



Expensive-to-maintain air conditioning equipment at Coulwood Middle, built in 1960, would be replaced as part of the bond issue that is before voters Nov. 5. Details on where the bond money would be spent were published in the Sept. 26 *Educate!*, available at [www.educateclt.org](http://www.educateclt.org). See page 2 of this issue for stories about an Oct. 23 rally in support of the bonds, about an error in bond promotional materials, and about a video available for showing to your group.

## Inside

Supt. Jim Pughsley talks about the limits of the mentoring role, and the successes and challenges CMS faces. Page 5.

North Carolina doesn't rank too badly in study of funding low-income students' needs. Page 3.

Help needed reviewing financial structure of *Educate!* Page 6.

# To the comfort zone

## In Texas, study shows teachers transfer to find pupils who are easier to teach – and more like themselves

The reasons for the crisis in teacher turnover are not pretty.

According to a study of Texas teachers' decisions, teachers don't respond much to the small salary incentives that schools can offer in return for accepting difficult assignments.

They prefer to teach the kids who are easiest to teach.

They prefer kids of their own ethnicity.

And they shop around for teaching assignments until they attain those goals.

These are the conclusions in a research paper by three academics. They were studying a huge database containing information on essentially all Texas schoolteachers. They combined that data with the test scores and demographics of essentially all of their students.

The study may suggest the limits of public policy to deal with what most observers believe is the key to leaving no child behind.

With most teachers white and an increasing number of children being poor or of color, the study suggests that schools like Charlotte-Mecklenburg face practically insurmountable challenges, long-term, if they are to guarantee quality teaching at all schools and for all children.

"Why Public Schools Lose Teachers," published last October, was written by Eric Hanushek, John Kain and Steven Rivkin, all of them now at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Hanushek's work has been cited in the *Leandro* school finance lawsuit still pending in N.C. Superior

Court Judge Howard Manning's court.

The researchers' conclusions:

– Inexperienced teachers are twice as likely to leave teaching as more experienced ones, and four times more likely to move to another district.

– Teachers in urban districts are highly likely to move to suburban districts. And rookie teachers in urban districts are more likely to leave the profession than those in suburban districts.

– The teacher with less than 10 years experience moving to a new district must not be doing it for money: The apparent gain in annual salary averages 0.4%.

– Yet after adjusting actual salaries for cost of living and so forth, it's clear that salary may play a bigger role than 0.4%: The salary "loss" for the teacher moving from urban to suburban districts turns, after adjustment, into a salary increase of 1.4%. And the modest salary hikes among teachers switching to another suburban district triple.

– Little or no evidence came to light suggesting that smaller class sizes decrease turnover.

– So what's the reason for turnover? "Teachers systematically favor higher achieving, non-minority, non-low income students."

For all teachers, student achievement at the teacher's new location averages 3 percentage points higher, the percentage of black students drops 2.5 percentage points, Hispanic students drop by 5 percentage points, and

Continued on Page 4

# Rally Oct. 23 for bonds, city's 'can-do' agenda

*The writer is group vice president for education at the Charlotte Chamber.*

At the Chamber's board retreat last year there was a lot of discussion about how we go about making decisions in our community. There was also a lot of discussion about building a standard of living agenda.

On Oct. 23 from 5:30 till 7:30 p.m. at the Wachovia Atrium, 301 S. Tryon St. we're holding a rally to unveil that agenda as well as come together around the bond referenda. We need your help in building attendance for this event.

Help us to rally community consensus for:

- Passing the CMS School Bonds
- Passing the Charlotte Affordable Housing Bonds
- Passing the City Road Improvement Bonds, and
- Launching the Charlotte Chamber's Standard of Living

## ***Educate!*** is a journal on public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen interested in the welfare of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

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## From Readers

Agenda, a 10-point plan to help financially vulnerable families throughout our community.

Please communicate to your constituencies and urge them to bring their families. It'll be fun and a great way to show that our community is as "can do" as it ever has been!

Kit Cramer

## Observer tracks down, reports on a bad school bond campaign number

The Charlotte Observer Saturday reported that campaign literature for the Nov. 5 bond campaign contained a number for projected student enrollment in 2010-11 that is higher than the actual projection.

