

Real children, really Left Behind

North Carolina uses its 10th-grade reading comprehension test for No Child Left Behind reporting purposes. The statistics below don't account for every student, but they give some indication of the hundreds of CMS students likely to leave school underprepared for life.

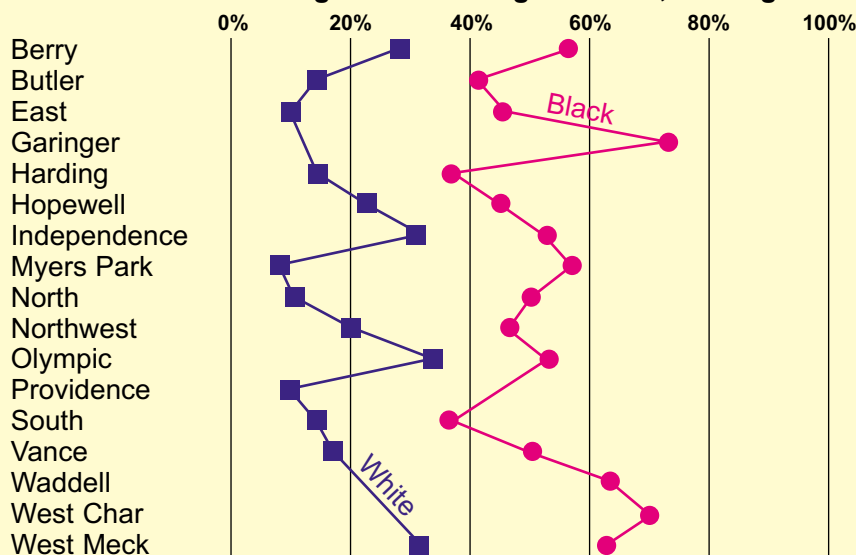
The first chart below lists the number of real live 10th-graders in four subgroups reading below grade level last year. Subgroups are not reported when there are fewer than 40 students in the subgroup. Students may be reported in more than one subgroup.

The second chart notes the percentage of students tested in two subgroups at each high school who were reading below grade level.

NUMBER of 10th-graders below grade level, reading

	White	Hispanic	Black	FRL
Berry	11		166	124
Butler	60		41	35
East	23	22	104	76
Garinger		32	149	127
Harding	8		93	56
Hopewell	73		59	20
Independence	66		175	120
Myers Park	37		71	54
North	48		80	51
Northwest	12		29	
Olympic	43	26	75	68
Providence	49			
South	56	28	32	44
Vance	22		154	77
Waddell			78	70
West Char			198	130
West Meck	26		93	78

PERCENTAGE of 10th-graders below grade level, reading



Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction <http://disag.ncpublicschools.org/2004/>

Grand opening

Board member applauds principal training, morale among staff in CMS

No school opening will be flawless, but the report Tuesday night showed Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools off and running well.

All but 14 of more than 7,000 teaching positions were filled on opening day.

And school board member George Dunlap said spirits have improved.

"There was one that that seemed to resonate everywhere I went," he said.

"The teachers as I talked to them seemed to have clearer direction as to what their expectations were.

"And everybody seemed to have a real positive attitude – which is unlike what I've seen before. And I was extremely impressed with that.

But Dunlap said he was "even more impressed... with the new administrators, with the fact that the some of the new administrators who have been assigned just recently appear to be operating as if they had much more experience being the principal than they do.

"And I think that is a tribute to the kinds of training they have received this summer in the Principal Academy and other places. I think this district will be the better because of it."

If school opening was relatively smooth, board member Molly Griffin said a parent had an idea to make next year's even better: Recruiting and then training par-

Continued on Page 3

It's not that boys don't read...

Michael Sullivan in "Why Johnny Won't Read," published by the *School Library Journal*:

"Boys read comic books, baseball cards, and cereal boxes. They are less likely to read books; and when they do, they often don't read the ones we want them to. There are many reasons for this, but the biggest one relates to role models.

"Boys identify with the men in their lives, and males, in general, don't read as many books as women. A 1996 study ... shows that mothers are 10 times more likely to read books than fathers. On the other hand, dads are 10 times more likely to read newspapers than moms. What's the significance of this?

"Developmentally, boys view the world as a place filled with rules and tools, and their job is to understand how it works in order to get things done. Newspapers, helpful how-to manuals, and other brief, informative texts address this need admirably. But they don't provide boys with the sustained, language-rich reading experiences they need to become mature readers."

