

NCASA, Superintendents, Finance Officers Share Feedback On School Funding System With Legislative Task Force

By Jacqueline Wyatt for NCASA

On Wednesday the Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform met to hear from superintendents, LEA finance officers and school advocacy organization leaders on their likes and dislikes with the current state funding system for North Carolina public schools.

Presenters included Katherine Joyce, Executive Director of NCASA; and superintendents, Dr. Stephen Fisher of Cleveland County Schools; Dr. Rob Jackson of Edenton-Chowan Schools; Dr. Tim Markley of New Hanover County Schools; finance officers, Carol Herndon with Rowan-Salisbury Schools; Jeff Hollamon of Onslow County Schools; and Norris Barger of Transylvania County Schools. The task force chairs also heard from Leanne Winner of the N.C. School Boards Association.

Each presenter brought forward an array of issues to be considered by the task force. First, Ms. Joyce spoke to the committee [outlining](#) NCASA's finance reform report and suggested working with the committee in the future regarding NCASA's findings and priorities. The report she shared is a compilation of information on school funding systems in other states, a summary of strengths and weaknesses of NC's current funding system, as well as recommendations for guiding parameters NC school leaders would like the task force to consider in any reform effort ultimately undertaken. To read the full report, click [here](#).

Next, Dr. Fisher presented to the task force regarding restoring flexibility. He began by outlining the current funding system and how it affects his district. He then discussed the inadequacies it poses on districts, such as capped allotments, a lack of flexibility, unpredictable access to funds, and the adequacy of funding in certain areas. To view his presentation materials, click [here](#).

Then, Dr. Jackson shared pros of the current funding system, including flexibility that is provided and specific recognition of the unique needs of low-wealth counties and disadvantaged students. He suggested some proposed improvements to several allotments, including Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding, Low Wealth Funding and Small Schools Funding. To view his presentation materials, click [here](#).

Next, Dr. Markley presented to the task force on the Central Office allotment and school district needs there. He began his presentation with a set of general thoughts, each representing funding areas that are key to the task force's understanding of the allotment. He then addressed the disparities between the current funding allotment for the central office in New Hanover schools and the fact that it only represents 0.5% of the operating budget there. After presenting more detail to the task force on the issues with and need for a strong central office to support individual schools, Dr. Markley presented a set of recommendations to the committee. To view his presentation materials, click [here](#).

Mr. Barger then spoke to the task force regarding removing caps and increasing funding differentiation in several allotments supporting special populations of students, Children with Disabilities and students with Limited English Proficiency. Regarding each topic, he also provided funding recommendations. To view his presentation materials, click [here](#).

Next, Ms. Herndon stressed the importance of maintaining position allotments, funding new and growing charter schools via a direct allotment, and acknowledging differences between districts. To view her presentation materials, click [here](#).

Lastly, Mr. Hollamon presented materials on adequacy, focusing on Onslow County Schools. Among stating likes and dislikes, he presented recommendations to the task force. These include: modifying current funding formulas to address highlighted issues in need of improvement, utilizing professional judgement from educators and administrators in developing goals for sufficient resources, updating existing resource allocation formulas, continuing to allow Superintendents and Finance Officers to serve as a resource to meet the needs of students across NC. His materials can be found [here](#).

For a full list of materials presented to the task force, please click [here](#).