

[<<Back to North Carolina Education News](#)

**North Carolina Education News
May 2008
Copyright © 2008 Queue, Inc.**

IN THIS ISSUE:

[More Money Spent on Regular High School Instruction Directly Related To Student Achievement; Teacher Compensation has Largest Effect on Student Performance](#)

[Building a Vision for ALL children, Sunset Park Elementary School, North Carolina](#)

[Making a Difference?: The Effects of Teach for America in High School](#)

[School Segregation under Color-Blind Jurisprudence: The Case of North Carolina](#)

[Public School Choice and Integration: Evidence from Durham, North Carolina](#)

[Rigsbee Named North Carolina's Teacher of The Year](#)

[North Carolina School District Gets Advanced View of NCLB Performance](#)

[Urban School Students Score at Highest Levels Ever On State and Federal Tests](#)

More Money Spent on Regular High School Instruction Directly Related To Student Achievement; Teacher Compensation has Largest Effect on Student Performance

The amount of money a high school spends on regular classroom instruction is directly related to the achievement level of its students—the more money, the greater the achievement. Of regular classroom spending, higher teacher compensation expenditures has the largest effect on student performance. The findings were presented on April 2nd to the North Carolina State Board

of Education by Gary Henry from the Department of Public Policy and FPG Child Development Institute (FPG) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Charles Thompson from the College of Education at East Carolina University.

The researchers found that the amount that high schools spend on regular classroom instruction has a sizable impact on student learning outcomes. All other things being equal, an increase of \$500 per pupil spent on regular classroom instruction in a school is associated with an increase of nearly half a point on students' average scores on End of Course examinations. The differences in spending on regular classroom instruction between high schools serving high-poverty populations and those with the fewest low-income students are about \$300 per pupil.

"Our findings strongly suggest that more resources targeted to the low performing schools and more effective use of existing resources will be needed to offset the effects of lower levels of student's prior performance and, ultimately to improve performance in chronically low-performing high schools," said the study's lead researcher and FPG Fellow, Dr. Gary Henry.

It is not just about how much money you spend, but where you spend it. Schools receive a certain amount of money per student, known as the total per pupil expenditure. They then decide how to spend that money on everything from special education to supplemental programs to regular classroom instruction. It is how the money was allocated that proved important as the total per pupil expenditures had little effect. So even though the high schools with the largest percentage of low-income students spent on average about \$1,500 more total per student than high schools serving the lowest percentage, they allocated only \$300 more pupil to regular instruction.

Expenditures for regular instruction include teachers' salaries, supplementary pay, benefits, and bonuses; salaries for teachers' assistants, tutors, and substitutes; instructional supplies and textbooks; and library or media services. More detailed analysis indicates that higher teacher compensation expenditures had the largest effect on student performance.

"The higher teacher salaries may allow the schools to hire and retain teachers that have important but unmeasured strengths, or the additional salary may motivate those who receive it to perform at higher levels than similarly qualified teachers who do not receive the extra pay," according to Henry. Expenditures for supplies and media services do have a positive effect, albeit smaller. The findings indicate that materials and supplies make a difference when measures of teacher quality such as experience and education are taken into account.

Perhaps surprisingly, higher levels of expenditures on supplementary instruction (outside the normal school day and week) and student services

(guidance, psychological, health, speech, and related services) are actually associated with lower student test scores.

Charles Thompson, professor of educational leadership at East Carolina University, discussed the distinctly different leadership in schools with high concentrations of poverty who were "beating the odds" and those labeled as chronically low performing. "In the high schools that are 'beating the odds', we observed principals who instilled a strong sense of commitment to student performance and educators who held each other responsible for students' success on the End-Of-Course exams. In these schools, the educators found creative ways to offer students multiple opportunities to learn the material within a caring and orderly environment."

The study was commissioned in 2006 by North Carolina Governor Mike Easley to examine if low-performing schools were using existing resources in the most effective manner.

Full report:

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~handouts/misc/hsra-final-v10.pdf>

Building a Vision for ALL children, Sunset Park Elementary School, North Carolina

A "peaceful revolution" took place at Sunset Park Elementary School in Wilmington, North Carolina, when Principal Deborah Parker took the helm. Stunned by low test scores and a "low-performing school" designation just months after starting as principal, Parker set about invigorating the school community with a solid vision, plan and goals toward success.