— www.schoollibraryjournal.com

Afterschool plaudits

Guilford Supt. Terry Grier credits afterschool programs for helping his district close academic achievement gaps, the *Afterschool Observer* reported.

Guilford made afterschool mandatory five years ago for low-performing students. Scores for blacks, Hispanics and whites have risen in every subject and at all grades in that time. The third-grade math gap has been halved.

The *Afterschool Observer* quoted Grier as saying, "I certainly have a degree of satisfaction that all of us pulling together have made great progress."

CMS operates programs at all elementaries and 16 middle schools. The *Afterschool Observer* is published by the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs.

Educate! is a journal on public education focusing on Charlotte-Mecklenburg and N.C. Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen.

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People: Leonard R. (Deacon) Jones, president; Lucy Bush Carter, vice president; Steve Johnston, executive director and *Educate!* editor; Beth Kinny, outreach director. Assisting with this edition: Stephanie Southworth.

Wake FRL percentages vary some from goal

The writer, a member of the Wake County Board of Education, is a candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I read with great interest your compilation of ideas for improving educational outcomes in CMS (*Educate!*, Aug. 20).

One writer mentioned the Wake student assignment policy.

Our goal is to have no more than 40% free or reduced-price lunch students, and no more than 25% Level I and Level II students in any school.

It is, however, a goal and the realities of distance and housing patterns do affect actual student populations.

As a result, schools in Wake range from below 10% F&R to above 60% F&R, but none has more than 25% below grade level.

This assignment strategy is supported by differentiated funding based on the number of students below grade level. In

round numbers, the principal is allocated one additional month of employment of a certified teacher for every 10 children below grade level. This amounts to providing 20 additional days of instruction in a 1:10 teacher-to-student ratio for students in need of additional help. Additional time with teachers occurs before and/or after school and on Saturdays. Transportation is provided.

It takes a combination of strategies to achieve academic success with all students and each district must decide for itself what that set of strategies will include.

Bill Fletcher

From Readers

Correction

A chart in *Educate!* Aug. 20 misstated two schools' percentage of AYP targets met in 2004. Bain and Davidson elementaries made 100% of their No Child Left Behind targets.

School opening

Continued from Page 1

ent volunteers to field phone calls. "One of the biggest problems is not being able to get through because of the volume of calls," she said.

In his report to the board on school opening, Supt. Jim Pughsley gave a partial report on Title 1 transfers.

Sixteen schools had to offer parents transfers because the schools had not made Annual Yearly Progress for two years in a row under the U.S. No Child Left Behind law.

About 8,200 students were eligible. Of those, 1,291 sought transfers. Of the 1,291, 658 had, through Monday, accepted a new assignment, while 479 refused it and remained at their original school. The remaining 154 students' cases were still pending and are in school at their original school, Pughsley said.

Through Monday, then, about 8% of the students eligible for transfer had done so, Pughsley said.

Transportation staff have been working weekends and will continue to until issues are resolved. "Each day that passes, the whole thing with transportation is a bit better than the previous day."

On staffing, Pughsley said 92% of schools opened fully staffed, with only 14 teaching positions at 11 schools vacant on the first day. The district hires on the order of 1,000 teachers every year.

But some teachers are on the move, as staffing is brought in line with student enrollment. Pughsley said staff were moving at the high schools, as well as at the schools that received transfers from Title 1 schools. He did not give details.

Some mobile units will also be moving.

Late-arriving math textbooks are now being delivered to schools, and Pughsley said CMS would meet its internal goal of having all textbooks in students' hands by the 10th day (the end of the second week of school.)

The saga of Oaklawn continues. After the 1950s center city school was substantially rebuilt, it became clear that there weren't enough children in the neighborhood to populate an 800-seat school. The board approved a French-Spanish language immersion magnet, then also agreed with educators that the immersion program would work best for students if the school was phased in – opening with 200 kindergartners through second-graders this fall. Pughsley reported an enrollment of 185, 154 in Spanish and 31 in French. For now, the rest of the seats sit empty because the board would not bus students to relieve overcrowded schools to the north.

The Early College program at underutilized Waddell High has a goal after phase-in of 100 students at each grade 9-12. Pughsley reported enrollment through Monday of 84 ninth-graders, 26 10th-graders, 22 11th-graders, and six 12th-graders.

Pughsley characterized both programs as having "gotten off to a very strong start. They will be supported throughout the year so we can realize the goals as we had set out."

