

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Quote of the Week

When the public is asked to rank professions in order of which they respect, lobbyists rarely fare well. There might be a reason. Following is Kevin Geddings, the former lobbyist for Scientific Games who is on trial for not disclosing his links to the lobbying industry when appointed to the Lottery Commission, responding to why he didn't disclose that Scientific Games had been a client:

"It's like being a plastic surgeon and telling who you did nose jobs for," Geddings said.

NCCU Provost Places Professors At Durham High School

When N.C. Central University (NCCU) Provost Beverly Washington Jones learned that Durham's Southern High School was in danger of opening its school year without enough math and science teachers she quickly mobilized 13 members of NCCU's faculty, reports the *News & Observer*. The university faculty members reported to Southern High and are filling in as math and science teachers

This rapid response speaks to Jones' belief that a university should be active in its community, a philosophy she came by during her seven-year stint on the Durham school board in the 1990s. "We do have an achievement gap, and we're trying to eliminate it," she says. "That's a role for higher education."

A historian with two degrees from NCCU, Jones spent 25 years on the faculty before moving into administration in 1999 as dean of the University College. Last year, Chancellor James Ammons tapped Jones to be the university's top academic officer. Though she hopes to lead a university someday, Jones says she didn't specifically seek this job. Still, she acknowledges that it's a good fit.

Jones, a Durham native, grew up just down the street from N.C. Central University, a historically black institution. Her ties to the community run deep and eight of her ten siblings have degrees from NCCU. "I know North Carolina Central," she says, "I grew up three or four blocks from it, so it's like a home girl being second in command."

Ben Ruffin, a Durham native, NCCU graduate and former chairman of the UNC system Board of Governors, is among those impressed by Jones' decision to use the professors at Southern, as well as the swiftness with which she made it happen. "What she did to move those

NCCU Provost (cont'd)

professors out to help with public education is novel, and it is what we should have done a long time ago," Ruffin says. "I think she's ahead of the curve on that."

In the late 1970s, Jones' became a doctoral student in the history department at UNC-Chapel Hill, her first extended stay away from her Durham neighborhood. In 1980, she became the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate in history from the university.

"She was a pioneer," says Joel Williamson, her now-retired doctoral dissertation adviser. "She was African-American, and she was a woman. On two fronts, she came into this white, male environment. Very soon, everybody recognized her brilliance."

State News . . .

Foundation/University Joint Effort Commits \$4 Million For Teacher Recruitment Efforts in Guilford County

Action Greensboro, a unit of the Action Greensboro Partnership and a partnership of the Triad area foundation has committed \$2 million during the next three years to support a pilot project aimed at recruiting and retaining math teachers for Guilford County high schools. Officials said the project would also involve the University of North Carolina system and its two Greensboro campuses, UNC-Greensboro and NC A&T State University. The total financial commitment from all the partners will be about \$4 million.

The pilot project will attempt to counter annual turnover of math teachers in some Guilford County high schools that runs as high as 50 percent. Studies have indicated that a key issue is pay, since highly qualified math teachers can often earn much more in the private sector.

The project will focus on eight Guilford County high schools and will attempt to recruit and retain math teachers through a combination of financial incentives, mentoring, and professional development. The goal will be to evaluate the potential benefit of market-based pay structures and other forms of support.

Speaking at the announcement in Greensboro, UNC President Erskine Bowles said the United States risks becoming a "second-rate power" if its children don't have access to more and better teachers. "If our children and grandchildren are going to be equipped to compete in a knowledge-based global economy, we have got to do more to increase the pool of qualified teachers," Bowles said.

Skip Moore, president of the Weaver Foundation and chair of the Action Greensboro Operating Group, said the organization is pleased to contribute to the improvement of local public schools because schools play an important part in economic growth. "This program is particularly important because it will focus on high schools with academic need," Moore said. "Mathematical skills, and associated reasoning skills, are endemic to further education and to the work force."

