

Institute of Politics Seminar  
June Atkinson

**Seminar: Every Monday from 5:00 - 6:15pm in Graham Memorial 035**  
**Office hours: Every Monday from 3:00 - 5:00pm and 7:15 - 8:15pm in Graham Memorial 011**

## Overview

Since the opening of the first North Carolina public school in 1840 to present, controversy has lingered about the purpose of education, who should pay, how should students be educated, and who should be in charge of policy to guide and direct educational initiatives. Technology use and expansion have also changed the landscape of where and how students learn. Today, many people agree that it is important to educate all children well for a competitive economy and a quality standard of living. Others believe that educating just those in K-12 who will attend college should be the focus of education. Some fear that schools are becoming more segregated by race and economic status. All of these issues have an impact on the future of education and subsequently, our nation's future.

This study group will examine the role of public education and what should be its future. The topics will include the state of public education, privatization of schools, governance, finance, standards and accountability, and educator evaluation. For each topic, students will learn about the past, the present issues, and formulate what should be future policy related to public education. By the end of the study group, a goal is that students will be able to articulate issues and make informed decisions when voting and influencing policy.

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**January 29**

### ***Just the Facts and Trends in Public Education***

Many changes have occurred over the past two decades in public education, K-12, including funding, educational providers, and federal and state legislation. Are these changes benefiting students or hurting opportunities for them to receive a quality education?

Hear about the past and present for implications regarding the future of public education.

Guests: Keith Poston, President and Executive Director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina and WRAL TV host of Education Matters

**February 5**

***Vouchers, Opportunity Scholarships—Good, Bad or Neither?***

Fifteen states have school voucher programs which are called opportunity scholarships in North Carolina. Do these programs undermine public education, have no impact, or improve educational opportunities for students? Will these programs propel public schools to be more competitive or will they eventually starve public schools? Hear and discuss the perspective of a former North Carolina legislator who was instrumental in getting the Opportunity Scholarship legislation passed. Also, find out about his strategies in convincing his colleagues of the program's value.

Guest: The Honorable Skip Stam, former NC state legislator, Apex, North Carolina

**February 12**

***What North Carolina and Hawaii Have in Common***

Money matters when it comes to financing public schools, but people disagree about how much money is needed and where the money should be spent. Learn about how public schools are financed and funding trends that have occurred over the past 20 years. Learn about the role of the federal government, the North Carolina General Assembly, and local communities in financing public education. Discuss how some current trends may have an impact on schools being able to serve students.

Guest: Philip Price, former Chief Financial Officer of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and North Carolina Legislative staff

**February 19**

***Who is in Charge of Public Education***

Developing policy for public education is complicated. Who deserves the blame or accolades for developing policy governing each classroom? State legislators, governors, state superintendents, state boards of education, local boards of education, local superintendents, and U.S. Congress play a part in developing education policy.

This session will focus on how the current governance system works and examines what the governance system should be in the future.

Guests: Eric Davis, Charlotte Mecklenburg local board and North State Board of Education member and Tricia Willoughby, North Carolina state Board Member and

former executive director of the North Carolina Committee for Business and Education.

## **February 26**

### ***Standards, Accountability, and Evaluations***

This session will examine the past and present system for evaluating educators and developing standards and accountability systems for determining what students should know and be able to do as a result of attending school for 13 years. Find out about what has been the key drivers in developing the current system, including federal and state legislation, as well as the Common Core initiative, and the movement to evaluate educators. Learn about North Carolina's and Delaware's approaches.

Guests: Dr. Rebecca Garland, former Deputy State Superintendent, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Angeline Rivello, former Associate Superintendent, Delaware Department of Education

## **March 4**

### ***Read it in the News –The Rest of the Story***

The panel will focus on how journalists decide which education stories to write and what they identify as key issues facing public education. They will share what has surprised them while covering education during General Assembly and State Board of Education discussions and how they would have covered the desegregation of schools after hearing Mr. Rasheed's story.

Guests:

- Abdul Rasheed, President, William C. Friday Fellowship Institute
- Billy Ball, Reporter, NC Policy Watch
- Alex Granados, Author, EducationNC
- Vanessa Jeter, former Communications Director, NC Department of Public Instruction

## **March 19**

### ***What is Making Education Leaders Happy or Sad About Public Education***

Teachers, principals, and superintendents are responsible for carrying out the laws of the General Assembly and the State Board of Education. Hear the panel's wish list about what they would like to see happen in public education. They will share their hopes, frustrations, and trends they see occurring in education.

Panel: local superintendent, principal, NCAE President

March 26

***TBD***