"All children, 100 percent, will achieve on or above grade level," declared Parker as she urged the school to adopt a new focus on literacy and character development. The plan to meet that vision included new programs, approaches and teaching strategies for this Title I school where 80 percent of the students qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch.

Sunset Park established a 90-minute period of protected instructional time focused on reading. Staff is empowered to plan their own professional development and coach each other in their work. The school day was lengthened by 15 minutes for teachers to have time to develop

and implement new strategies. And, to ensure the appropriateness of the curriculum, students are frequently assessed, retaught and regrouped where needed.

Constantly preaching high expectations with the slogan, "up the ante" was Parker's mantra in establishing a vision. Again and again her students heard that they were the "best and the brightest." Parker also spread the vision in the community, issuing more than 140 press releases explaining how Sunset Park was a model of school improvement. And, parents were brought into the school regularly for workshops, parenting classes and open time in the media center on Saturdays for families to research on the Internet and read together. Her monthly newsletter, Sunrise, sent the message that every student will meet the school's goals.

"By setting high expectations for the entire learning community," notes Parker, "and sharing a core set of values and beliefs, we have increased our overall proficiency from 40 percent to 85 percent in just four years." The school moved out of a low-performing status and met expected growth in academic success each year since 1997. Visibility and accessibility of the principal are keys to Parker's success as she visits every classroom each day. She is clear on her purpose: "Being a principal requires a tenacious leader who is a keeper of the vision."

Complete report: http://www.naesp.org/client_files/LLC-Exec-Sum.pdf

Making a Difference?: The Effects of Teach for America in High School

Teach for America (TFA) selects and places graduates from the most competitive colleges as teachers in the lowest-performing schools in the country. This paper is the first study that examines TFA effects in high school. The authors use rich longitudinal data from North Carolina and estimate TFA effects through cross-subject student and school fixed effects models. The authors find that TFA teachers tend to have a positive effect on high school student test scores relative to non-TFA teachers, including those who are certified infield. Such effects exceed the impact of additional years of experience and are particularly strong in math and science.

Full paper:

http://www.caldercenter.org/PDF/411642_Teach_America.pdf

School Segregation under Color-Blind Jurisprudence: The Case of North Carolina

This paper uses administrative data for the public K-12 schools of North Carolina to measure racial segregation in the public schools of North Carolina. Using data for the 2005/06 school year, the authors update previous calculations that measure segregation in terms of unevenness in racial enrollment patterns both between schools and within schools. They find that classroom segregation generally increased between 2000/01 and 2005/06, continuing, albeit at a slightly slower rate, the trend observed over the preceding six years. Segregation increased sharply in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which introduced a new choice plan in 2002. Over the same period, racial and economic disparities in teacher quality widened in that district.

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001152_school_segregation.pdf

Public School Choice and Integration: Evidence from Durham, North Carolina

This paper uses evidence from Durham, North Carolina to examine the impact of school choice on racial and class-based segregation across schools. The findings suggest that school choice increases segregation. Furthermore, the effects of choice on segregation by class are larger than the effects on segregation by race. These results are consistent with the theoretical argument—developed in sociology and economics literature—that the segregating choices of students from advantaged backgrounds are likely to outweigh any integrating choices by disadvantaged students.

Full paper:

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001151_school_choice.pdf

Rigsbee Named North Carolina's Teacher of The Year

Cindi Rigsbee, a sixth/seventh grades reading resource teacher at Gravelly Hill Middle School, Orange County Public Schools, was named the 2008-09 AT&T North Carolina Teacher of the Year. Rigsbee succeeds James Bell from Chowan Middle School, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools.

In accepting the award, Rigsbee said her selection as North Carolina's Teacher of the Year was all about chances. "My father, who quit school in the seventh grade to work, didn't have the chance to go to high school. My mother, who graduated second in her class at age 15, didn't have the chance to go to college. But both my parents, who didn't have educational opportunities, worked hard to give me the chance to get an education. That is the reason why I've had the pleasure of teaching over a thousand North Carolina children in my career, " Rigsbee said. "I'm so excited that this little girl who grew up across the street from the Bluefield Housing Project has been given this amazing opportunity. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this chance."

