

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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The Forum will be closed Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th for the Thanksgiving Holiday. We wish all of our readers a joyous Thanksgiving Day. *The Friday Report* will resume publication on Friday, December 4th.

Federal Stimulus Dollars Unevenly Distributed to Counties

The North Carolina *Capitol Monitor* has been tracking how federal stimulus dollars are being allocated across the state. They are finding a wide disparity between how dollars are being distributed from one county to another. On average counties have received the equivalent of \$305.10 per capita, but the range goes from Camden County's high of \$819.52 to a low of Yadkin County's \$205.69.

There also appears to be little, if any, relationship between unemployment rates and fund distribution. Camden County, for instance, has an unemployment rate of 7.1%, considerably lower than the state's 10.8% unemployment rate and received \$819.52 per capita. On the other hand, Scotland County which has the dubious distinction of having the state's highest unemployment rate, 16.5%, received \$348.12 per capita. There also does not appear to be any correlation between population and funds received. Wake and Mecklenburg Counties, for instance, with roughly 900,000 people each received well below the state average, \$253.12 and \$273.24 respectively. On the other hand, Perquimans County with 13,301 people was well above average at \$669.28 per capita while Tyrrell with only 4,326 people was slightly above average at \$355.13. [Click here](#) to see a county-by-county breakdown of how federal stimulus dollars have been distributed to date.

It's Official...

Sen. Nesbitt Voted New Senate Majority Leader

After receiving an endorsement from Senate leader Marc Basnight last week for the job, Senator Martin Nesbitt this week was unanimously voted in as the new majority leader in the Senate. Senator Nesbitt replaces Sen. Tony Rand, who announced two weeks ago that he would step down from his Senate seat to head the state Parole Commission. Senator Nesbitt will not be adding to his plate Rand's title of Senate Rules Committee chairman. Both he and Sen. Basnight agree that someone else should have that position.

Schools of Education Receive Strong Defense

Recently U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan added his voice to those who are critical of college and university Schools of Education. As pressure increases to close performance gaps, lower dropout rates and reach higher levels on international comparison tests, many contend that teachers are receiving an inadequate preparation in today's Schools of Education and looking for alternative routes into teaching.

While not denying that Schools of Education need to improve, UNC School of Education Dean Bill McDiarmid makes a strong argument in support of today's college and university preparation programs and their efforts to better prepare tomorrow's teachers. [Click here](#) for the full text of McDiarmid's article.

"No Sign of an Economic Recovery Yet"

Legislative economists have reported that state tax revenues are running \$95 million behind projections through the first four months of the fiscal year. Although a one-cent increase to the state tax rate went into effect in September, analysts report sales tax collections have plummeted in recent months. Collections were down 11.7 percent in July to September (compare to a 2.7 percent decline last year). In addition, withholding and personal income tax collections were 2.7 percent below projections during the first quarter of FY 2010, compared with 2.4 percent a year ago.

On a positive note, while the state has lost nearly 270,000 jobs since the start of the recession last year, analysts said signs point to renewed hiring in the coming months. Temporary employment is up, and the housing market appears to have stabilized. In order to meet projections, economists report the following three things need to happen:

- Employment losses abate and businesses hiring picks up
- Wages and salary incomes will need to show improvements by last quarter
- And consumer spending will have to rebound early 2010.

PENC Celebrates 30 Years!

Thirty years ago, this week, Professional Educators of North Carolina (PENC) was formed by a small group of educators in Mecklenburg County. The group emerged in 1979 in response to a growing need for an alternative professional association for educators in the state. PENC's first president, Jan Carpenter, stressed the newly formed organization's opposition to collective bargaining and philosophy of nonpartisanship. Today the objectives of PENC remain much the same as they were thirty years ago. PENC's current president, Jeffrey Elmore, Town Commissioner and art teacher in Wilkes County, proudly serves to fulfill the mission of PENC which is to promote education reform for the benefit of all North Carolina children while ensuring the recruitment, development and retention of qualified educators.

PENC continues to serve as an affordable and viable alternative to other professional organizations in North Carolina. And, PENC remains nonpartisan, independent and state-based, with member dues remaining in North Carolina as they work to promote quality education reform. For more information on PENC, visit www.pencweb.org.

CMS Teacher Named NC's Milken Award Recipient

This week, Cynthia Rudolph, a biology teacher at Hopewell High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (CMS) was named North Carolina's 2009 Milken Family Foundation National Award recipient. Rudolph is among more than 50 secondary educators in the nation to receive this national award, which comes with an unrestricted financial award of \$25,000.

State Superintendent June Atkinson and Milken Family Foundation Senior Vice President Jane Foley made the surprise announcement during a school-wide assembly. The Milken Educator Awards were established by Milken Family Foundation Chairman Lowell Milken to provide public recognition and individual financial rewards to elementary and secondary teachers, principals and specialists who are furthering excellence in education. The Awards alternate each year between elementary and secondary educators; its recipients are heralded in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish.

National News...

NY to Link Certification to Student Performance

It was announced this week that the New York Board of Regents wants to certify new teachers based on their students' academic achievement in their first two years of teaching. The proposal came as part of a plan to overhaul the way teachers are trained and placed in classrooms that state officials, including Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch and Education Commissioner David Steiner hope will help their state win competitive federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant money.

Under the plan, a new teacher would also face a tougher set of tests and must prove to the state that he/she is ready to enter the classroom before receiving their initial certification. Tisch and Steiner stat that they would like to begin altering the assessments required for initial certification immediately, but that a program to link student performance to professional certification may take years to develop.

Did You Know...

Tuition Hikes Head to UNC Board for Approval

The board of trustees of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has approved a \$200 tuition and fee increase for in-state students for next fall. The tuition and fee increases will be presented to the UNC System Board of Governors for approval. In addition, if approved, out-of-state undergraduates would see a \$1,127 increase, while out-of-state graduate students face a \$732 increase.

Forum News...

Leadership Institute Continues to Inspire Its Participants

This week the Collaborative Project's Leadership Institute met in Raleigh to continue its efforts to provide meaningful professional development to the five participating counties involved in the program. Superintendents, principals and central office contacts spent the past two and a half days expanding their knowledge and skills of both inquiry-based learning as well as formative assessments through sessions lead by David Smith and Tim MacAller of Duke University's Center for Inquiry-Based Learning and Trish Martin, Education and Research and Evaluation Consultant at the Center for Urban Affairs, NC State Unversity.

Leadership Institute (cont'd)

Participants were treated to an inspirational address by Paul Cuadros, Assistant Professor for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of *A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America*. The book, featured in an earlier edition of the *Friday Report*, highlights the impact a small town (Siler City, NC) soccer team's championship season "has on helping to bridge the cultural gap in a rural area still coming to grips with waves of immigrants who arrive to work in chicken plants and textile mills and on farms."

Paul Cuadros is an award-winning investigative reporter with more than 10 years of experience. In 1999, he was awarded an Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship to write and report on the impact of emerging Latino communities on the rural South. Cuadros shared with the Collaborative participants the culture clash he witnessed in Siler City between the long-time residents and the newcomers, and how he stepped outside of his "assigned role" to actively participate and help positively influence the growing numbers of Latino youth by showing them that their lives "could be more than the cutting line at the poultry plants".

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