Observer reporter Ann Helms says county commissioner Jim Puckett raised the issue, suggesting that a "more than 160,000 students" reference "appeared to come from nowhere."

The actual projection for 2010-2011 is 149,399 and for 2011-2012 is 158,460. The latter number was rounded up, then misapplied to the wrong year, the Observer reported.

The Observer said that three days after public information director Jerri Haigler acknowledged the error, Supt. Jim Pughsley was still using the erroneous number in a speech to real estate agents and homebuilders.

What had initially been destined to be reported next Sunday in a larger package about the bonds got split off and was reported last Saturday, Helms said,

"because it got so complicated and bizarre, especially with Dr. Pughsley emphasizing the too-high number even after Jerri had acknowledged it was wrong."

Potential damage from the use of the wrong number has nothing to do with CMS's projections, the number of students that ultimately will be in CMS, or even the need for the bonds, since use of bond money is based on the correct projection, not the "rounded up" number used in the bond campaign literature.

The potential damage is to the credibility of the bond campaign effort with the public.

The bad number had not been used in *Educate!*. But a fact sheet from the bond campaign that contained the bad number has been inserted into a four-page reprint of the Sept. 12 *Educate!* The reprint lists where school bond issue dollars will be spent.

That reprint was shared with PTA groups at West Meck High and McAlpine, Lincoln Heights, Idlewild and Winterfield elementaries.

## Bonds: The 'home movie'

Using pictures taken for *Educate!*, The Swann Fellowship has developed an eight-minute video on the bond issue, and it's available to show from your TV when you gather a group of friends.

To schedule a showing and discussion, call Steve Johnston at 704-342-4330, or message him at [swannfello@aol.com](mailto:swannfello@aol.com).

# Study shows N.C. gaining on school funding disparity

North Carolina doesn't fare too badly in a study of how the states treat the more expensive educational needs of low-income students.

The Education Trust, in an August paper titled, "The Funding Gap," finds that, nationwide in the year 2000, districts with highest poverty rates were, on average, getting \$966 less per student in state and local resources than the districts with the lowest poverty rates. For North Carolina, the figure is \$114 less, as shown in the chart at the right.

The national figure is down, meaning better, by 5% from \$1,139 in 1997. The North Carolina figure is down 72%, from \$413.

But looking just at state resources, the study found many states make things worse for minority-heavy districts. New York, Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky and New York spend more than \$1,000 per student *less* on high-minority districts than on low-minority districts. Conversely, a few states like Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island spend more than \$1,000 per student *more* on high-minority districts. Nationwide, the number is \$27 more per student in high-minority districts. In North Carolina, the state spending is \$103 less, according to the study.

During the Depression, North Carolina took over funding school operations statewide, leaving to localities only the construction of new buildings. One of the reasons North Carolina did reasonably well on the Education Trust study is because this state funding is doled out chiefly on a per-pupil basis. About 65% or so of most

## Poor kids and school resources

An Education Trust study in August identified the money available per pupil from state and local sources in the 25% of U.S. districts with the highest child poverty, compared those districts to the 25% with the lowest child poverty, then identified the funding gaps by state. So, in the list below, New York's districts with the highest child poverty have an average of \$2,152 less to spend per pupil than districts with the lowest child poverty. Conversely, Minnesota on average pumps an extra \$601 into its highest-poverty districts. Hawaii and D.C. have only one district, and other states are not listed because the poverty level disparity among districts was less than 25%.

New York	\$2,152	Nebraska	516	New Mexico	86
Illinois	2,060	Iowa	471	Arkansas	76
Montana	1,535	Ohio	394	Kansas	66
Pennsylvania	1,248	South Carolina	332	California	59
Michigan	1,103	Missouri	284	Florida	46
Alabama	991	Rhode Island	273	Connecticut	6
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>966</b>	Indiana	210	Georgia	-6
Vermont	939	West Virginia	199	Oklahoma	-57
Maryland	912	South Dakota	171	Kentucky	-133
Virginia	885	Idaho	157	Nevada	-280
Arizona	845	Wisconsin	151	New Jersey	-324
Louisiana	793	Maine	148	Oregon	-371
New Hampshire	733	Washington	145	Utah	-422
Wyoming	715	Mississippi	133	Tennessee	-497
Colorado	587	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>114</b>	Massachusetts	-530
Texas	518	North Dakota	93	Minnesota	-601

Source: Education Trust

school districts' operations money continues to come from the state.

