2005–2006
NCSBA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
The mission of the North Carolina School boards Association, as an advocate for public school education is to provide leadership and services that enable local boards of education to govern effectively. Through NCSBA, local boards of education have been involved in the legislative process to achieve needed school and program reforms. Each of these efforts is focused on the goal that every student is entitled to a free and quality education.

Every two years NCSBA initiates a legislative process that enables local school board members to express their opinions on current educational issues. These opinions are collected through an extensive survey process.

A comprehensive analysis of the surveys has determined the following to be major issues for the 2005-2006 NCSBA Legislative Agenda.

**GUIDING PRINCIPALS**

During each legislative session there are always unanticipated bills introduced that affect public schools. NCSBA will use three guiding principles to evaluate legislation.

**Unfunded Mandates**
NCSBA opposes any legislation that would require school systems to expend additional financial resources without the State providing those necessary resources. NCSBA also will continue to advocate for funding for those mandates that currently exist.

**Local Control**
One of the three components of the ABCs program is the “C,” which stands for local control. In order for the ABCs to be successful in the long term, local control at the school system level must be preserved and expanded. NCSBA opposes any legislation that attempts to diminish or take away local control and supports legislation that provides additional local control and decision-making.

**Funding Formulas**
The General Assembly should provide sufficient funds to guarantee that all funding formulas are fully funded. For those formulas that are not currently fully funded, additional allocations should be appropriated to fully fund the programs.
There are many pressing financial needs in the 115 school districts across North Carolina. NCSBA believes that the General Assembly should concentrate the State’s resources on the following areas:

- Restoration of $44 million recurring cuts
- School Facility Needs
- Leandro funding
- Improvement of teacher salaries
- Technology
- Low Wealth School Fund
- Reduction in class sizes

**State Bond Issue for School Construction**
North Carolina has an estimated $6 billion backlog in school construction needs. With the push to decrease class sizes in the lower grades and increasing student enrollment across North Carolina, local resources simply cannot meet the needs of school construction. NCSBA supports the passage of a State School Bond Issue of sufficient size to help boards of education build and renovate schools.

**Recruitment and Retention of Teachers**
One of the greatest problems school districts face today is recruiting and retaining teachers. North Carolina must do more to help local boards of education in this area. Some of the strategies to address these problems that NCSBA supports include: additional flexibility in the lateral entry program; expand efforts to help teacher assistants become teachers; provide funds for signing bonuses for teachers in geographically and economically challenged areas; establish and expand college loan-forgiveness programs for teachers who teach for a specific period of time; and a general increase in teacher pay.

**Principal Contracts**
NCSBA supports returning to local boards of education the option to renew a principal’s contract for two, three, or four years for the first renewal with future contracts being four years.

**School Calendar**
NCSBA believes that the establishment of school start and end dates should be left to local boards of education.

**Inclement Weather**
NCSBA believes that the integrity of the 180-day school year is extremely important; however, there are years when inclement weather forces schools to be closed for an unusually high number of days. NCSBA believes that local boards of education should have the authority to make decisions regarding exempting days due to severe inclement weather.

**Lottery**
NCSBA supports the establishment of a lottery with the proceeds of the lottery going to school construction and technology. A portion of the proceeds could possibly be used to retire future school construction bonds.
**Election Procedure Changes**
NCSBA supports granting school boards the authority to make changes to their election procedures similar to that which cities and counties have. This authority would allow school boards to make certain changes to their election procedures without securing local legislation.

**School Board Fiscal Accountability**
NCSBA supports giving school boards fiscal accountability. Over 80 percent of local boards of education in the country do not rely upon another entity of local government to provide local funding for public schools. North Carolina should grant its local boards of education fiscal autonomy.

**Tuition Tax Credits and Vouchers**
NCSBA opposes any tuition tax credit or voucher program. Implementation of a tuition tax credit or voucher program would divert needed resources from public schools.

**Charter Schools**
NCSBA opposes any expansion of the charter school cap.

**Sales Tax Exemption**
NCSBA supports a sales tax exemption for purchases made by local boards of education. At the present time, school districts may apply for a sales tax refund. Converting the sales tax refund to a sales tax exemption would provide school district finance departments with significant administrative relief.