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Adopts Major HS Reform Plans

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) new Superintendent, Peter Gorman, did not wait long to propose major shake-ups at the county's four lowest performing high schools. The initial focus of the plan is on principals and teachers at the schools.

Teachers will have to reapply to teach at the schools and principals are being encouraged to dismiss ineffective teachers. The principals of the schools will also come under close scrutiny and could be subject to dismissal if they are unable to show measurable progress.

Staff members who stay and new staff hired in the buildings would receive an extra 15 percent of their pay. Other financial incentives are also planned, including \$15,000 signing bonuses for some teachers.

Under the plan, consultants would recruit and screen candidates in a nationwide recruiting effort. If sufficient numbers of new teachers are not recruited, involuntary transfers of teachers from other high schools are possible.

The price tag for the plan is a projected \$10 million. County commissioners are being asked to fund one-half of the \$10 million. They will debate the plan next month.

The school board approved the new plan by an 8 to 1 vote. The single "no" vote was cast by board member Larry Gauvrea who described the plan as "kicking the dog."

Others voiced similar sentiments. A teacher in one of the high schools said, "I was hoping for reform and it's just more of the same -- more blaming the teachers, more threatening the teachers." Jim Puckett, a member of the County Commission, asked "What is the deliverable, other than; I fired some teachers and paid some bonuses?"

However, all but one of the school board members supported the plan, and it is receiving generally positive reactions around the county. A former County Commissioner, Tom Cox, said "I think Dr. Gorman has made a powerful statement for change. I think Judge Manning will be pleased to see this." The former UNC Charlotte Chancellor, Jim Woodward, who is now heading up the new Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education, said, "We finally have a plan that fits the concept of the high school challenge. It puts accountability squarely in the hands of principals and teachers. When your job is at stake and you know it, that's accountability."

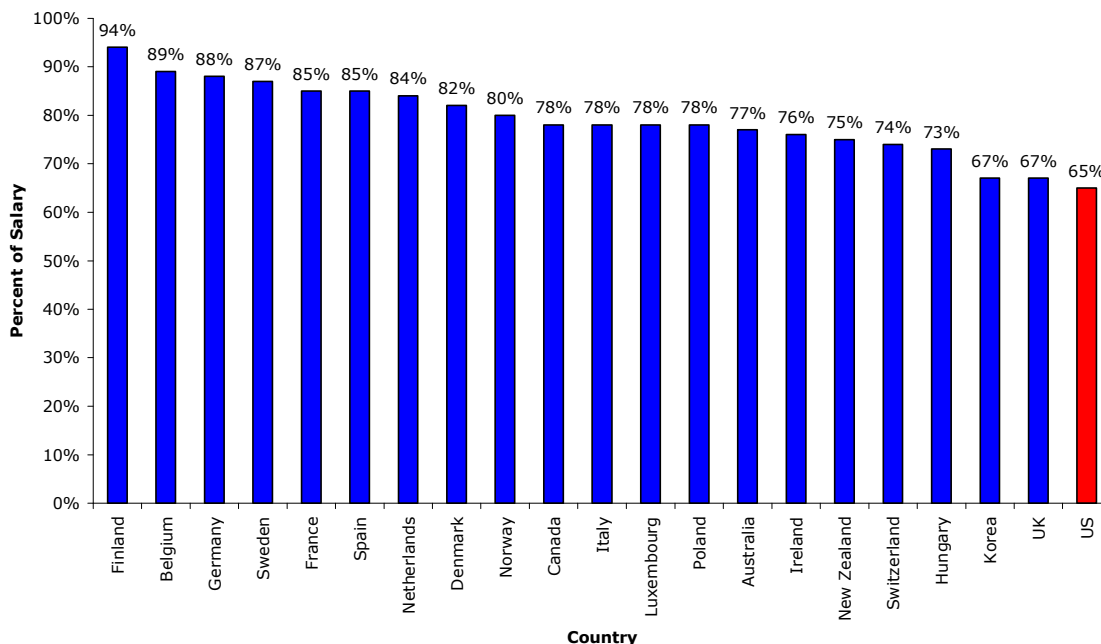
U.S. Losing Ground in National Education Comparisons; HS and College Grad Rates Dip Below International Average

