

# NEWS BULLETIN

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NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

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## Members' passion about education shines through

The nation will observe the 90th anniversary of American Education Week November 13-19. Great public schools are a basic right for every child, and each day educators share in the responsibility of making sure students receive a quality education. Five NCAE members share the reasons they entered the profession and why they remain committed and dedicated to the children in their community.

**Donna Liefer**, second-grade teacher, Millbrook Elementary School, Wake County: "I remember saying in first grade that I wanted to be a teacher. I admired my teacher greatly and valued her as



a person. She believed in all of her students and told us we could become anything we wanted to be. Teaching fills me with pride, especially when I see a student learn something for the first time. I can honestly say that I am happiest when I'm teaching!"

**Braxton Foushee**, custodian at Culbreth Middle School, Chapel Hill-Carrboro: He works behind the scenes to ensure that students at his school grab every opportunity available to them. At the beginning of each school year, Foushee randomly selects and follows the progress of five students. He consults with their teachers about their grades, checks to make sure homework is being done and does what he can to ensure they stay on task. "Most of these kids just think of me as the custodian, and that's okay. But I know their potential and want to help them formulate plans for high school and college. It makes me feel good when students succeed and because of this, I can go home each day knowing that I made a difference."



**Sabrina Hunter**, guidance counselor, Willis Hare Elementary School, Northampton County: "I enjoy helping children. It's heartfelt to see that you are part of what's being done to make them feel successful. Sometimes students feel they can't do something or they feel they don't have that support. I always

encourage them and tell them they are smart; in return, they share lots of hugs, which are one of the many rewards of this job!"



**Ed Kelley**, first-grade teacher, A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School, Wake County: It was a conversation with a former colleague that sparked Kelley's interest to pursue a career in education. "She

impressed upon me the importance of excellent teachers and teachers who are passionate about what they do," said the 38-year veteran. "I was working in a state hospital at the time and made the decision that I wanted to work with children." For critics out there who think educators are only in it for the money or summers off, Kelley has this to share, "Obviously they have never been in a classroom with a passionate teacher."



**Kim Smith**, teaches Foods 1, Advanced Foods and Nutrition, and Food Technology, Cary High School: Food and working with children are two of Smith's passions. As a child, she hosted her own make-believe cooking show that featured recipes

she created; those recipes now hang on the walls of her kitchen. In college, she decided to combine these two passions and become an educator. "The other day one of my students said, 'I'm getting it; I've got it. I love learning.' It's the highlight of my job when I see the smile on the face of a student who makes a new discovery."



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## Knowing what's in your personnel file is critical

Imagine if reporters, parents or other members of the community had access to your personnel file. The possibility of someone other than you and your administrator being able to readily view information about you is an unsettling thought. During this past legislative session, members of the General Assembly attempted to pass a bill that would have given full disclosure to the public, but thanks to NCAE, that bill was defeated.

For decades, administrators and school employees have understood the importance of keeping employee personnel files private. Such privacy is the only way to 1) ensure that supervisors can be honest and forthright in their assessments of employees without fear of public reaction or defamation liability; and 2) employees can have confidence that they will not be stigmatized as a result of unfounded allegations, partial or out-of-context information, health-related data, etc.

Along with these compelling justifications to maintain the confidentiality of personnel files, NCAE recommends that ALL public school employees immediately take the following actions before the law on personnel files changes dramatically. "Keeping the personnel files of public school employees private should remain a basic right, regardless of the circumstances," said NCAE President Sheri Strickland. "Educators should have a say in what remains confidential and what can be shared. However, if the Legislature continues to press this issue, it's important that our members be aware of what their personnel files contain and make adjustments to lessen the possibility of negative repercussions."

The time to check your personnel file is **NOW!** Please contact your UniServ director if you have questions.

**NOTE:** [Click here](#) to see which documents should be included in your personnel file.

### The "5" day dilemma ●●●

The General Assembly enacted legislation that changed "5" protected teacher workdays into "5" additional instructional days. This has caused tremendous consequences, including the following: **1)** Loss of valuable workdays necessary for planning; **2)** Requires a minimum of two optional teacher workdays during the entire 215-day calendar; **3)** Use of optional workdays are limited (where annual leave could be used).

There is conflicting information coming from DPI on the type of leave that can be used on waived workdays if some are optional. House Speaker Thom Tillis and other legislators are hearing concerns from members on this issue. NCAE and DPI will be meeting to discuss what can be done to correct the problem. Look for updates about this issue in the *News Bulletin* or on the Web site.

#### Review the contents of your personnel file

You might be amazed at what has found its way into your file, or, for whatever reason, is missing from your file.

#### Consider the submission of positive documentation

If you notice that something positive is missing from your personnel file, such as an administrator's letter of commendation or an article about your class in the local newspaper, you may submit it for inclusion.

#### Consider the removal of inappropriate documents

Any complaint about a school employee must be signed before it is allowed into a personnel file, and the school employee must have had five (5) days advance notice of this action. North Carolina law allows a school employee to petition the local board of education to remove "any information from his personnel file that he deems invalid, irrelevant, or outdated." N.C.G.S. 115C-325(b).

#### Consider submitting rebuttals in response to negative documentation

If it is unlikely you will be able to remove a critical document from your personnel file, consider writing a rebuttal so there is a complete explanation of the event or issue should someday your personnel file become open to the public. Yet, be mindful about whether your actions will re-open matters that have been resolved and are best left in the past.

### Message from the President



NCAE is the leader in preserving public education in NC and a conversation needs to take place on ways we are going to remain THE VOICE for educators and students. The dialogue begins with you! Click on my e-mail address, embedded in the column, to answer 4 short questions. Your feedback will be helpful in directing our path of action. To

access this month's message, click <http://bit.ly/u4Wbx8>.

