



NCCSA UPDATE



NCCSA Fine Arts Competition: My 3 Perspectives

by Julie Corbett

Perspective 1: The student

Some of my fondest memories from junior and senior high school are of participating in the NCCSA fine arts competition. In the 1980's, I attended a Christian school that was a part of the NCCSA (then called the North Carolina Christian Activities Association), and our school participated in the fine arts festival each year. In those days, the competition was held at Northside Baptist Church and Christian School in Charlotte, North Carolina.

For months, students from our school studied God's Word for Bible Quiz competition, stayed after school for extra speech and music practices, created artwork, and studied material for academic testing. Winning first place at the competition wasn't the ultimate goal, but rather, doing our best with the talents God had given us.

Even though I participated in several fine arts categories, I particularly enjoyed Bible Quiz, Speech, and Music. Because of the Bible Quiz competition, I learned the value of memorizing God's Word and being "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). I learned to think quickly and to quote God's Word accurately and confidently.

Because of the Speech competition, I learned how to be com-

fortable speaking in front of an audience. Preparing for speech competition developed my memorization skills, my communication skills, and my creativity.

Because of the Music competition, I learned the value of practice, repetition, and attention to detail. I learned to perform in a group and follow the direction of a leader. I gained an appreciation for culture and the different types of music that glorify God.

Little did I know back then that the NCCSA fine arts competition would play an important role in my life for years to come.

Perspective 2: The teacher

Years later, I taught in a Christian school that sent its students to the same fine arts competition that I had participated in as a student. Now it was my turn to prompt, prod, and encourage students to prepare for competition entries.

Listening to speeches, calling out spelling words, and providing feedback for music groups – all these required time from me, an already-busy teacher. The time and effort was worth it, however, as I watched students who seemed average at the beginning of the school year become exceptional by fine arts competition time. The competition encouraged a spirit of excellence in teacher and student alike, and I formed close relationships with many students that remain to this day.

Perspective 3: The NCCSA staff member

I never imagined that years later, in God's perfect timing, I would be privileged to join the staff of the NCCSA. Now my role with this competition has changed from practicing and performing to planning and organizing. I now understand just how much time, effort, and organization goes into a competition of this size and quality.

With each passing year, I am thrilled to see the amazing talents and abilities that the Lord has given to the students in North Carolina's Christian schools. I am thankful for the teachers who challenge students to reach their God-given potential. I know that many of these students will be impacted for life because of this competition.

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Three perspectives, three stages of my life – the NCCSA fine arts competition has played a role in each of them.

A few of the competition categories or rules may have changed since I was a student, but the purpose of the competition remains: to allow Christian young people from NCCSA member schools to develop skills in various areas of proficiency so they might better serve the Lord throughout their lives. I am so thankful that the NCCSA continues to organize and promote this fine arts program that has had such a lasting impact on me.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Indiana Exits Common Core Standards

Last week, Indiana Governor Mike Pence [signed](#) Senate Enrolled Act 91 which [reversed](#) the state's previous adoption of the controversial Common Core English and mathematics standards (CCS). In 2010, the unvetted standards were rapidly adopted by 46 states without local input or review in most cases. State education officials were incentivized to adopt the standards in order to win a portion of the \$4.3 billion Race to the Top funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Subsequently, the Department of Education awarded \$330 million to two state consortia to develop assessments aligned with the Common Core, conditioned No Child Left Behind flexibility waivers on certain reforms, and established a technical review board to oversee the assessment content.

Several states have withdrawn from the CCS-aligned assessments, but over 4 million students in 36 states and the District of Columbia are expected to take the CCS draft assessments by June 6th of this year. While dozens of state legislatures are currently considering bills to withdraw from the Common Core, Indiana is the first state in the nation to reject the standards outright. The Heritage Foundation has produced an in-depth [report](#) on the battle within the state over this significant move. Governor Pence stated, "I believe our students are best served when decisions about education are made at the state and local level. By signing this legislation, Indiana has taken an important step forward in developing academic standards that are written by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers, and are uncommonly high, and I commend members of the General Assembly for their support." Education pundits question whether the development of the alternative standards will be a significant departure from the Common Core. Grassroots activists, such as [Hoosiers Against Common Core](#), continue to monitor the process.

High Court Hears Landmark Religious Freedom Case

By Brittany Farrell—This week, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in one of the most important religious freedom cases to come before the Court in years. For nearly 90 minutes, the nine justices questioned the current and a former U.S. Solicitor General on whether the controversial "HHS contraception mandate" that was issued under the Affordable Care Act represents a violation of the religious freedom of two family-owned businesses.