Dropping out of high school has its costs around the globe, but nowhere steeper than in the United States, according to "Education at a Glance," an annual study by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

According to the report, "The United States is losing ground internationally because other countries are making faster and bigger gains. The high school and college graduation rates of recent U.S. students are now below the international average. For example, among adults age 25 to 34, the U.S. ranks 11th among nations in the share of its population that has graduated from high school. It used to be first."

High school dropouts in the United States make only 65 percent of the earnings of high school graduates, a bigger gap than in other countries (see chart below). Adults without a high school diploma typically make about 80 percent of the salaries earned by high school graduates in nations across Asia, Europe and elsewhere. Countries such as Finland, Belgium, Germany and Sweden have the smallest gaps in earnings between dropouts and graduates. In addition, an adult with a university degree in the United States earns, on average, 72 percent more than someone with a high school degree. That's a much bigger difference than in most countries.

Percent of HS Graduate Salary Earned by HS Dropout



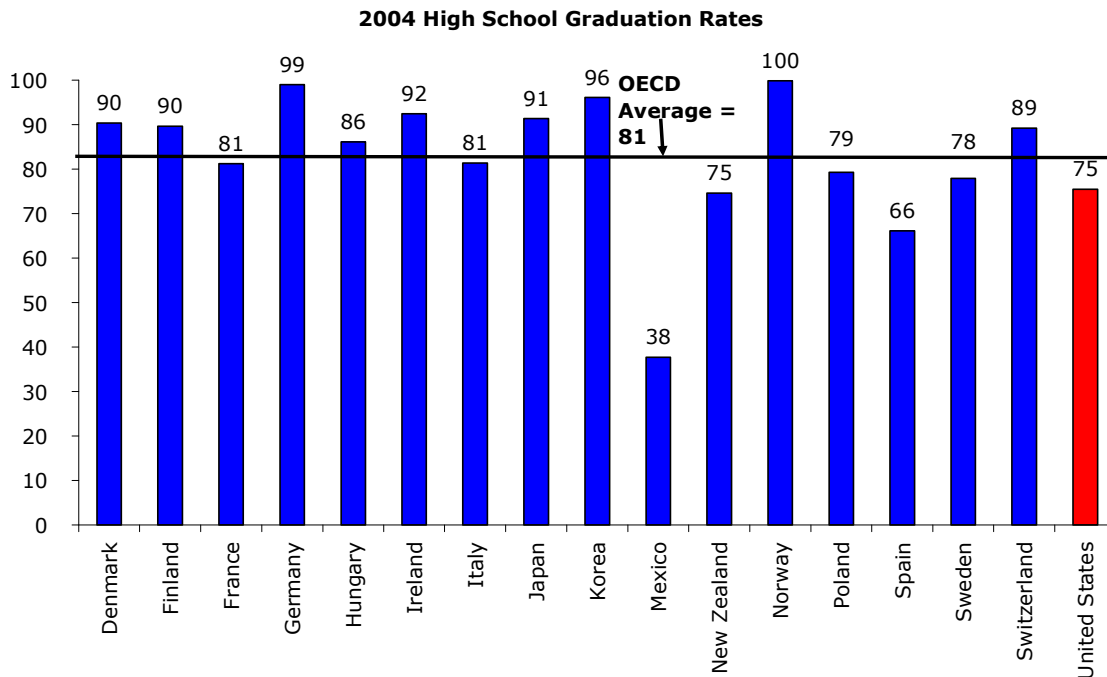
Source: OECD

U.S. Losing Ground (cont'd)

The findings underscore the cost of a persistent dropout problem in the United States. It is rising as a national concern as politicians see the risks for the economy and for millions of kids. According to the researchers, nearly 45 percent of adults without high school degrees in the United States have low incomes, making half of the country's median income or less. Only Denmark had a higher proportion of dropouts with low incomes.

