

History of the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education

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The North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, a state government agency, was created in March of 1961 to supervise non-public elementary and secondary schools in the state in accordance with legislation enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1955, but theretofore not implemented.

For the first 18 years of its existence, it operated under the oversight of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In May of 1979, the General Assembly enacted legislation transferring it to the jurisdiction of the Office of the Governor. On July 1, 1998, Governor James B. Hunt Jr. moved it to the North Carolina Department of Administration, a department which answers to the Governor. In March of 2005, an Advisor to Governor Michael F. Easley included in the Governor's recommended budget to the General Assembly a proposal to move the division to the Department of Public Instruction. However, due to intense opposition from the non-public school community, an April 8, 2005 statement was released by the Governor's Office announcing that the proposal was being withdrawn.

The agency was first named the "Office of Non-Public Schools." In 1976, it was re-named the "Division of Non-Public Schools"; in 1979, it became the "Office of Non-Public Education"; and then, the "Division of Non-Public Education" in 1985.

The title initially assigned to the person serving as the head of this state government agency was "Supervisor." In 1969, it was changed to "Coordinator" and in 1976 to "Director." Then, "Coordinator" again in 1979; and finally back to "Director" in 1985.

Supervisors of the agency over the years include:

Samuel C. Stell 1961-1962
Ben H. Hackney, Jr. 1962-1964
Calvin L. Criner 1964-1985
Rod W. Helder 1985-2010
Chená T. Flood 2010-2016
Diane Allen 2016-2018
Chená T. Flood 2018-2022
Bobby J. Dixon 2023-Present

During its first 24 years, the division dealt exclusively with private K-12 schools. However, its workload changed dramatically in May of 1985 after the North Carolina Supreme Court announced its decision in the Delconte Case which, in effect, legalized home instruction programs as non-public schools. The 1988 North Carolina General Assembly later enacted the state's first home school statutes as House Bill 837. In July of 1998, the North Carolina General Assembly added oversight of the State of North Carolina's new student Driving Eligibility Certificate (DEC) program for non-public school enrollees to the division's duties.

The agency has had numerous physical locations over the years. Since 1985, its offices were housed at 532 North Wilmington Street, 530 North Wilmington Street and 116 West Jones Street in Raleigh. The agency has had the same (919) 733-4276 telephone number since 1976. About 1993, the division began utilizing home school volunteers to assist with filing and mailing tasks – “freeing up” staff to handle the increasing volume of incoming telephone calls and mail, due to the continuous home school growth. It added its automated phone attendant system in 1995. It entered the internet age in 1997 by launching its 2 first web site, which has become a very convenient and efficient means of providing information to the non-public education community and the general public. Further technological history was made in August of 2009. At that time, DNPE launched its first interactive web page which allowed home school administrators to file their annual home school reports online instead of mailing them to DNPE. In May of 2010, it added a second one which now provides new home school administrators the opportunity to register their new home schools online. More such interactive web pages will follow.

The agency has always operated with a very small, but efficient and professional, staff. It finally increased to five persons in 2006. Today, it monitors compliance of both private K-12 schools as well as home schools throughout North Carolina to the North Carolina non-public education statutes. To view the number of private K-12 schools monitored by the staff over the years of its existence, [click here](#).

To view the number of homes schools over the years, [click here](#). To learn how the division monitors home schools, [click here](#) and then [here](#).

For additional information, read "Why is DNPE a part of DOA instead of DPI." Historical information about non-public schools (including the first directory of schools published in 1962) is accessible from our North Carolina's Non-Public Education Heritage section.

