



North Carolina Retired School Personnel

Post Office Box 27347, 700 South Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27611-7347

Phone: (919) 832-3000

Fax: (919) 829-1626

Web: www.ncrsp.org

Email: ncrsp@ncrsp.org

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2018 NCRSP State Convention focuses on school safety

School safety and concern for youngsters loomed large at the NCRSP's 2018 State Convention in Winston-Salem on March 14-15.

More than 300 delegates gathered at the Marriott Winston-Salem to ponder school safety and support the NC Foundation for Public School Children. They approved two new business items that voiced opposition to arming educators with guns and called for a whole list of gun control measures, including: universal background checks and a minimum age of 21 for gun buyers, a ban on high capacity gun magazines, limiting all gun purchases to licensed gun dealers, and greater resources for treatment of individuals who may suffer from mental illness. They also used a Silent Auction and a friendly competition between the regions to raise more than \$13,000 dollars for the NC Foundation for Public School Children. The Foundation provides clothes, medicine, eyeglasses and a host of other needs for public school children who lack basic necessities that other children take for granted.

Almost 260 attendees gathered for the Recognitions Banquet on Wednesday night. They were entertained by the Regan High School Jazz band and witnessed awards for high achievement in various areas including what used to be called "Gold Star" work and legislative advocacy. The Community Service Committee noted more than \$9 million in community service hours across the state.

The Rev. Willie Ramey III and Ms. Linda Gunter ran unopposed for the offices of NCRSP President and Vice President and were elected by acclamation. The same was true for Vera Taylor and Ira LaVerne Reed, who ran unopposed for Treasurer and Recording Secretary. Vice President Rev. Willie Ramey III presented outgoing President Joan K. Bass with a framed letter of appreciation for her service to the organization along with flowers and a monetary gift, collected by those in attendance, for all the miles traveled to regional and local unit meetings. Joan thanked the members for their support throughout her two-year term (which ends June 30) and called on all officers and members to support the new officers who will take the reins of leadership on July 1.

The 2019 State Convention will be held April 4-5 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center in Durham. This is a familiar venue and readily accessible from most parts of the state. NCRSP previously met there in 2017 and 2015.

Leadership Conferences set for May and June

NCRSP will hold its 2018 Leadership Conferences May 14-17 in the east and June 5-7 in the west. At all events, registration will be held from 9:00-9:30 a.m. Most events should be over by 3:30 p.m.

Topics will include "The Future of Retirement Security," a legislative update, membership tips, committee involvement and special breakout sessions for treasurers and other officers.

Each Local Unit is encouraged to send its (a) President, (b) Treasurer, (c) Legislative Chairperson (or another committee chairperson) and (d) an "emerging leader." That is **four** people per

local unit. Each Region is encouraged to send its Regional Director or Directors plus two others. Those two others may include: (a) the Treasurer and (b) a committee chairperson of the Region's choice. That is up to **four** people per region.

The Regions and Local Units must pre-register and pay \$10 for each attendee they send to the Leadership Conferences. The \$10 charge is to help offset the cost of a hot lunch, which is also subsidized by a leadership grant from NEA-R. Pre-registration materials have already been sent to regional and local unit leaders. For logistical and financial reasons, pre-registration is **very important!** Any person who appears at a conference site without pre-registering will be charged \$20 for lunch.

Here's the schedule:

EAST

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| Monday, May 14: Region 4 & 5 | Durham County PS/ Staff Development Center (Cafeteria)
2107 Hillandale Road, Durham, NC 27705 |
| Tuesday, May 15: Region 7A | Hitch'n Post
1981 US Hwy 17, Williamston, NC 27892 |
| Wednesday, May 16: Region 7B | King's Restaurant
405 East New Bern Road, Kinston, NC 28504 |
| Thursday, May 17: Region 6A & 6B | Pine Crest Country Club
110 Nigel Drive, Lumberton, NC 28360 |

WEST

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| Tuesday, June 5, Region 1A | Senior Center (Jackson County Dept. on Aging)
100 County Services Park, Sylva, NC 28779 |
| Wednesday, June 6, Region 1B | First United Methodist Church
309 Church Street NW, Lenoir, NC 28645 |
| Thursday, June 7, Regions 2&3 | Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
1531 Trinity Road, Concord, NC 28027
(Building 1000, Room 106 - RCCC South Campus) |

New roster of NEA-R delegates elected

The ballots have been counted and certified, and ten persons have been elected to serve as NEA-R delegates this summer. With an allocation of ten delegates, President Joan Bass will automatically be the first delegate, followed by: Vera W. Taylor, John Hoffman, Rev. Willie T. Ramey, III, Linda Gunter, Geraldine McNeill, Terry G. Mitchell, Sandra Hatley, Kever Clark and Robert "Bob" Grau.