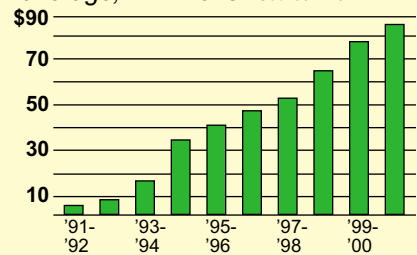
Since the Depression, counties have been adding supplements to the state funding. Local funding is tied to the local property tax, and varies widely depending on the wealth of the local district.

In poor counties, where the tax base will not support large supplements, the N.C. General Assembly a decade or so ago began providing supplemental funding. The bar chart on this page traces the growth of that supplemental effort, which has helped narrow the gap between rich and poor districts. But the project is still underfunded by \$40 million or so annually, according to the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

The Education Trust's results differ from, say, a Census Bureau report. That's in part because statisticians took into account the

### N.C. low-wealth supplement

Growth of funding to schools in 73 counties whose ability to generate revenue per student is below state average, in millions. Source: N.C. DPI



higher cost of educating low-income children. But as the study concludes:

"Dollars do matter, and inequality in the distribution of dollars sends a strong signal about the distribution of the critical resources that money can buy."

## Texas teachers move toward own culture

Continued from Page 1

the subsidized lunch numbers drop by 6.6 percentage points.

Among those teachers who move from urban to suburban districts, the changes are even larger: a 14 percentage-point increase in achievement, and drops in racial and ethnic concentrations of 15-20 percent.

Teachers moving from one suburban district to another achieve similar though smaller changes in these student characteristics.

– Teachers moving within urban districts choose schools such that they achieve a “substantial” increase in achievement and declines in minority and poor students. They “appear to seek out schools with fewer academically and economically disadvantaged students.”

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, this was the pattern that led former Supt. Eric Smith in his 1999 “Achieving the CMS Vision” document to propose involuntary teacher transfers to achieve balance in faculty diversity, experience and training at all schools. Under pressure from teachers, Smith dropped the idea.

– White and Hispanic teachers gravitate in similar directions. But black teachers tend to move to schools with higher black enrollments. The authors speculate on the reasons: In cities with segregated residential patterns, a desire to teach close to home might be a cause. Another possible cause, they write, would be district policies pressuring black teachers to move to black schools.

Another researcher puts it this way: “Anglos like teaching Anglos and Asians, Hispanics like teaching Hispanics and Anglos, and blacks prefer teaching blacks. All teachers appear to move in ways

that increase the ethnic congruence of teachers and students.”

– Turnover differences are “most dramatic” in connection with student achievement. More than 25% of teachers in bottom-quartile schools leave each year. The rate at top-quartile schools is less than 20%.

“These differences imply that the lowest-achieving students are more likely to have teachers new to the school and to the profession, and evidence from Texas strongly suggests that this will adversely affect achievement.”

– White flight among inexperienced teachers is a major component of turnover. “Increases in the campus proportion of students who are Hispanic or black raises the probability of exiting for these teachers, although similar to other variables the effects tend to decline with experience.”

– A pay raise of \$2,000 to \$3,000 would cut turnover only 3%. A small decrease in the achievement levels of a student body increases turnover. A 10% increase in Hispanic or black students in a school increases white teacher turnover by 1%-2%.

– Schools serving high proportions of either black or Hispanic children or academically disadvantaged children “may have to pay an additional 20, 30 or even 50% more in salary than those schools serving a predominantly white or Asian, academically well-prepared student body.”

In a June report, the National Task Force on the Future of Urban Districts sums up the challenges this way:

“Unless we confront the prevailing ways school districts bring in, develop, and manage their essential human resources, we may be conceding what is probably the best hope for improving schooling for the substantial share of students enrolled in large urban districts.

“How people are assigned, the

expectations and objectives they are working toward, the authority, responsibility, recognition, rewards and accountability they face, are what determine the management environment in which they are asked to perform their jobs....

“These are the critical variables that need to be examined to determine how best to create work environments in school districts that can ensure that the best quality people are available, fully utilized, and obtaining the best outcomes for all children.”

