

NCASA 60 SECOND UPDATE

February 9, 2023

NCASA's 60 Second Update is a weekly brief summary of legislative and policy news affecting public schools in North Carolina.



Parents' Rights & Education Omnibus Bills Gain Approval — [Senate Bill 49, Parents' Bill of Rights](#) was passed in the Senate on Tuesday, and [House Bill 26, Education Omnibus](#) was passed in the House on Thursday. Both bills now head to the other Chamber for additional consideration. Click on this week's [bill tracking report](#) to see a list of all key education-related legislation that was filed or made progress in the NC General Assembly in the past week.



State Superintendent Shares Legislative Priorities As Committee Approves Education Governance Bill — North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt presented to members of the House K-12 Education Committee on Tuesday an update on her "[Operation Polaris](#)," or her strategic vision for supporting public school students across the state. During her presentation to lawmakers, Supt. Truitt mentioned recent Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) initiatives, such as the ongoing "[Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals](#)" teacher licensure and pay reform proposal, as well as the [school performance grade redesign](#) initiative. The superintendent also highlighted the ongoing work of several professional development partnerships between NCDPI and NCASA affiliates, including the Assistant Principal Accelerator Program (AP Accelerator) and other programs administered by the NC Principals and Assistant

Principals' Association (NCPAPA). Truitt ended her presentation Tuesday by mentioning her office's top legislative policy and budget priorities, including a new priority aimed at protecting students from "incredibly heinous activity" by teachers across the state. The superintendent shared that she signs numerous license revocations each month for teachers who have behaved inappropriately with students, and the public should expect "protect-our-students legislation" being filed in the state legislature next week.



NC Senate Approves Parents' Bill Of Rights Along Party Lines, With GOP Supermajority — Using their new supermajority in the state Senate for the first time Tuesday, North Carolina Republicans pushed along party lines to restrict what schools teach and how they can treat LGBTQ students. [Senate Bill 49](#), called the Parents' Bill of Rights but criticized as targeting LGBTQ youth, bans curriculum on gender identity, sexual activity or sexuality in kindergarten through fourth grades. It also requires teachers to potentially out LGBTQ students if they change their pronouns. In debate before SB 49 passed on a 29-18 vote, the only out LGBTQ senator said the bill "does harm." The measure also requires schools to make textbooks and other materials available for parental review at the schools and online. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper is highly likely to veto the bill if it is approved by

the state House and reaches his desk, but Republicans are also likely to attempt to override his veto. The 2022 elections gave the GOP enough votes to override vetoes on their own in the Senate but left them one vote short in the House. ([Via N&O](#))



North Carolina Teachers Continue To Lead The Nation In National Board Certification — North Carolina continues to lead the nation in numbers of teachers who have earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, with 486 additional teachers earning the endorsement during the 2021-22 school year. Data released last month by the teaching standards organization show that North Carolina now has a total of 23,858 teachers with the respected credential, offered by the Arlington, Va.-based non-profit organization. ([Via NCDPI](#))



Superintendent Truitt Unveils New Plan For Schools Designated Low Performing — On [last] Thursday at the State Board of Education meeting, state Superintendent Catherine Truitt presented a new structure that she hopes will help the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI) better assist low-performing schools. Before presenting her new model for assisting low-performing schools, Truitt took the Board through the current model, which essentially has one deputy superintendent overseeing all the various departments that deal in some way with low-performing schools. Under her new model, DPI will use all staffers who work in the field with schools in a coordinated way to make sure there is one unified approach to reforming low-performing schools. ([Via EdNC](#))



Biden Calls For More Mental Health Care At Schools In State Of The Union — Rising rates of anxiety and depression among children and teens should be a top concern for the nation, President Joe Biden said in his State of the Union address. The president emphasized schools' role in supporting student mental health during his speech on Feb. 7 in Washington, which followed an announcement that the U.S. Department of Education will develop a \$280 million grant program to help schools hire more mental health counselors. ([Via EdWeek](#))



The USDA Wants To Limit Added Sugars And Sodium In School Meals — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on Friday new nutrition standards for school meals, keeping the focus on increasing nutritional value and decreasing diet-related diseases. If implemented, the new standards would limit sugar and sodium intake while increasing the amount of whole grains in meals eaten by more than 30 million students each day during the school year. ([Via NPR](#))



ED Invites Organizations To Make School Infrastructure And Sustainability Commitments — [Last Wednesday] The U.S. Department of Education extended an invitation to national, regional, and local non-profits, foundations, businesses, and community-based organizations to share bold commitment(s) to advance school sustainability, encompassing infrastructure, health,

environmental sustainability education, climate, and environmental justice in America. By May 31, we ask organizations and entities to complete an [online form](#) to share how they will advance at least one of these infrastructure and sustainability priorities:

- **Priority #1:** Ensure equitable access to healthy, safe, sustainable, 21st century physical learning environments.
- **Priority #2:** Develop, maintain, and provide environmental sustainability learning, such as climate literacy, green workforce development, and outdoor learning.
- **Priority #3:** Build capacity for infrastructure, sustainability, environmental justice, and climate mitigation and adaptation in schools.

([Via U.S. Department of Education](#))