## Meet your NCAE Board Members

Get to know who represents you on the NCAE Board as the *News Bulletin* continues to highlight district directors, division presidents, and NEA directors/alternate directors in each issue and why they joined the Association. Please use this information in membership recruitment efforts.



### Wanda Kindell, District 5-B director, Cumberland County

"I joined the Association because I wanted to be an advocate for students and educators. Once I entered the classroom I thought I would just be a teacher, but I quickly understood that politics dictate nearly every aspect of the profession — class size, salaries, benefits, etc. — so I had to get involved." Kindell has been a member for 15 years and represents Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke and Robeson counties.

### John Hoffman, Retired School Personnel At-Large

"I have been a member of NCAE for 38 years and joined because I wanted to stay professionally involved. When I started out in education, you were expected to join your professional organization."



### Randolph Frierson, District 3-B director, Charlotte-Mecklenburg

"I was a student member in college and continued my membership once I became a teacher. After seeing and experiencing the challenges that we as professionals go through, I wanted to take a more active role and become a leader." A member for 25 years, Frierson represents Cabarrus County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Kannapolis City.

### Jennifer Lenk, District 4-A director, Rockingham County

A member of the Missouri NEA prior to coming to North Carolina, Lenk credits two colleagues for getting her involved in the Association. "I guess you can say they cultivated me." Lenk has been a member for 18 years and represents Alamance-Burlington, Chapel Hill-Carrboro, and Caswell, Orange, Person, Rockingham and Stokes counties.



Please remember to vote on **November 8** for the **municipal races** in your county. These races include, but are not limited to, **Mayor, City Council, Board of Commissioners or Board of Aldermen.**

### nea Member Benefits

Take a closer look at the many benefits 3.2 million members can garner. Click <http://bit.ly/oWNuV6> to learn about the wide range of high-quality programs and services that are available.

## NCAE brings you up to speed on the NC Teacher Evaluation process

### A New Standard for Teachers

Since North Carolina received ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act) and Race to The Top (RT3) funds, the State Board of Education has approved changes to both educator standards and the evaluation process. A new standard has been added to the Teacher Evaluation Processes (TEP) that indicates an impact on student growth. It is important to note — this standard will include **MORE** than test scores as a measure of impact on student growth!

New standard VI: **Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students.** The text of the standard states that *'the work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations using appropriate data to demonstrate growth.'* This additional standard **will not have negative consequences as a stand-alone component** of the TEP as each standard carries the same "weight."

For **Standard VI** to be a valid measure in a teacher's evaluation, there must be at least three (3) years of student data available. Because of this requirement and the work that must be done to create multiple measures for teachers to demonstrate their contribution to student growth, it will take 3-4 years for the new standard to be truly valid as a component of an evaluation. **However**, in the 2011-12 school year there will be teachers who have three or more years of data based on End-of-Grade/End-of-Course standardized assessments that connect to Standard VI. Again, it is important to understand that **there will be no negative consequences solely on this one standard** for teachers with data at the end of this year, *unless there are other areas of weakness connected to the other five standards.* The rubric for standard VI is also different than the other five standards. There are three ratings: developing, effective and highly effective.

### A Shorter Process for Teachers

Another change to the process itself is the creation of an abbreviated evaluation process. The State Board of Education realizes that the NCEES is a time-based process throughout which conversations must take place, and administrators may not have the time needed to properly evaluate every teacher every year using the full evaluation cycle mandated by the U.S. Department of Education. Therefore, in July, the SBE adopted a new policy for local school boards to consider as a component of their policies requiring career teachers to be evaluated annually (as part of NC General Statute 115C-333). The new language (underlined) would be *'The annual evaluation requirements shall be met by either: (1) Using the Teacher Evaluation Process as set forth in 16 NCAC 6C.0503; or (2) Using an abbreviated evaluation consisting of Standards One, Four and Six of the Teacher Evaluation Process.'*

The abbreviated evaluation process would only apply to teachers not in their licensure renewal year, and includes:

- ▶ a self-assessment
- ▶ a growth plan
- ▶ two informal observations lasting at least 20 minutes gathering data on Standards I and IV, and
- ▶ a summative conference at the end of the year based on Standards I, IV and VI.

NCAE leaders and staff have been directly involved as these policies were created. More than 200 members will be serving on the RT3 Work Groups that will create assessments to be part of the multiple measures for standard VI in the non-tested subject areas. If your school and/or local Association would like to have NCAE Center for Teaching and Learning staff facilitate a session on these changes, contact us or your UniServ director!

*NCAE Center for Teaching and Learning*

## Educators and Cyberbullying

**Q:** An educator is being cyberbullied via Facebook by a parent, who consistently insists that the educator be fired or transferred to a different school. The school system administration is aware of the problem but has taken no action. What recourse does the educator have?

**A:** NCAE legal counsel Tom Stern suggests that when members seem to have legitimate knowledge that Facebook or any other Web site is posting defamatory information about them, they should:  
1) Make hard copies of the damaging Web information; 2) Send

their UniServ director the exact information at issue; 3) Contact the Facebook help center in order to complain about the defamatory information (<http://www.facebook.com/help?page=798>) and see if it can be removed; and 4) Request in writing assistance from the administration when appropriate. While students have some First Amendment rights in terms of their Facebook speech, those rights may be limited when the speech causes disruption in the schools or threatens a person's health or safety.

More information about the North Carolina Defamation Law is available by clicking <http://bit.ly/qUYz4p>.

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

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