While the [oral arguments](#) included a discussion of the First Amendment freedom of religion, the more specific question before the Court was whether a for-profit corporation may seek protection under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) when a mandated federal law violates the religious beliefs of a business owner. The federal RFRA, which was passed by Congress in 1993 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, provides that the government "shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion" unless that burden is the least restrictive means to further a compelling governmental interest. More fundamentally, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states in part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...."

Former U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement represents Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc. and Conestoga Wood Specialties Corporation in a [consolidated case](#) before the Court. The Green family owns Hobby Lobby. They are devout Christians who seek to honor God "by operating their company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles," and who object to providing four of the 20 mandated contraceptives because those drugs and devices are considered abortifacients. Under the current mandate, Hobby Lobby faces two choices: either pay a \$475 million annual "penalty" for providing what the federal government considers incomplete coverage to employees because it does not include the four contraceptives in question; or pay a \$26 million annual "tax" for dropping all health coverage for employees.

Clement told the Court that the Green family considers providing health coverage to their employees an important part of their religious responsibility as an employer and that the second option would also have to include any employee compensation adjustments the company feels are necessary to make up for not offering health coverage. Similarly, Conestoga Wood Specialties is a privately held company owned by a Mennonite

Christian family, the Hahn's, who also object to the HHS mandate on religious grounds.

Clement argued that for-profit corporations are among the "persons" covered by RFRA, and that his clients' sincerely held religious beliefs are violated by the contraceptive mandate. He also contended the government's compelling interest argument is substantially weakened by the number and variety of exemptions that have been made to the mandate. Additionally, he stated that the allowance of grandfathered insurance plans that do not have to meet the minimum requirements being forced on companies like Hobby Lobby and Conestoga "is fundamentally inconsistent with a compelling interest analysis." He also pointed out that there were other less intrusive means to accomplish the government's goal of providing contraceptives to women, such as eliminating the mandate and having the government offer the contraceptives separately.

U.S. Solicitor General Donald B. Verrilli argued for the government's position, saying that RFRA does not apply to these for-profit corporations. However, he conceded to Justice Scalia that there have not been any court rulings finding that a for-profit company is not entitled to make religious freedom claims.

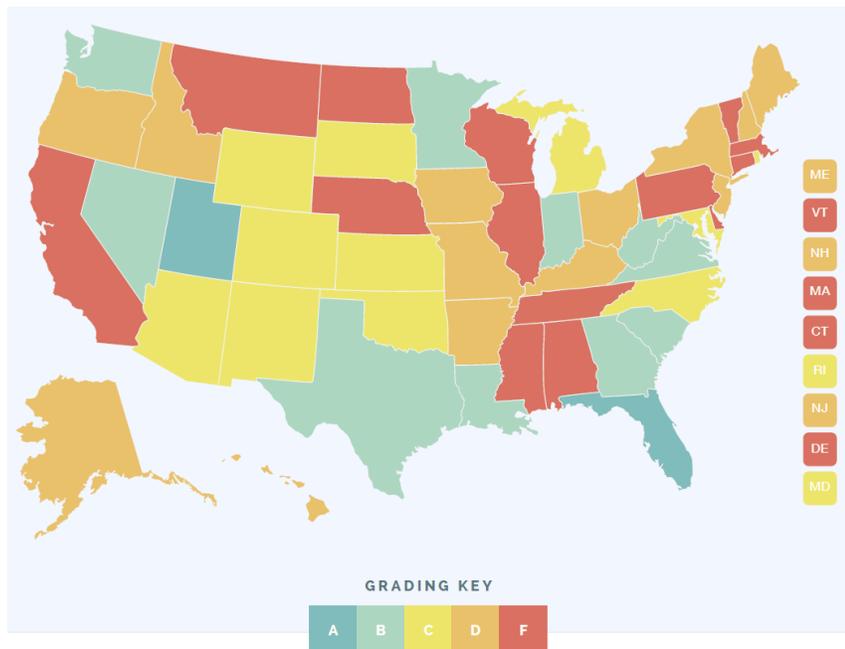
Both Justices Kennedy and Breyer expressed concern with portions of the government's arguments. Justice Kennedy questioned the constitutionality of agencies imposing and changing rules that are essentially and intimately related to the laws passed by Congress. He also pressed Verrilli on the logical conclusion of the government's arguments, pointing out that, "Under your view, a profit corporation could be forced - in principle, there are some statutes on the books now which would prevent it, but - could be forced in principle to pay for abortions." Ultimately, Verrilli laid out the government's position as holding that, "once you make a choice to go into the commercial sphere, which you certainly do when you incorporate as a for-profit corporation, you are making a choice to live by the rules that govern you and your competitors in the commercial sphere."