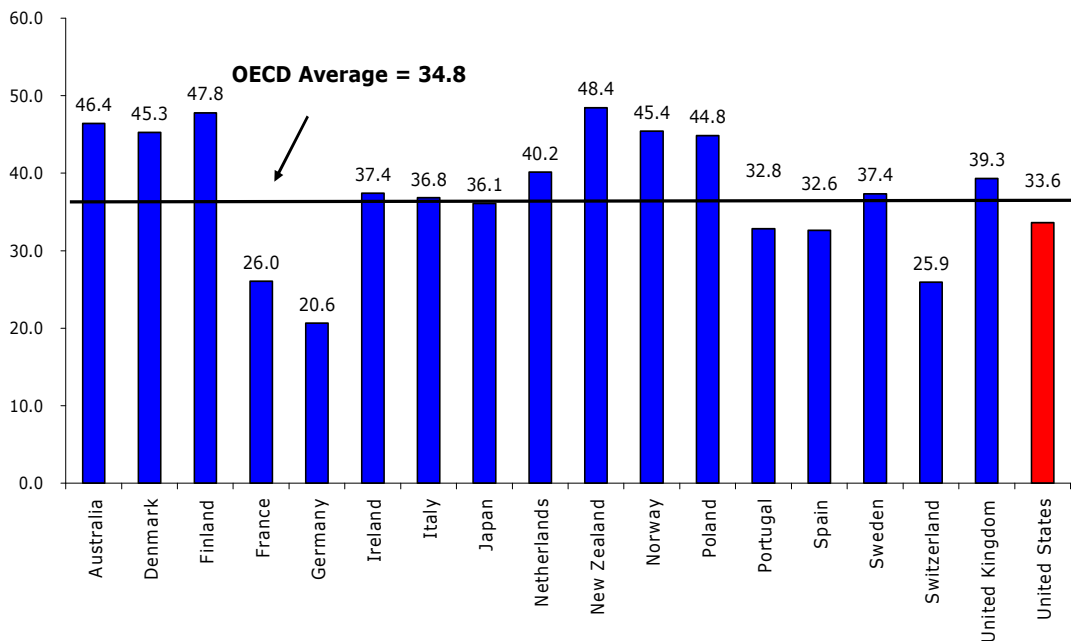
Also, the United States is below the international average when it comes to its employment rate among adults age 25 to 64 that have no high school degree. Even U.S. adult education and job training do little to close gaps, because too few dropouts take part, according to Barbara Ischinger, director of education for the OECD.

"Education at a Glance," compares the United States to 29 other nations that belong to the economic organization, although not every country reported data on every indicator. It also compares how the US stacks up with key non-OECD members; China and India. That comparison will be crucial in the coming decades. The number of college graduates from China last year; 4.4 million, surpasses that of the entire European Union. This is becoming more and more crucial, particularly now that the US has dropped below the international average in both high school and college graduation rates (see charts below).



Source: OECD

**2004 College Graduation Rates
(Obtain Degree in 6 years or less)**



Source: OECD

Among OECD members, East Asian countries are increasingly outperforming the United States and Europe, and they "succeed without leaving many students behind," the report said. The report stressed the pressures on rich countries to meet the fast-growing demand for high-level skills, and warned that the United States and Europe are losing ground because other countries are making faster and bigger gains.

The report also shows that the U.S. spends more on primary and secondary education than most developed countries, yet has the largest classes, lower test scores, and higher dropout rates. From elementary school through college, the United States spends an average of \$12,023 per student, more than in all countries in the comparison except for Switzerland.