–  
*“Why Public Schools Lose Teachers” can be downloaded from [www.utdallas.edu/dept/socsci/working\\_papers/index.html](http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/socsci/working_papers/index.html)*

### Comments?

Comments from teachers and parents on the above study are welcome. Message [swannfello@aol.com](mailto:swannfello@aol.com). Leave a voice message at 704-342-4330. Or write Educate! at 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204-2410.

The principal of a school with more than 500 students addressed the 50 or so parents who showed up at the PTA meeting.

The speech went like this:

“We need you here. We NEED you here....”

“Please come volunteer ... do anything you see that needs doing. We need you here...”

“We need our parents here.... I am so disappointed in the lack of parent support.... We need your support.”

*Send us your story. For addresses, see page 2.*

Story  
 Corner

# Pughsley on limits of mentoring, CMS's successes – and challenges

The super's story was nominally about a high school kid sporting a doo rag on his head. But it was really about respect – and the patience needed to help kids grow.

Supt. Jim Pughsley, impeccably dressed as always, had addressed a citizen training session Wednesday and was taking questions. A member of the audience asked about the Phoenix Club at Myers Park High.



Pughsley

Pughsley responded that Phoenix had been created by a school employee who works with students at risk of dropping out. Named for the fabled bird that rises, youthfully renewed out of its own ashes, the club encourages students "to look out for one another," Pughsley said. "They support each other.... That's the concept we want. That's the concept that will make the difference in our schools."

Pughsley said a friend encouraged a high school senior to sit down with Pughsley. The African American student, whose SAT scores are just short of a perfect 1,600, showed up in a doo rag, a violation of dress code at high school, though perhaps not at the Education Center. "I think he was testing me," Pughsley said. "I didn't say anything, but I did notice."

The student does not plan to go to college. He'll join the military, maybe go to college during military service or afterward.

"There is so much more he could do," Pughsley pleaded. "But you have to be careful how you talk because you can push them away from you...."

"He has to deal with his peers. Sometimes he gets beat up over who he relates to – and who he doesn't relate to.

"There are a lot of kids like that

out there. That's why we have to have open access to our higher-level classes. You have to have that opportunity to let them show what they can do."

In his speech, Pughsley touched on the following topics:

**Budget:** The \$20.7 million cut this month was on top of \$22 million redirected last spring.

"We can do that once, we can think about it a second time, but we can't continue to do that without having an impact on the classroom and the equity initiatives we put in place."

**Achievement at high-poverty schools:** "Yes, there is less diversity... not all related to the choice plan, but the choice plan is one of the drivers...."

"These students were achieving wherever they were last year. They will achieve this year. We are going to do what's right by them. Principals understand that because they've been told that.

"All too often we try to place high expectations on the students themselves.... We have an obligation as adults. It's our business. We have a responsibility to remove those barriers that may cause those students not to learn."

**Bonds:** The Nov. 5 bond issue will keep money flowing to a long-term renewal "for growth, for equity, and for operations. It's awfully important. If we miss a beat it's two or three years that it throws us off."

**Comfort with goals:** The 2001 goals set in the mid-'90s left people with a "blank look" because they were unfamiliar, and seemed so far away. Today, "it's a different thought pattern as a result of past success. We have built a critical mass and we have a clear direction."

**Partners:** Support from business and other groups helps dis-

## SAT gap: Another view

*North Carolina lags the nation in average SAT scores. Not news. But N.C. students who have an A+ average also lag the nation's other A+ students. The details, as presented Wednesday by the Public School Forum:*

N.C. student grade average	Points below similar U.S. students
A+	34
A	61
A-	45
B	29
C	22
D or below	15

tinguish CMS from less successful urban school districts. "But I warn you that CMS could become [like them] if we allow it to. There are a lot of people depending on us. I know 109,000 of them."

**Open Court:** The unified approach to reading had its detractors last year, but not now. "Success cures a lot of things."

**Bright Beginnings:** Scores show 4-year-olds graduating from the program are more ready for kindergarten. But "we've got to put in place proper scaffolding" to support those children in later grades so the gains are not lost.

**Underperformers:** One high school has corralled its below-grade-level ninth-graders into an on-site academy. Electives are eliminated to create time to focus on the basics. The tradeoff, Pughsley said, is "so they have more opportunities when they leave the ninth grade."

