make things fun and informative, as well as encourage participation.”

Sharing the importance of being an involved member is one of the points that Meredith and Tyson stressed in a recent training of their ARs. “We would like to grow membership by two per

*Melanie Meredith, right, and Priscilla Tyson, discuss strategies for the local's success.*

*ARs James Bethea (Shaw Academy), left, and Robert Taylor (Scotland High School).*

worksite,” said Tyson, a support staffer for the Department of Exceptional Children at the Scotland County Central Office, “but it’s not all about quantity... it’s about quality as well. We want members who are going to be involved. Being a member is not only about receiving a service, it’s about advocating and being part of something.”

Reps also learned during the meeting how to effectively communicate with potential members based on the generation factor, and received a copy of the NCAE AR Manual, which will serve as a resource for their work. The manual contains a wealth of information including everything from how to deliver the Association’s message to how to respond to questions about NEA.

Like other locals, Scotland County NCAE has had its challenges in maintaining members. Tyson said that if members see a strong team standing behind them, maybe those former members will come back and new members will join. “This is an exciting time for Scotland County and an exciting time for me as well,” Tyson



said. “I’ve been a member for six years, but I didn’t become involved until last year when I filled in for my AR. Until then, I didn’t know I could attend meetings. That experience made me want to get more

involved. I saw members weren’t participating and wanted to be a part of turning things around.”

“I’m excited as well,” Meredith added with a laugh. “I too am a six-year member who wanted to be more active. When Priscilla approached me about taking on the role as president, I said, ‘Oh, I don’t know...’ I’m a little scared because it’s a lot of responsibility but I’m ready for it. We’re both ready!”

Scotland County will hold elections this fall and both Meredith and Tyson said they plan to run for the positions of president and vice president respectively.

## From TA, to teacher, to principal:

# Williams has remained a member at every stage of his career

In the 17 years that Myron Williams has been an educator, he's moved up the ranks from teacher assistant to principal. At every stage of his career, he's found NCAE membership to be a great value. And although he's pursued jobs in the private sector, he's always returned to the profession where his main goal is to have a good time and educate children.

"The reason I became an educator is not one you most commonly hear," said Williams, principal of Westover Middle School in Cumberland County. "I just sort of fell into education!" he said with a laugh. "At the time, I was asked to coach a track team, but had to be a member of the staff in order to do so. I was hired as a TA and a few months later I moved into a teaching position."

Through the different stages of his career — from TA to administrator — NCAE has been a guiding force for Williams, who encourages all of his staff to become members. He said the minute he stepped foot into the classroom, he was approached by a colleague who told him that he needed to join the Association. "NCAE is the body that works for you and I personally think it's crazy for anyone in education not to have the support of NCAE," he said. "As a TA and teacher, it provided a sense of security. As an administrator, it has afforded me a valuable relationship with my UniServ director. When I'm working to keep my staff on point, I always consult with her; she provides helpful advice that I use to ensure that proper procedures are followed. My philosophy is "I'm going to treat my staff right because I want to be able to sleep at night."

Williams strongly believes that administrators need to know about the services NCAE offers. "In a school setting, administrators and their staff need to be a team in order to win; it's about being united. It's true that the Association provides legal representation, professional development and member benefits for us but it is also instrumental in helping us advocate for ourselves in its mission to unite, organize and empower. When we all come together as a team with one dream, everyone benefits!"

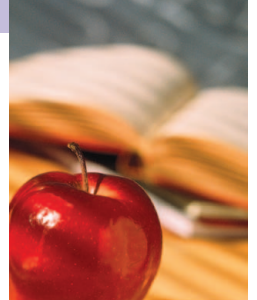
Although Williams admits that the field of education moved a little "too slow" for him in the beginning, he is proud of the legacy he's building and the educators who paved the way for



*Westover Middle School Principal Myron Williams believes "NCAE is the body that works for you. I encourage all of my staff to become members."*

*Photo: Marcus Castro*

him. Two teachers who greatly influenced his life were Mr. Robinson, a high school history teacher and Mrs. Wyatt, a sixth-grade science teacher. As a dyslexic student, school was difficult for Williams, but the lessons they instilled in him have helped make him successful. "I share these skills with my staff and students," he said. "Here at Westover, it's all about teaching each other, working together and sharing ideas; our goal is to keep tweaking that process."



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## Message from the President



Every member has the right to exercise his/her privileges of membership. Read what your privileges are as a member in

this month's message from President Sheri Strickland by clicking <http://bit.ly/nnNOSD>.

