

RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - Seven education items are featured in this week's web highlights from the Department of Public Instruction. Full entries can be found at www.ncpublicschools.org/whatsnew/.

1. Dr. Atkinson Discusses How Technology Improves Reading Skills in Latest Blog

In her blog post for Jan. 28, State Superintendent June Atkinson highlights Perquimans Central School and how teachers are using technology to improve reading skills. To learn more about the school's success in encouraging students to read more, including the story of one student who read 278 books, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/statesuperintendent/blog/>.

2. New Website Highlights Read to Achieve Program

A new website providing an overview of all the components of the Read to Achieve program was recently launched and can be viewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/k-3literacy/achieve/>. The Read to Achieve program is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act that became law in July 2012. It applies to all schools beginning with the 2013-14 school year. More information about Read to Achieve can be found at <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2011/Bills/House/PDF/H950v7.pdf>. Please refer to pages 38-45.

3. Collaborative Conference on Student Achievement Just Around the Corner

Have you registered for the 2014 Collaborative Conference on Student Achievement, scheduled for March 3-5 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro? If not, there's still time to register so you can participate in a full range of sessions related to the conference theme, "Engaging North Carolina in Transforming 21st Century Teaching and Learning." To learn more about the conference please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/academicsservices/conference/>.

4. Public Hearings Scheduled for Changes to Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities

The NCDPI Exceptional Children division will hold public hearings to receive comments regarding the agency's proposed amendments to specific Sections of Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities (Policies) pursuant to Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). The public hearings are scheduled for the following dates:

-Wednesday, March 19, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC), Suites 102/103, 907 Barra Row, Davidson.

-Thursday, March 20, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the NCDPI building, room 150, 301 N. Wilmington St, Raleigh.

Additional information about the hearings, including the proposed changes, is available at <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/>.

5. District EC Staff Describe Roles and Services in Video

A video describing the role of school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech language pathologists working in North Carolina's public schools is available on the Exceptional Children website at <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/>. School-based practitioners and an Exceptional Children director describe how educationally relevant evaluations are conducted, how IEP teams decide the need for services, and how interventions for students with disabilities occur in the least restrictive school environment. English and Spanish versions of the video are available.

6. Dates for 2014 Summer Institutes Now Online

Dates for the 2014 Summer Institutes are available on the Professional Development website at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/summerinstitutes/2014/>. New information is being added regularly, so district personnel are encouraged to check the website for updates such as registration opportunities and agendas for the Institutes.

7. Race to the Top Updates Highlight Latest Program News

Race to the Top Weekly Updates feature the latest program information for curriculum, professional development and more. The update for Feb. 5 is available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/rttt/reports/weekly/>.