Wednesday's "Citizen Leader in Public Education" conference was sponsored by Charlotte Advocates for Education, CMS and the Public School Forum of N.C. and drew about 50 people.

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## Briefs

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**Budget deficit:** Prince George's County, Maryland, overspent last year's \$1 billion budget by as much as \$10.5 million, the Washington Post reported. The superintendent blames principals for unauthorized hiring of per-diem teachers. An official of the principals union blames the superintendent's human resources department.

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

**No textbooks:** While many school systems don't have textbooks for all students because of fund shortages, Sun Valley Charter High School in Ramona, Calif., has no textbooks because they used the money to buy computers instead, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. Students without computers at home can use on-campus machines after school.

[www.suntimes.com](http://www.suntimes.com)

**More vouchers:** Milwaukee's voucher program totals 11,750, up 868 or more than 7% from last year, the Journal Sentinel reported. While some schools joined the program, there was a net drop in participating schools.

[www.jsonline.com](http://www.jsonline.com)

**Too pricey:** Suburban districts east of the city are losing students, the Seattle Times reported. Systems ranging in size from 2,700 to 25,000 blamed lower housing costs in adjoining counties, and empty nesters deciding to stay in their homes.

[www.seattletimes.com](http://www.seattletimes.com)

**Adjusting standards:** The states have begun redefining "proficient" as they face federal pressure to have all students proficient in reading and math by 2013-14, Education Week reported. Louisiana will use its assessment level of "basic." Connecticut will create a "goal" level below its current "proficient" level.

## Reviewing *Educate!*'s financial structure

The Swann Fellowship seeks volunteer assistance from business and nonprofit professionals as it re-examines its financial structure.

The publisher of *Educate!* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, with obligations to the IRS to advocate for and nurture public awareness of the needs of this community's public schools. The journal, published in partial fulfillment of those obligations, is distributed free both on the Web at [www.educateclt.org](http://www.educateclt.org) and to more than 2,000 subscribers via e-mail.

The Fellowship has depended on undesignated donations to finance the journal. But the current fund-raising environment is not providing the level of donations required to ensure continued publication.

Persons interested in assisting in this review should call Steve Johnston at the Fellowship's office at 704-342-4330 or message [swannfello@aol.com](mailto:swannfello@aol.com)

Colorado will count its "partially proficient" students as proficient for federal purposes. Experts said that NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, will end up being the only way to assess states' real educational progress. All states must participate in NAEP testing beginning next year. NAEP is a sampling test: Only a small number of students per state take it.

[www.edweek.com](http://www.edweek.com)

**Wise hired:** Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Supt. Eric Smith named Joey Wise an associate superintendent to oversee data collection and school improvement goals, the Baltimore Sun reported. Wise, who worked for Smith at CMS, was an unsuccessful candidate for the top job in Rock Hill, S.C., last summer. Smith's board also approved \$2 million to put a window air conditioner in every classroom.

[www.sunspot.net](http://www.sunspot.net)

**Insufficient oversight:** Standard school audits are not detailed enough to catch insider theft by Michigan school officials, the Detroit Free Press reported. In one recent allegation, for example, a manager placed money in small bank accounts used for training, then embezzled the money. The theft fell below auditors' radar.

[www.freep.com](http://www.freep.com)

**Fewer magnets:** While 12 elementary magnet schools in St. Paul, Minnesota were oversubscribed this fall (one admitted only 39% of applicants), the school board is considering cutting the number of magnets, the Pioneer Press reported. Similar discussions have begun in CMS.

[www.twincities.com](http://www.twincities.com)

**Test standard:** Virginia celebrated rising pass rates on its Standards of Learning tests, which included a U.S. history rate of 72%, up from 47% last year. But the Times-Dispatch pointed out that the state board of education last spring cut the passing score from 40 points to 34 out of a possible 61.

[www.timesdispatch.com](http://www.timesdispatch.com)

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## Calendar

- 17** Finance, Capital and Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 22** Curriculum Committee, 3:30 p.m., Board Conference Room.
- 22** School board meeting, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 23** Rally for Community Consensus, an event in support of school bonds, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Wachovia Atrium, 301 S. Tryon St.