The alternate delegates will be: Barbara B. Grau, Sandra Rogers Alston, Lillar S. Barnes, Joyce Hooks Hawkins, Yvonne Williams, Laveta Weatherington, Ira LaVerne Reed, Robert L. McLean, Yvonne Hart, Laurette W. Lewis, Mildred R. Griffin, Marrion Dunn, Debera Cole-Jones, Margaret Campbell, Viola Roseboro, Kenneth Webb.

Retirements and new hires will change the NCRSP State staff

Three long-time NCRSP staff members will retire at the end of June and will be succeeded by a new Executive Director and a new lobbyist.

Pam Deardorff and Dr. Lacy Presnell will retire their posts as NCRSP's lobbyists on June 30. Both have served retired teachers and the cause of the public schools for decades. Both have received the NCRSP Distinguished Service Award and both are widely known and beloved by members.

Tom Bennett will retire on June 28 after almost five years as Executive Director of NCRSP. Tom's tour as NCRSP's ED caps a career of almost 35 years as a non-profit executive for organizations ranging from the NC Medical Society to the NC Victim Assistance Network.

The organization's officers have already hired a new lobbyist to succeed Pam and Lacy, and that person's name will be announced soon. A Search Committee has been formed and members will soon be pondering applications for the Executive Director's post.

"Seven Questions" available on web site and here...

Fake news, partisan cant, ideological bias, right wing spin, left wing spin—haven't we heard it all? How is a person supposed to cut through all the fog and make good decisions about our state's political candidates—especially candidates for the NC General Assembly? This revised and updated list of "Seven Questions" can help you or your group evaluate a candidate's commitment to retirement security and public education. The following document will also be available on the NCRSP web site.

NCRSP's Seven Questions to Ask Any Candidate for The General Assembly

Virtually all candidates for public office will insist that they support retiree security and the public schools, but for too many of them, it's just lip service. The devil is in the details. We suggest that when you meet each candidate during the campaign or elsewhere—ask these questions. Do not settle for less than specific, satisfactory answers, and if you don't get them, consider the competing candidate. *[NOTE: This is an NCRSP discussion guide. NCAE conducts a candidate endorsement process, and the results of that activity will be available during the spring and summer of 2018.]*

(01) Do you support restoring health insurance benefits for state employee retirees who will be hired on or after January 1, 2021?

[The correct answer is "YES." This will require a repeal of legislation passed last year by the majority party in the General Assembly. They voted to take retiree health insurance coverage away from state employees who are hired on or after Jan. 1, 2021.]

(02) Do you support sustaining North Carolina's current retirement system as a defined benefit plan?

[The correct answer is "YES." Beware of any candidate who supports a change to a "defined contribution plan," to 401Ks or to "portable" self-funded plans.]

(03) Do you support Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for retired teachers and state employees in your district (to help them keep up with increases in consumer prices)?

[The correct answer is "YES." State retirees are losing earning power because COLAs aren't keeping pace with increases in consumer prices. Last year—after a great deal of struggle—we got a mere 1%!]

(04) Do you support bringing North Carolina’s teacher pay up to at least the national average?

[The answer should be “YES.” North Carolina is the 9th largest state by population, but our teacher pay is 35th in the nation—that’s still \$9,000 behind the national average.]

(05) Do you support bringing North Carolina’s per pupil spending up to the national average?

[The correct answer is “Yes.” In 2017 the national average per pupil expenditure was almost \$12,000, but North Carolina spends an average of only \$8,940 per student--that’s 43rd in the nation—source NEA.]

(06) Will you support tax increases on corporations and high-income earners to get our state to the national averages mentioned above?

[The correct answer is “YES.” Our General Assembly cut the corporate tax rate from 6.9% in 2013 to 3% today, and majority party lawmakers want to cut it again to 2.5% in 2019. NC already has the lowest corporate tax rates of states that have one. Meanwhile, we are 43rd in per pupil spending. Our public schools lack books, adequate staff and must choose between smaller class sizes and things like art classes, music education and PE.]

(07) Do you support transferring public school funds to create and support private voucher schools (also known as “school choice”)?

[The correct answer is “NO.” Private school voucher schemes lack full public accountability and these voucher schools have not proven to be more effective than public schools. Worst of all, voucher schools are draining millions of dollars from the public schools. Beware of any candidate who calls for “school choice!”]