CMS this week also received a \$5.6 million federal grant to support training and materials for six schools involved in three magnet programs.

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New inside old: Reusing existing buildings tough

In districts that are growing, school officials are looking to commercial and industrial buildings to meet some schoolhouse needs.

But the concept is no panacea.

Earlier this month, Wake County's school board purchased two office buildings on U.S. 64 and will convert one into a 150-student alternative school (read: no playground or ball fields needed). One of the district's newest middle schools (pictured at right) was built into an Apex manufacturing facility.

CMS is looking at using an existing building that will be surrounded by a proposed housing development, according to Guy Chamberlain, assistant superintendent for building services. The structure would require an addition, but the structure is of satisfactory quality. "It might be practical," he says.

Many buildings don't meet two tests: quality and location.



Lufkin Road Middle School, opened last year by Wake County Schools, was built in an Apex manufacturing building.

Most retail buildings, Chamberlain says, are concrete slabs surrounded by uninsulated block walls topped off with a roof. Such buildings can be more expensive to upfit for a schoolhouse than starting fresh.

And most of the vacant commercial buildings are in neighborhoods where there are existing schools – or few children. A case in point is the Wilkinson Boulevard corridor in west Charlotte.

"Why would I want to build a school in strip center when I have empty seats a half-mile away?"

But Chamberlain is open to discussions with landowners. "We will not overlook any opportunities."

Particularly in cases like the one Wake County just acted on – a special program that doesn't need a big parking lot and ball fields.

About that, says Chamberlain, "stay tuned."

Needed: A new community consensus on juggling capital projects

The next go-round of school bonds is going to reopen a thorny issue: How do Mecklenburg people want to balance two demands on school bond financing?

One demand is the need to build new schools to serve a burgeoning school-age population.

The other demand is for renovation money to keep older buildings in repair and to reshape them as the district's needs change over time.

During the '70s, enrollment wasn't growing much, and the few dollars available went mostly to renovations. As growth took off during the '80s, renovation took a back seat to building new seats. That left parents in older schools fuming.

So by the mid-'90s there was a new consensus: Split the baby, and give half the money to renovation, half to new schools.

Most big school districts don't have this balancing problem. Chicago, Philadelphia and others are

closing schools.

Today, says CMS building chief Guy Chamberlain, this district's backlogged needs include \$800 million in new schools, and \$500 million in renovation projects. The district has shown it's able to manage a maximum of about \$200 million in construction work a year. The growth needs are mostly on the rim of the county. And many of the renovation needs are there also.

Growth and renovation will probably continue to depend on bonds until N.C. legislators offer another financing tool.

Shall we split the baby eight parts to five? Continue the 50-50 rule? Risk citizen upheaval by leaning further one direction or the other? Is there a national model for how to settle the issue?

Send your thoughts to be shared with *Educate!* readers to swannfello@aol.com.

Some lessons in good schoolin,' mountain-style

My summer travels included enough time in the Western N.C. mountains and a Waynesville bookstore to acquire "Haywood County Schoolin': A Rich Heritage."

This 1992, 541-page, spiral-bound volume compiles the reminiscences of those who taught and studied in Haywood County's numerous small, rural schools from about 1809 onward.

I'll spare you the tales of one-room schoolhouses, miles-long walks morning and evening, and the children's excitement at their first hearing of an airplane overhead. But some of the history I found thought-provoking:

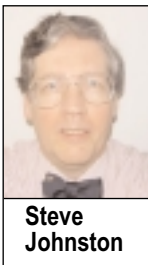
– Ruth Shipman recalls having a roomful of Bethel School's poor readers in 1968; another teacher had a roomful of excellent readers. The teachers combined their classes and added additional books and games to the rooms. After a year of the good readers helping the poor readers, "it was astounding at the end of the year how the vocabularies had grown."

Reading levels had risen an average 2.8 years, with some improving 3.2 years in a single year.

– Peachtree School in Maggie Valley is now a church (photo). While it was a school from 1927 to 1935, writes Lorena Mehaffey McKay, "if a child happened to be absent from class due to an illness, their homework was taken to them by the teacher."

– Aileen Ezell found records that showed overcrowded North Canton School, around 1920, running split shifts – half the first-graders coming in the morning, the rest in the afternoon. Teachers working just one shift taught 50-60 students. Teachers that worked two shifts "often instructed up to one hundred fifty first graders daily."

