



NC TRAVEL NEWS

A weekly newsletter on North Carolina General Assembly news relevant to the North Carolina tourism industry

Setting the Record Straight

A common talking-point used by critics of the 2004 school calendar law is that the tourism industry's goal is to have access to student labor during the summer vacation season.

It is a false claim and NCTIA takes every effort to correct it, including this week when the talking-point was included in the John Locke Foundation's admonishment of school systems breaking the law.

NCTIA lobbyist Brian Lewis wrote to JLF's Bob Luebke, the author of the article, to thank him for the principled public position that school districts should respect the rule of law. Lewis added this correction about JLF's message:

The tourism industry wants to preserve the summer calendar law chiefly because we see tourism numbers drop at summer destinations (beach/mountains) about 10-14 days prior to the opening of school.

"If there are are fewer visitors to summer destinations, there is little need for student labor in restaurants, lifeguard stands, and other small businesses," Lewis said.

Luebke replied that he appreciated the clarification and he understands NCTIA's point.

Charlotte Meck Schools to Break Law

It was reported by WFAE this week that Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools will join Gaston, Cleveland and Rutherford counties next year in breaking North Carolina's 2004 school calendar law.

The trio of school systems illegally started school on August 17 this year in open defiance of the current law.

"The (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) board will be giving direction to me, and I believe it's their intent that we will be moving ahead aligning our calendar with Central Piedmont Community College, because we do have their middle colleges," said Interim Superintendent Hugh Hattabaugh on August 26.

NCTIA spent much of the week messaging about the importance of the summer calendar law on social media, reaching out to legislative leaders and staff, and consulting with attorneys about legal options parents have in school districts breaking the law.

"It's hard to believe that a public school system – an institution with a responsibility to educate children and instill civic values – would dare to break the law openly and with no regard for the example they are setting," said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena.

The John Locke Foundation – an organization that supports repealing the summer calendar law – reached out to NCTIA this week to share its public rebuke of school systems breaking the law:

Developing school calendars in open defiance of state law or telegraphing your intentions to do so undermines our laws and sends the wrong message...School districts in Gaston, Cleveland, Rutherford and Charlotte-Mecklenburg also need to respect the rule of law. If the State Board of Education does its job, it will do much to ensure that happens.

Chelena said that NCTIA will continue to work on several options to protect the summer calendar, including partnership with concerned parents and teachers in the affected communities.