Rigsbee has been a North Carolina public school teacher since the 1979-80 school year and has taught in five different North Carolina public school systems: Guilford County Schools, Vance County Schools, Wake County Schools, Durham Public Schools and Orange County Schools. Professionally, she is a member of the National Education Association, the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the Orange County Association of Educators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the International Reading Association, and the North Carolina Reading Association.

She has presented or spoken at numerous workshops, conferences and other events, including literacy workshops for elective teachers, new teacher orientation, the Orange County Schools' convocation, and at an NCAE National Board Candidate Support workshop. Rigsbee has received a number of awards and other types of recognition, including Orange County Schools' Teacher of the Year 2007-08, Gravelly Hill Middle School Teacher of the Year 2007-08, and a 2005 finalist for the Terry Sanford Award for Creativity and Innovation in Teaching.

Rigsbee completed her undergraduate studies at North Carolina State University, and received a Bachelor of Arts in English Education and a Master of Education/K-12 Literacy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 2004, she achieved National Board Certification.

The AT&T North Carolina Teacher of the Year will spend the school year traveling the state as an ambassador for the teaching profession. In addition, Rigsbee will receive a personal automobile, an engraved plaque, a one-time cash award of \$7,500, a trip to the National Teacher of the Year conference, the opportunity to travel abroad through an endowment at the North Carolina Center for International Understanding, and a technology package valued at over \$14,000 from the SmarterKids Foundation. She also will serve as an advisor to the State Board of Education for two years.

The other regional finalists are:

REGION	FINALIST	SCHOOL	COUNTY
North Central	Paige Elliott	Fuquay-Varina High	Wake County Schools
Northeast	Sonya Rinehart	John A. Holmes High	Edenton-Chowan Public Schools
Northwest	Janice Raper	Hurley Elementary	Rowan-Salisbury Schools
Southeast	Ruth Ann Parker	Clinton High	Clinton City Schools
Southwest	Bernard Waugh	Kannapolis Intermediate	Kannapolis City Schools
Sandhills/South Central	Trisha Muse	Page Street Elementary	Montgomery County Schools
West	Renee Peoples	West Elementary	Swain County Schools
Charter Schools	Freida Baker	East Wake Academy	Wake County

North Carolina School District Gets Advanced View of NCLB Performance

Iredell-Statesville Schools, based in Statesville, N.C., recently began using TetraData DASH, which helps rapidly communicate vital information regarding school performance to principals and staff throughout the district. DASH serves as an easy-to-use, front-end vision alignment tool for the district's TetraData Warehouse, which it implemented last year.

"Every school superintendent, school principal and classroom teacher realizes the importance of data-driven decision making," said Dr. Terry Holliday, superintendent for the district, "The problem is having the data when you need the data and having the data in a format that is understandable. With DASH, our decision makers have the data when they need the data."

"Decision makers in our school system get right to the work of deciding what is working or not working to help more children be successful," Holliday added.

According to Pam Henderson-Schiffman, Chief Accountability and Technology Officer for Iredell-Statesville Schools, DASH is helping to transform all the district's data sources into usable information.

"We have a myriad of data that we need to rapidly communicate to our teachers and principals," Schiffman said, adding that the district's warehouse combines student demographic information, state test scores, district quarterly assessments, staff demographics and certification levels, and more. Using DASH, district staff can now see custom-designed reports interrelating any or all of that data simply with one quick click.

Urban School Students Score at Highest Levels Ever On State and Federal Tests

Report Includes City-by-City Profiles of Big-City School District Trends

On Math and Reading Assessments

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
<http://www.cgcs.org/BTO8/Charlotte.pdf>

Guilford County Schools
<http://www.cgcs.org/BTO8/Guilford.pdf>

Students in the nation's major city public school districts continue to advance in reading and math on state tests and on the more rigorous federal test— the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

A new report analyzing academic progress in 66 urban school systems in 37 states and the District of Columbia shows substantially higher test scores in 2007 than in 2003 in fourth and eighth-grade mathematics and reading on state assessments. It indicates that the state and national test scores are at their highest levels since academic proficiency data have been collected for urban schools.