– Canton grammar school Principal J.N. Freeman "was highly praised for his work in demoting



Steve Johnston



<http://discovermaggievalley.com>

Methodists now use old Peachtree School on Jonathan Creek in Maggie Valley. The Blue Ridge Parkway hugs the ridge in the background.

a large number of 'over-promoted' students— some being demoted as much as three grade levels," Ezell wrote. The demotions helped the school maintain its accreditation.

– During the Depression, North Canton had 1,000 students in 22 classrooms. My calculator says that's 45 per classroom.

– School hours were generally 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., not today's shortened six-hour day.

– One oft-reported discipline involved ordering a student for some minutes to touch nose to blackboard inside a chalk circle drawn by the teacher.

– Sara Martin writes about attending one-room Francis Cove School beginning in 1905. The one teacher had 50-60 pupils. And the teacher "was a high school graduate, having attended summer school for a six-week term conducted by the county superintendent which qualified one to teach in the country schools."

– Writing about Lake Junaluska School in the '20s and '30s, Ruth Noland describes a program written by fifth-graders involving the following characters they had learned about in their history class: Leif Erickson, Columbus, Magellan, DeSoto, Balboa, Coronado, Ponce de Leon, John and Sebastian Cabot, Samuel de Champlain, John Smith, Pocohontas, Mary Chilton and John and Priscilla Alden. Parents of CMS sixth-graders: Did your kids meet all these people last school year?

– Bessie Evans recalls a 6-year-old in the 1930s at Bethel School

who "each morning... had a headache and was often listless and uninterested in school work. One day it occurred to me – maybe she did not have breakfast. I took her to the lunchroom and asked the ladies to fix her a good wholesome breakfast and I'd pay for it. They did and each morning she would stop by the lunchroom before coming on to her room. There were no more headaches, her grades improved and there was a happy little girl."

Much has improved in school. Fewer children have headaches from malnutrition. Teacher training has changed markedly. And the curriculum has broadened and deepened. But has the personal touch kept pace? Can you imagine having your ailing child's homework brought to the house by a teacher?

Or can you imagine helping build your child's school, as many of the parents of rural Haywood did a century ago?

There aren't too many comments in this book about lack of parental disengagement. What the writers remember is that their parents seemed to know when they'd been bad at school, and heaped a second whipping on top of the first!

One last observation. We don't know much of Mecklenburg's early school history. Longtime CMS official Chris Folk knows of no Mecklenburg effort similar to the Haywood County Schools History Book Committee that produced "Haywood County Schoolin.'" That's our loss.

Group offers training for education advocacy

A Raleigh nonprofit is offering a free training opportunity to parents and community members determined to make “public education the best that it can be for all students.”

The 30-hour, four-weekend program will be held in Rocky Mount, and will be led by the N.C. Justice Center’s Education and Law Project. Topics include:

- How federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) can be used to maximize access to education.

- How to change local practices and policies around short-term and long-term school suspensions.

- What the Leandro court decision means to North Carolina’s children and how to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to receive the sound basic education mandated by the N.C. constitution.

- What questions to ask, and what questions not to ask, at parent-teacher conferences.

The workshop is offered at no cost to participants. The Justice Center will provide workshop materials, food, accommodations and a small stipend to help with your travel expenses.

Dates are Saturday, Oct. 23, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 12, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 13, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 20, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The location in Rocky Mount will be announced later.

Applicants should be able to attend all four days.

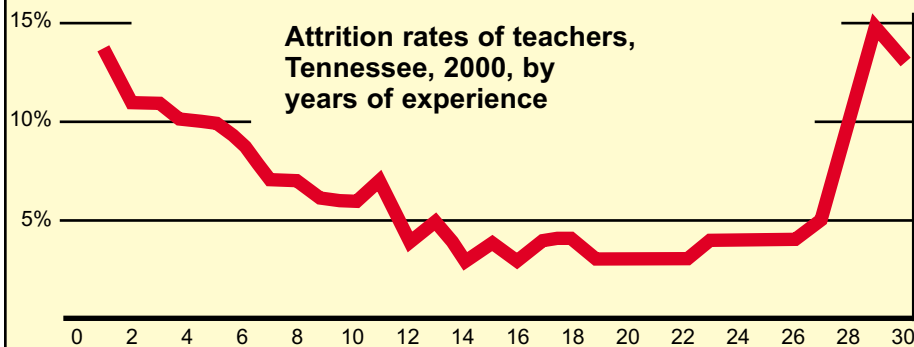
To apply:

E-mail: angella@ncjustice.org. Please indicate in the subject line that you are registering for ELI.

