

Brooks PTA Advocacy Update

March 9, 2017

March 14 – Lobby Day

The NC PTA has designated March 14, 2017 as PTA lobby day, to show lawmakers that we care about public schools! If you are interested in attending events at the NC General Assembly to lobby for legislation to strengthen our public schools, see NCPTA.org for more info. You don't have to be an expert – just show up!

Undocumented Students

On Tuesday, March 8, 2017, a lobbying effort took place to encourage the Wake County School Board to adopt a “safe zone resolution” similar to those in Chicago and Los Angeles to protect undocumented students from deportation while attending school. Nationwide, undocumented students’ ability to attend public school has been at issue since President Donald Trump ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials to step up deportation. Christine Kushner, the board's vice chairman, said her father came to Fayetteville from Greece as a teen in 1946. “Being in a public school for a fifteen-year-old man in the nineteen forties opened up America,” Kushner said, adding that sharing such stories can lead to “greater conversations” about pressures that face the school system and the community. The School Board is taking the resolution under consideration.

WCPSS Budget Update

The Board Advisory Committee met this month at Sanderson High School and explained how the WCPSS budget is funded and allotted. Did you know...

- Only 5% of public school boards in the US are publicly funded, and ours is one!
- The Wake County Commissioners (elected officials) are the folks who decide how much funding goes to the Wake Co. school system (usually through property tax increases). → *The Chair is Sig Hutchison and Vice Chair is Matt Calabria, and the school task force folks are Erv Portman and Greg Ford. If you want increased funding, those are the people to contact.*
- This year's school board plans to focus on additional counselors, mental health issues, pre-K expansion, and achieving a living wage for school employees.
- Wake County schools spends \$8,400 per child per year, on average. This is much less than most school similar school systems. For example, Chapel Hill public schools spend \$11,000 per child, and Montgomery Co, MD (similar population and size) spends \$13,000 per child.

NC Governor

Governor Roy Cooper's new budget proposal includes a 5% average raise for teacher pay this year and next, with the goal of raising pay to the national average in five years.

NC Legislature

- Principals' Pay
The NC General Assembly convened on January 11, 2017 for a full session. North Carolina ranks 50 out of 50 in pay for administrators. Therefore, the General Assembly has created a Joint Legislative Study Committee on School-Based Administrator Pay. Principal pay, while often overshadowed by public debates over lagging teacher pay in North Carolina, has emerged as a keynote item for education leaders in 2017. Be on the lookout for discussions regarding education appropriation for our wonderful administrators.
- Class Size Mistake Corrected
Last year's state budget mandated class size reduction. Great idea, except that the budget included no additional funds to make that happen. School systems trying to abide by the new class size mandate scrambled to cut art, music, and PE. The legislators clearly recognized their mistake. The NC House of Representatives just voted 114 to 0 to adopt legislation (House Bill 13) to relax the new class size mandate. Specifically, the bill allows schools to exceed the average class size requirements by up to three students and the mandated individual class size by up to six students.

Carroll Middle School in the news!

Brooks ES feeder school Carroll Middle School was featured on the NBC nightly news with Lester Holt! The school's new principal is visiting every students' home in her efforts to connect the school with the families.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/inspiring-america-principal-visitsevery-student-home-886885443554>

Education News

If you learn of policy issues or legislation affecting Brooks, please contact Tara@MullerLawFirm.com.