



## from the ground up

Our voices  
working together for change  
in North Carolina's  
education world

December 2007

### NC CARE Makes Plans for 2008

*"The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to."*

-- Marian Wright Edelman

NC Community Advocates for Revitalizing Education (NCCARE) held its day-long annual retreat earlier this month. More than 30 members from across the state took advantage of this opportunity to increase their knowledge, plan activities for the new year, and fellowship with friends and advocates.



### Does Your Child Have a Personal Education Plan?

All children who did not get passing scores on their end-of-grade or end-of-course tests have the right to Personal Education Plans.

If your child failed the test but was never offered a Personal Education Plan, please let us know!

Contact Jack Holtzman, Justice Center Staff Attorney, at 919-856-2156 or [jack@ncjustice.org](mailto:jack@ncjustice.org).

Highlights of the day included a presentation from Dr. Karolyn Tyson, associate professor of sociology at UNC-Chapel Hill. Dr. Tyson presented a statistical analysis showing that using a gifted curriculum leads to increased academic success for all students and could improve test scores.

NC CARE members also heard from Deputy State Superintendent JB Buxton, who provided detailed information on the current state of education in North Carolina. In addition, he addressed the issue of dropout prevention and the state's plans to address the current crisis.

Using this information, NCCARE members began the process of drafting their 2008 education agenda. The group will hold a follow-up gathering in early 2008 to finalize the strategic plan and prepare for the upcoming legislative session.

If you would like to participate in the upcoming meeting or to become a member of NCCARE please contact Angella Dunston at [angella@ncjustice.org](mailto:angella@ncjustice.org).

### Will Common Sense and Compassion Prevail?

*NC Leaders Recognize Importance of Immigrants and Education*

Throughout North Carolina, immigrant children are going to school and becoming part of their communities. But shortsighted state policies have kept many of them from furthering their education beyond high school.

Then this month, the community college system unveiled a policy allowing anyone, regardless of immigration status, to attend classes. However, foreign-born children of undocumented parents would have to pay out-of-state tuition, a \$7,000+ hurdle many can't overcome.



That prompted an announcement from Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC system, that it would consider whether to offer in-state tuition to immigrant kids. He said it's a move North Carolina must consider in order to avoid creating "another permanent underclass."

Leaders like Bowles and Governor Easley deserve high praise for their willingness to stand up for what's right for the state and all of its people.



For more information on education issues affecting Latinos and migrant students, visit [www.adelantenc.org](http://www.adelantenc.org).

### Charter Schools Debate Misses the Point

A recent study found that charter schools are doing about the same or worse than traditional public schools. Despite evidence that many charter schools aren't fulfilling their commitments to their students, some supporters of alternative education want the state to lift the cap of 100 charter schools.

The debate about the cap diverts attention from the needs of public schools.



Check out the charter schools report at [www.nccppr.org](http://www.nccppr.org).



NC JUSTICE CENTER

224 S. Dawson St.  
PO Box 28068  
Raleigh, NC 27611

(919) 856-2570  
(919) 856-2175 – fax

[www.ncjustice.org](http://www.ncjustice.org)

To unsubscribe to this newsletter,  
email [angella@ncjustice.org](mailto:angella@ncjustice.org).

State leaders should determine what resources traditional schools need and then figure out how to improve the current charter schools. Then, maybe, it will be time for the cap conversation.

## 2008 Could Bring Financial Windfall For Schools

Beginning in January, schools across the state could receive an after-Christmas present worth as much as \$768 million. That's how much the state collected in civil penalties, like parking fees or late tax payments, from 1996 to 2005.

State law says such fees should be distributed to local schools for technology needs. But for more than ten years, the state has kept that money. Six school districts sued, and last week, Supreme Court Judge Howard Manning ruled that all 115 school districts could receive some fraction of the \$768 million. The state will likely be given up to 5 years to pay back the money; however, this decision will have a major impact on next year's budget.

## Know Your Rights – What *Leandro* Means to You

*Leandro* is much more than a court case. It's the key to unlocking great educational opportunities for all of North Carolina's children. This year, Superior Court Judge Howard Manning, who is overseeing implementation of the *Leandro* case, held several hearings during which he called on middle schools to improve performance and questioned why schools aren't creating Personal Education Plans for all at-risk students.

Sadly, around the state, some schools are denying children their right to a quality education. But we can't help those children if we don't know about them! We need you to keep us informed.

Read our latest [Leandro Update](#) to learn more about the educational rights guaranteed by North Carolina state law. And let us know if children in your community are being denied these important rights.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Blue Ribbon Commission on Charter Schools Meeting  
December 19, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm  
Department of Public Instruction, Room 755  
[http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe\\_meetings/07sbemedia.html](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/07sbemedia.html)

NC General Assembly Joint Education Oversight Committee  
January 8 and 9, 10 am  
Legislative Office Building, Room 643

NC General Assembly Joint Dropout Prevention & High School Graduation Commission  
January 29, 10 am  
Legislative Office Building, Room 643



*Our staff would like to thank each of you for your commitment to education for all students. We look forward to working with you in the upcoming year to continue to make a difference from the ground up!!*

*Happy Holidays from the Education and Law Project*