Fax: Include name, phone, and mailing address and e-mail address to 919-856-2175.

Phone: Call Jenny at 919-856-2164 and provide her with your name, phone, and mailing address and e-mail address.

Highly qualified teacher may be on TV screen



Lynn Cornett, in “Resolve and Resources to Get a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom”:

“Do you know how many teachers in your state need to be replaced each year because they leave? How many of them have taught five years or less?”

“The pattern in Tennessee is likely typical of that in most [Southern Regional Education Board] states. In 2000 in Tennessee, the number of teachers with five or fewer years of experience who left the classroom was 2,325 – almost exactly the same as the total number of teachers with 11 or more years of experience who quit teaching (2,336).

“In fact, 41% of a group of beginning teachers leave in Tennessee in the first five years. Teachers who have at least 10 years of experience leave at a rate of 5% annually. Retaining new teachers is a problem in Tennessee and all other SREB states.”

— — —

“SREB states cannot expect that every school will employ enough teachers who are highly qualified, particularly in hard-to-staff content areas, such as the foreign languages and advanced science and math. The lack of highly qualified teachers in these areas should not provide an excuse for school districts to hire underqualified teachers or to assign teachers to courses for which they do not have content preparation.

“If states and districts are to staff all classes with highly qualified, licensed teachers, they will need to rethink the way that courses are delivered. Expanding the ways that technology is used in schools will make the guarantee of a qualified teacher a reality in every middle grades and high school classroom. States will need to develop their own “virtual” high schools or identify ways to partner with others to deliver online courses.”

– www.sreb.org

Organizing workshops

The League of Women Voters and Democracy North Carolina will collaborate on free organizing workshops this fall.

Topics covered include organizing fundamentals for novices or as refreshers for veterans. Participants receive a toolkit with sample materials adaptable to work in a variety of areas.

Events are planned for Sept. 11 in New Bern and on dates to be set in Fayetteville, Rutherford County, Gaston/Cleveland and Warren/Vance.

To register or co-sponsor an event, call or e-mail Beth Messersmith at Democracy North Carolina, toll free at 1-888-687-8683 ext. 17 or bethmessersmith@democracy-nc.org.

Briefly...

Lowered bar, part 1: More Washington State schools are expected to meet No Child Left Behind requirements, the Seattle Times reported. One reason: changes in the accountability standards. An example: Graduation rate targets were lowered from 73% to 66%.

www.seattletimes.com

Lowered bar, part 2: Philadelphia schools made dramatic improvements in meeting federal No Child standards, as did schools across Pennsylvania, the Inquirer reported. State officials dropped the bar for graduation from 95% of the class to 80%, chiefly to benefit small schools. Philadelphia schools making adequate yearly progress zoomed from 58 or 22% in 2003 to 160 or 61% in 2004.

www.philly.com

Purple is "In": Teachers are moving from red pens to purple, the Boston Globe reported, because a marked-up paper "doesn't look as scary" when the corrections are in purple. The paper noted, "A mix of red and blue, the color purple embodies red's sense of authority but also blue's association with serenity..."

www.boston.com

Laptop nonadvantage: Critics of Maine's policy of giving laptops to all middle school students assert that it is "an expensive fad" and that recent test scores prove it, eSchoolNews reported. Test scores this year were about the same as those taken in the past by students without laptops. Proponents argue that the initiative is only three semesters old and despite the fact that teachers are still learning the technology, writing scores improved.

www.eschoolnews.com

Pledge v. First Amendment: Pennsylvania's attempt to contact parents of children who refuse to

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

6 Habitat for Humanity group service, 4 p.m., Plaza Presbyterian Church, 2304 The Plaza, to dedicate homes on Airport Drive, Allen Street, Centre Street, Deherradora Avenue, Eaton Circle, Golf Street and Matheson Avenue for new homeowners Mohammed Ali, Miro Boljanovic, Roberta Booker, Talinda Burton, Dong Chanthavong, Danh Doan, Salim Hadid, Andra Morrison, Alice Pendergrass, Safin Selzmovic,, Pamela Tillman and Talathia Woodard.

9 Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., 11th floor conference room, Government Center.