For more information go to <http://www.oecd.org>

Judge Dismisses Most Of First Lawsuit Against NCLB

A federal judge dismissed most of the claims in Connecticut's challenge to the No Child Left Behind law on jurisdictional grounds, the state's attorney general said. Connecticut became the first state to try to block the 2002 law when it filed the lawsuit in August 2005 (see Friday Report August 26, 2005). Attorney General Richard Blumenthal argued that the law was unconstitutional, an unfunded federal mandate costing more than the state received in federal aid.

NCLB Lawsuit (cont'd)

Judge Mark Kravitz dismissed three counts, saying state officials can not challenge the law until they have violated it. The judge is allowing the state to proceed with a fourth claim that the U.S. Department of Education unfairly denied Connecticut's proposed amendments to testing rules. NCLB requires annual standardized tests for students in grades 3 through 8, but Connecticut wants to continue its program of testing students every other year, in grades 4, 6 and 8. "This is a jurisdictional ruling," Blumenthal said Wednesday. "Our challenge is alive and well."

Attorneys for the U.S. Department of Education had asked for a dismissal of the entire lawsuit, arguing that the state understood the law when it accepted hundreds of millions of dollars in education funding.

Iowa Proposes Loan Forgiveness Program for Teachers

New teachers would get a combined \$10 million worth of student loans forgiven under a program announced recently by Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack, reports the *Quad-City Times*. The program is aimed at graduates of Iowa colleges and universities who agree to teach in high-need specialties such as math, science and special education. The maximum forgiveness would be \$9,000 over five years of teaching. "This program will help alleviate the financial burden many teachers face coming out of college, while also helping local school districts fill much-needed teaching positions," Vilsack said.

The program is paid for by Iowa Student Loan, a nonprofit company that holds \$2.45 billion in loans to 214,000 borrowers. It would apply to teachers who have outstanding loans with the company or have consolidated loans with the company.

The new program would have a typical annual loan forgiveness of \$1,000 per teacher for four years, with a possible bonus in the fifth year of \$5,000 for a total of \$9,000. Because this is loan forgiveness, the amount of benefit cannot exceed the amount of debt. Officials in the governor's office estimate that teachers could get up to \$30,500 in benefits from the new program and two existing ones.

Forum News . . .

EPFP Graduation Reminder

The NC EPFP Annual Graduation Celebration honoring the 2005-2006 EPFP Graduates will be held on **Tuesday, October 24, 2006**, at the Cardinal Club, which is located on the twenty-eighth floor, Wachovia Building, 150 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, NC. The reception will begin at 5:30 pm, followed by the dinner and program at 6:30 pm. The graduation address will be given by Dr. Gene Causby and Dr. Dudley Flood, two North Carolina icons in education leadership. Also present will be special guest Dr. Doug Brattebo, National Director EPFP, IEL. If you wish to attend, please complete the registration below and return it with payment to the Forum by October 17, 2006. Space is limited.

EPFP Graduation (cont'd)

Reservations for the 2006 EPFP Graduation Celebration

RSVP: Debra Jordan October 17, 2006

YES _____ **I plan to attend** the EPFP Celebration.

NO _____ **I cannot attend**, but please correct my information for your records.

Name (*Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss*) _____
(circle one) (please type or print)

Current Position & Organization _____

Work Address _____

(W)Tel # _____ **(W)Fax#** _____ **(W)Email** _____

Home Address _____

(H)Tel # _____ **(H)Email** _____

Enclosed is my check for \$35 payable to Public School Forum. (Please include additional \$35 for each guest.

Guest name/s & organization: _____

If Paying by: Master Card _____ Visa _____ Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration Date ____/____/____ **Signature** _____

****There is no charge for the 2005-06 EPFP Graduates/Sponsors or 2006-07 EPFP Fellows/Sponsors.**
(Please circle your year & category if you are a Fellow or sponsor in one of these classes.)

RSVP by October 17, 2006, with check to: EPFP, 3739 National Dr., Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27612, or with credit card by Fax to 919.781.6527. Refunds cannot be given after October 20, 2006. For more information call 919.781.6833.

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