Beating the Odds: An Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments by the Council of the Great City Schools compares this past school year's state test scores with those reported a year after the federal *No Child Left Behind* law was implemented in 2002, requiring school districts to report performance levels based on state tests and show the percentage of students who score at the "proficient" level.

The *Beating the Odds* findings for the 2006- 2007 school year show that 63 percent of urban school students scored at or above the proficient level in fourth-grade math on their respective state assessments, a whopping 14 percentage point gain from 49 percent in 2003. For eighth-graders, the percentage climbed to 55 percent, compared with 42 percent in 2003, a 13 percentage point rise.

In reading, urban schoolchildren also posted gains over the past four years. From 2003 to 2007, the percentage of fourth-graders scoring at or above the proficient level in reading on state tests rose to 60 percent from 51 percent – a 9 percentage point hike. For eighth-graders, the percentage increased to 51 percent from 43 percent in 2003, an 8 percentage point gain.

National Test Assessments

The report also reveals that the state-test trends coincide with NAEP gains by urban students, but with lower percentages of students scoring at or above the proficient level on what is generally considered a more rigorous exam than most state tests.

Students in big-city public schools have made faster math and reading gains than the nation on the NAEP over the past few years, according to *The Nation's Report Card* for 2007 released by the U.S. Department of Education. The report last November marked the first time that the nation could see four- or five-year trends on NAEP for the country's major urban public school systems since the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) was launched in reading in 2002 and math in 2003.

Some 28 percent of urban fourth-graders scored at or above the proficient level in math in 2007 on NAEP, an 8 percentage point hike from 20 percent in 2003. In reading, 22 percent of urban schoolchildren in fourth grade reached or went beyond the proficient level in 2007, a 5 percentage point increase from 17 percent in 2002.

Beating the Odds also includes how student test scores in 11 big-city school districts that volunteered for the trial urban NAEP compare with scores on their respective state tests. Among the 11 cities are New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, the nation's three largest school systems.

Although urban schools show gains in math and reading performance, the districts still generally lag behind state and national averages in fourth and eighth grades, and acknowledge that they still have a long way to go to reach proficiency levels. But there are exceptions.

State Math Achievement

In the report's eighth annual analysis, data show that 22 percent of urban school districts now score as high as or higher than their respective states in fourth-grade math, and 16 percent score as high or higher at the eighth-grade level in 2007.

The school districts with both fourth- and eighth-grade math scores equal to or greater than their respective states are Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.), Charleston, New Orleans, Palm Beach and Portland, Ore.

State Reading Progress

In 2007, 16 percent of urban school districts scored at or above their respective states in fourth-grade reading, and 14 percent at the eighth-grade level. The school districts with both fourth- and eighth-grade reading scores equal to or greater than their respective states are Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.), Charleston, New Orleans, Portland, Ore., San Diego and San Francisco.

Achievement Gaps

Beating the Odds VIII also indicates that racial achievement gaps in urban schools narrowed in math between 2003 and 2007, although they remain wide. Some 66 percent of bigcity school districts narrowed the gap between their fourth-grade African-American students and white counterparts statewide in math proficiency – 63 percent in eighth-grade math.

Among Hispanic students, 63 percent of the urban school districts narrowed the gap with white fourth-graders statewide – 58 percent in eighth-grade.

In reading, between 2003 and 2007, 64 percent of major city school systems narrowed the achievement gap between fourth-grade African-American students and white counterparts statewide in reading proficiency – 67 percent at the eighth-grade level. Among Hispanic students, 57 percent of urban school districts narrowed the gap with white fourth-graders statewide – 63 percent in eighth grade.

Urban Environment America's big-city school systems enroll about one-quarter, or 26 percent, of all students of color in the nation, and a

disproportionately high number of English language learners and poor students.

The report attributes the standards movement as the catalyst that triggered change in urban schools. It gave urban school administrators direction on what they were being held responsible for delivering.

Beating the Odds analyzed two assessments – state and national – because the nation does not have a single system to measure progress relative to the same standard across school districts in all states.