11 Candidate forum for statewide offices and the at-large county commissioners race, 3 p.m., Citiside Club House, 4500 Eaves Lane. Sponsors: Acorn, NAACP, Democracy North Carolina and the League of Women Voters. Information: Doris Nurllah 704-537-4297.

NOVEMBER

17 Cheryl Brown Henderson and Linda Brown Thompson to discuss *Brown v. Board*, 7 p.m., Dana Auditorium, Guilford College, Greensboro. The Brown sisters are daughters of the lead plaintiff in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 1954.

say the pledge of allegiance was struck down by the state's highest court, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported. The mandate was an attempt to promote patriotism, but the court ruled that it violated students' freedom of speech.

www.philly.com

Ultimate exit: Twenty states are now requiring high school exit exams for graduation, the Christian Science Monitor reported. Many educators are concerned that, given the test score gap between whites and the poor and minorities, the increased reliance on exit exams may push more students to drop out of school. Indiana's white-black gap on exit exam scores is more than 40 percentage points.

www.csmonitor.com

Less service: The California Performance Review team is recommending condensing the current 58 county Boards of Education into 11 supercenters, which would each oversee a larger number of districts, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Although the plan would save the state \$45 million a year and eliminate 80 jobs, many believe the

reduction in personal service the districts receive from the county would be "the difference between going to Nordstrom vs. Kmart".

www.sfgate.com

Immersion wars: Arizona officials commissioned a study that found that non-English speaking students who attended English immersion classes outperformed the more expensive bilingual education students. Scores were high for immersion students in English, language and math and in every grade level between second and eighth, the Arizona Republic reported. The difference in scores increased over time and by eighth grade, the immersion students were a year or more ahead in all three subjects.

www.azcentral.com

Schools & housing: Believing that good schools attract buyers, Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, a developer of affordable housing, is partnering with several schools near their housing complexes in Baltimore, CNN told its readers. Last summer the company renovated Kelson Elementary so it could convert to a K-8 school. The

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Briefly

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departing principal said that the "improvements... made it easier for her school to raise test scores." www.cnn.com

NCLB overhaul?: Critics of NCLB are proposing amendments to the act which would give credit for school growth and provide measures of student performance other than test scores, Education Week reported. Many believe the expectations and performance targets are unreasonable and should be modified. www.edweek.org.

Dating older boys: A survey found that it is dangerous for girls to date older boys in high school, the Washington Post reported. Girls with boyfriends two or more years older were six times more likely to drink and use marijuana than girls who dated closer to their age. www.washingtonpost.com

Adequacy lawsuits: According to the American Association of School Administrators, 25 states are either fighting lawsuits or threatened with litigation similar to North Carolina's long-running Leandro lawsuit regarding school funding levels, CNN told its readers. Small, rural and inner city districts are increasingly going without textbooks and air conditioning, while suburban schools are reducing extra teachers, such as those who teach art. www.cnn.com

At loggerheads: A report by Public Agenda, a New York based nonprofit, stated that nearly 80% of teachers report that either a student or parent has threatened them with legal action, the Arizona Republic reported. The report also found that 74% of parents and 82% of teachers believe that parents' lack of discipline in the home is the cause of children misbehaving at school. www.azcentral.com

Educate!

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DidYaHear?

✓ CMS Supt. Jim Pughsley Tuesday night reported a 6th-day enrollment for Monday of 116,929, up 4,486 or 4% from last year's sixth-day enrollment of 112,443. CMS's earlier projection for the 20th day was 117,561. Wake County Schools grew by 5,425 or 5.27% on its first day, and reportedly has kindergartners finishing lunch at 2:30 p.m. On its fourth day, CMS had 55,985 in elementaries, 27,129 in middle schools, 32,501 in high schools and 630 in special programs.

✓ CMS may have thousands more students, but it doesn't have any more local money than it did last year, or the year before – or the year before that. Pughsley had hoped for \$25 million more than last year, the board asked for about \$18 million, and commissioners offered nothing more in regular operating money. So, Pughsley told the board, he will be back Sept. 14 with a pared-down budget. Will the proposal make cuts that will rattle cages and rekindle public support for the schools' needs? Ending a sport or two, for example? Probably not: Pughsley just chuckled a fortnight ago when confronted with that suggestion.

✓ Pughsley also said he would return Sept. 14 with a plan for the so-called "high school challenge." Commissioners put \$6 million in contingency awaiting a proposal showing how CMS would use that amount of money to improve achievement at several high schools.

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com