The Supreme Court is expected to issue a ruling in the case before the end of their current term in June. In the meantime, the North Carolina Family Policy Council joins other organizations and individuals across the country in praying that the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court will seek God's wisdom in this very important decision that is likely to have widespread implications for the future of religious freedom in the United States.

2013 Digital Learning Report Card

Backed by the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, and many others, *Digital Learning Now* is a national initiative with the goal of advanced state policies that will create a high-quality digital learning environment to better equip all students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century. Recently, the third annual report card measuring state policies on alternative models of education that utilize digital learning has been released. This report is based on each state's alignment to the 10 Elements of High-Quality Digital Learning.

[Click here](#) to view any state and their grade.
[Click here](#) to download the entire report.



Update on Opportunity Scholarship Grants in NC

On February 28, 2014, the Wake County Superior Court ruled to immediately suspend implementation of the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship Program. The Opportunity Scholarship Grants would have been available for the 2014-15 school year. The application period began on February 1st and the deadline to apply was February 25th. By February 21, 2014, approximately 4,500 individuals had applied to receive the grants.

On March 23, 2014 a Petition for a Writ of Supersedeas and Temporary Stay was filed with the Court of Appeals. Possible legislative options are being explored as well. Please continue pray that this issue can be resolved as quickly as possible to provide help to the many families in North Carolina desiring additional education options for their children.



2014 NCCSA Summer Staff Development



The **2014 NCCSA Staff Development Seminar** will take place on July 28-31. **The NCCSA is privileged to have Leslie Fetzer confirmed as the speaker for this "teacher's" seminar.** Leslie is a former iNACOL National Online Teacher of the Year and a highly-sought-after speaker. **Her biographical sketch is available [here](#).**

Information regarding the topics will be available at a later date. To accommodate the travel needs of teachers from across the state, this seminar will be provided in two different locations. The central/western location will be held at Woodland Baptist Christian School on Monday/Tuesday, July 28-29. The eastern location will be held at Faith Christian Academy in Goldsboro on Wednesday/Thursday, July 30-31.



Currently, the **NCCSA Administrators' Seminar** is scheduled for July 30-31 at Faith Christian Academy in Goldsboro. **Bruce Friend is an education consultant and will be leading this session.** View his biographical sketch [here](#).

Official CEU credits will be available for both of these training events and will count toward the "official NCCSA CEU" credit that is required for NCCSA Teacher Certification—2008 Edition v1.5. Any new or renewal applicant since January 1, 2008, must earn at least 25% of all CEU renewal work at either the annual convention or a summer staff development session.

Please let your faculty/staff know about this summer's staff development seminar. It is rare for speakers of this caliber to be confirmed at the same time, so please take advantage of this opportunity. More information about these events will be available in a few months. **YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THIS YEAR'S STAFF DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR.**

2014 Freedom to Learn Early Childhood Conference

Mark your calendar now for the **2014 Freedom to Learn Early Childhood Conference** that will be held on Saturday, June 21, at Gospel Light Christian School in Walkertown, NC.

Lower-elementary, kindergarten, preschool, and daycare directors and employees will not want to miss this opportunity for training, fellowship, and fun! More information about speakers, workshop topics, and conference registration will be available in coming days. **Make plans now to attend!**



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Freedom to Learn

Early Childhood Super Conference

a conference designed especially for
lower-elementary, kindergarten, preschool, and daycare
directors and employees

June 21, 2014

Host Site:
Gospel Light Christian School
Walkertown, NC

FINE ARTS NEWS

The 41st-annual *NCCSA Fine Arts Festival* took place at Raleigh Christian Academy on March 19-21, 2014. **Thirty-seven schools from across North Carolina competed in this year's competitions, with approximately 2,700 entries.** The group competition included contests in the categories of Bible, Bible Quiz, Speech, Music, Spelling, Science Fair, and Art. Academic Testing and Journalism competitions occurred earlier this school year. Congratulations to each school, director, and student who participated!

Special thanks to the three schools that hosted the various fine arts competitions this year: Friendship (solo music), Gospel Light (Bible Quiz), and Raleigh Christian (group competition). These competition hosts provided excellent facilities and assistance to help make the competitions successful.

We especially want to thank the Fine Arts Chairmen who assist the NCCSA State Office in planning the various competitions. Their assistance and expertise in their particular categories help the competitions run smoothly.

Photos of the competition can be ordered by clicking [here](#). Competition results, including a list of the 2014 NCCSA National Team members, are available [here](#). State-level winners will go on to compete at the AACS National Fine Arts Competition at Bob Jones University on April 8-10.

To God be the glory for great NCCSA fine arts competitions again this year!



AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference



The *AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference* is July 7-11, 2014. Each year, the NCCSA selects students from NCCSA schools to attend this once-in-a-lifetime conference. It is always an invaluable process to any student who has an interest in legislative and civic service. **The deadline to submit this information to the NCCSA is Friday, April 11.**

Please let your Juniors and Seniors know about this opportunity. **All information and details are available in the PDF packet located [here](#).**

ATHLETIC NEWS



Congratulations to all the **2014 NCCSA State Basketball Tournament** winners, and thanks to the tournament hosts for a job well done. Special thanks also to Mr. Bob LaTour (NCCSA State Athletic Commissioner), Jeff Woosley and Bryan Harwood (NCCSA Assistant Commissioners), and Brian Trull (NCCSA Tournament Coordinator) for all their hard work.

The results of the 2014 basketball tournaments have been listed on the NCCSA website for a few weeks and are still available [here](#). The NCCSA All-Star event hosted by Friendship Christian on March 1 was a great success. Special thanks to Jerry Bailey from Alamance for coordinating this event, Brian Trull for assisting, and Friendship Christian for hosting.

Upcoming Events

- April 30: Athletic Meeting/Baseball-Softball-Girls' Soccer Seeding Meeting (Beacon Baptist Church)
 May 6: NCCSA State Golf Tournament (The Neuse)
 May 9-10: NCCSA State Tournaments:
 (A) NCCSA State Softball/Baseball/Girls' Soccer Tournament at Woodland
 (AA) NCCSA State Softball/Baseball/Girls' Soccer Tournament at Vandalia



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The Newest Blog Entries on the NCCSA Website

- [Research Suggests Professional Development Delivers Better Student Scores](#)
- [Successful Innovation Starts with Finding the Right Points of Integration](#)
- [Khan Academy to offer Free SAT Prep](#)
- [Blended Learning—So “Hot” Right Now](#)

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Spotlight on Faith Christian School in Ramseur

Concerned about the direction that the public schools were taking in the late 1960s, Faith Baptist Church in rural Ramseur, North Carolina, envisioned a school where Christ would be central and standards would be met. There were few other Christian schools in North Carolina when FCS opened with 80 students in 1968. Enrollment jumped to 180 students in just one year and peaked at about 330 students in the early 2000s. Faith currently has approximately 270 students in pre-school through grade twelve.

As FCA grew, it sought a balanced approach to the mental, physical, and spiritual needs of the students. In the '90s, the school's motto was refined to state, "Faith Christian School exists to educate and train servant-leaders for the Kingdom of God." Thus, training Christlike servant-leaders became part of the school's everyday purpose.

For example, a community service program was implemented in the early '90s. Instead of selling products through fundraisers, students seek sponsorship and then work in the community for those with special needs. Each year, the school completes sixty to seventy projects in nursing homes, hospice, churches, and various areas throughout the county.

Each class gives ten percent of the money earned to missionaries who are FCS graduates or to those who have impacted the student body.

The most transforming change has been the annual senior trip. For the last fifteen years, the senior class has gone to the Dominican Republic. The students prepare a program in their Spanish II course. Presented numerous times on their trip, the seniors' program involves a gospel presentation, songs, and puppet ministries. FCS students also provide medical and construction assistance for local churches. The students assist local missionaries in children's ministry, nursing home facilities, and village food distribution. Over the years, FCS has been able to help churches purchase land, build or paint small churches, equip local pastors, and encourage God's people in the Dominican Republic. Because of this mission endeavor, FCS students have been called into mission work or full-time Christian ministry.

In addition, other school functions have been improved to emphasize servant leadership. Annual visits to The Wilds Christian Camp provide spiritual emphasis and direction at the dawn of each school year. Also, the annual Homecoming format was replaced to recognize an outstanding character quality in each senior, rather than recog-

nizing just one person. The Word of God remains at the core of FCS's teaching because it is the supreme textbook. Without the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word, there can never be proper servant leadership.

Throughout its history, FCS has been blessed with faculty and staff longevity. In most cases, teachers have spent most of their teaching careers at Faith. Dr. Gary Moger has served as Faith Baptist Church's pastor for the last thirty years. Current school administrator, Todd Daniel, has served the school for fifteen years, while administrator emeritus Bill Hohneisen has devoted over forty-four years to the ministry. The school's curriculum is primarily BJU Press, Saxon Math, and Apologia, although other curriculum supplements are used. FCS also helps to enrich special needs students with its Talent Development Center.

With over 700 graduates in numerous professions, the Lord has blessed the Faith family with loyal and generous alumni who continually support the school and bring their children back to receive the same biblically-based education. The Faith family can clearly see how God has provided for this school, and faith in His provision is strengthened. Thus, the school was aptly named "Faith," for it has been faith in Christ that has sustained the school for over forty-five years.