## Meet your NCAE Board Members

Get to know who represents you on the NCAE Board of Directors. In the next several issues of the *News Bulletin*, the district directors, division presidents, and NEA directors/alternate directors will be featured and will share why they became members of NCAE.



### Sharon Bryant, District 1-B director, Caldwell County

“When I first started teaching, you became a member; there was no question about it. I have continued to be a member because I believe in what NCAE stands for, which is a sound, quality public education for every child, not just select people. Educating everyone is the right thing to do.” Bryant, who has been a member for 27 years, represents Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties.

### Christopher Graham, SNCAE president

“I became involved with SNCAE because I believe it will help me become a better teacher and a better professional, and that’s important going into the classroom.” Graham is a student at Winston-Salem State University and is studying physical education. He wants to become a principal or a college president some day.



### Mark Jewell, NEA director, Guilford County

A member for 25 years, Jewell said a rep approached him as a first-year teacher in West Virginia and told him he needed to be a part of the Association. “I signed up immediately and in three years I was president of the local. When I moved to North Carolina I continued my membership because I wanted to be a part of something that was engaging, active and mobilizing and doing great things for children and public school employees.”

### Tiffany D. Smith, president of the Principals/Administrators Division, Pender County

When I was in college, I heard a lot of people talk about this organization, which I knew nothing about. I knew there was a student organization, but due to my financial responsibilities I was unable to become a member. So while I was doing my student teaching, I did my research and found out exactly what NCAE was all about. I learned as much as I could because if I was going to be a part of the organization I wanted to be able to tell others about it as well.” Smith has been a member for 14 years.



**CORRECTION** Information in the article “NCAE Assists With Transfer of Earned Leave,” in the August *News Bulletin* needs more clarity. When the Charter School Bill became law, language allowing an educator’s sick and annual leave to be transferred from a charter school to a public school was part of the original version but was not included in the final version.

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## Ya Llegó: NCAE's Hispanic Caucus has arrived

NCAE's Hispanic Caucus has been officially established by two members, Saletta Ureña, a teacher in Greensboro, and Julio Morales, a teacher in Hyde County. Ya Llegó — or “it has arrived” announces the flyer for this new, historic group — the first Hispanic caucus in the state Association.

“My inspiration was hearing NEA Vice President Lily Eskleson speak at our state convention — she ended her speech in Spanish, and it really stuck out to me,” Ureña said. “I went to talk to her afterward and she was so warm and friendly. I expressed that I wanted to do something to better incorporate the Hispanic members in our state into the Association to ensure they have a voice and feel represented in NCAE.”

Ureña said she searched out Hispanic NCAE members at the convention, talked to the board of directors, researched how to establish a caucus, and has taken all the necessary steps to complete the process. The purpose of the caucus, she said, is to:

- ▶ Recruit all Hispanic NCAE members to join NCAE/HC;
- ▶ Promote and protect the professional rights, welfare and human rights of Hispanics;
- ▶ Assist Hispanics in assuming leadership positions at all levels of the NCAE/NEA;



Morales and Ureña discuss plans for the Hispanic Caucus.

- ▶ Assist and monitor NCAE with its decision-making policies concerning Hispanics;
- ▶ Continually educate and sensitize NCAE and North Carolina about the needs of Hispanics; and
- ▶ Advocate for excellence in education of Hispanic students in North Carolina and promote the contributions and achievements of Hispanics in NCAE.

She offers words of appreciation to NCAE leaders and

particularly to the members of NCAE's Black Caucus, who have been exceptionally supportive and helpful with this initiative. “We want to be a catalyst to bring leadership skills to Hispanic members so that they can take initiative to run for office and be the representation they want to see.”

Any members who are interested in joining the Hispanic Caucus, or who want more information, can contact Saletta Ureña at [sadu7801@hotmail.com](mailto:sadu7801@hotmail.com) or Julio Morales at [Julio.morales@hydencae.com](mailto:Julio.morales@hydencae.com)

**National Hispanic Heritage Month:**  
September 15 -  
October 15, 2011

## One Voice membership video: Have you seen it?



Elizabeth Whisenant, a fifth-grade teacher at Millbrook Elementary School in Wake County, is one of several NCAE members featured in the One Voice video that documents the Association's journey as the state's most influential advocate for public education. The three-minute video highlights the merger of the NCEA and NCTA, and how being an active member plays a role in moving the profession forward. To view, click on the link <http://youtu.be/DqkwtLrdmkQ>.

## NCAE NEWS BULLETIN

Positions stated in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official position of NCAE unless so identified.

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