

**NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION NEWS**

**April 2007**

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**Education News**

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## **North Carolina Public Schools Advanced Placement**

### **Student Participation**

*8.4% increase in the number of students participating between 2005 and 2006*

In 2006: 36,912 North Carolina Public School Students took AP Exams

In 2005: 34,048 North Carolina Public School Students took AP Exams

In 2001: 20,980 North Carolina Public School Students took AP Exams

In 1996: 14,339 North Carolina Public School Students took AP Exams

- Since 2001, the number of North Carolina Public School students participating in AP increased by 15,932 or 75.9%.

### **Exams Taken**

*10.6% increase in the number of AP Exams taken between 2005 and 2006*

In 2006: North Carolina Public School Students took 68,634 AP Exams

In 2005: North Carolina Public School Students took 62,051 AP Exams

In 2001: North Carolina Public School Students took 36,245 AP Exams

In 1996: North Carolina Public School Students took 21,975 AP Exams

- Since 2001, the number of AP Exams taken by North Carolina Public School students increased by 32,389 or 89.4%.

### **Exams Scored 3 or higher**

*9.3% increase in the number of AP Exams scored 3 or higher between 2005 and 2006*

In 2006: North Carolina Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 36,341 AP Exams

In 2005: North Carolina Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 33,249 AP

Exams

In 2001: North Carolina Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 19,578 AP

Exams

In 1996: North Carolina Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 11,954 AP

Exams

- Since 2001, the number of AP Exams scored 3 or higher taken by North Carolina Public School students increased by 16,763 or 85.6%.

To read detailed report on North Carolina please go to:

[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/ap/2007/north-carolina\\_ap-report\\_07.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/ap/2007/north-carolina_ap-report_07.pdf)

## **U.S. Chamber Report Card on Education Says States Failing our Students, Risking our Future**

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness graded all 50 states and Washington, DC, on nine broad categories including academic achievement, return on investment, truth in advertising, rigor of standards, and data quality.

North Carolina scored 3 A's, 2 B's, 3 C's and 1 D including a C in Academic Achievement.

A summary of North Carolina's scores is available online.:

<http://www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard/default>

To see the full report:

<http://www.uschamber.com/NR/rdonlyres/ej5ny2pjrdchnsde2sqo2hj2ybch7xf7gw2wjhwbxfvfxvpu7r54syv637naxtbgqx3q73u74vaa/Resource1.pdf>

## Technology Counts - North Carolina

*Technology Counts* is a joint project of *Education Week* and the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. As in previous years, the EPE Research Center has surveyed the states to assess the status of K-12 educational technology across the nation. The state reports assemble key findings from that survey and other sources in a format that allows readers to examine a particular state's performance on this year's indicators. For most indicators, national results are also provided as a benchmark against which the state can be measured.

*Technology Counts 2007*, which explores developments in educational technology over the past decade, tracks data from the 50 states and the District of Columbia in several critical areas of technology policy and practice: **access**, **use**, and **capacity**. The report assigns grades to the states for their performance in those three categories.

North Carolina's scores:

Access to technology B-

Use of technology A

Capacity to use technology D

Overall grade B-

**To see full North Carolina report:**

[http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/tc/2007/NC\\_STR2007.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/tc/2007/NC_STR2007.pdf)

## **North Carolina Sixth Graders in Middle Schools Fare Worse than Peers in Elementary Schools, Study Finds**

Sixth graders placed in middle schools have more discipline problems and lower test scores than their peers who attend elementary schools, according to a study by researchers at Duke University and the University of California, Berkeley.

In addition, the negative effects of grouping sixth graders with older students are lasting and persist at least through ninth grade.

"These findings cast serious doubt on the wisdom of the historic nationwide shift to the grades 6-8 middle school format," said Philip Cook, Duke professor of public policy and economics and an author of the paper.

In the 1970s, less than 25 percent of middle schools included sixth grade. Now, the figure is 75 percent nationwide and 90 percent in North Carolina, which has led the trend toward grades 6-8 middle schools. The shift took place in part due to school population pressures, but also because educators believed it was developmentally appropriate.

"What's been lacking in the debate is any real data on how the school configuration affects student behavior and performance," Cook said. "As it turns out, moving sixth grade out of elementary school appears to have had substantial costs."

Jacob Vigdor and Clara Muschkin, Cook's colleagues at Duke's Sanford Institute of Public Policy, and Robert MacCoun of UC Berkeley co-authored the report, "Should Sixth Grade Be in Elementary or Middle School? An Analysis of Grade Configuration and Student Behavior." The report is available online as a Sanford Institute working paper at <http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/research/papers/SAN07-01.pdf>

The researchers contrasted sixth graders attending North Carolina's grade 6-8 middle schools with those attending grade K-6 elementary schools. The data pertained to 44,709 sixth-graders in 243 schools in 99 districts.

The sixth graders attending middle school were more than twice as likely to be disciplined as those attending elementary school, after accounting for socioeconomic and demographic differences in the groups. Drug-related disciplinary incidents were nearly four times greater among the middle school group. The pattern continued as

the sixth graders advanced through the grades, suggesting the problems were not tied solely to the transition to a new school environment.

In addition, sixth graders in elementary schools improved their scores on end-of-grade exams in math and reading relative to their peers in middle schools, and those gains persisted through ninth grade.

Although the study didn't pinpoint the causes for the differences, the authors concluded that the 6-8 middle school structure brought impressionable sixth graders into routine contact with older adolescents who were a bad influence. Older adolescents are more rebellious and more involved in delinquency, sex, illicit drugs and other activities that violate school rules, the authors noted.

"This points to a general pattern whereby it is better for kids to make transitions later rather than earlier," said Vigdor, a co-author. "Sixth grade is an especially vulnerable time, in the sense that sixth graders display a strong susceptibility to peer influence and the decision to expose them to slightly older or slightly younger students seems to have a lasting impact."

## **High Poverty Schools and the Distribution of Teachers and Principals in North Carolina**

Although many factors combine to make a successful school, most people agree that quality teachers and school principals are among the most important requirements for success, especially when success is defined by the ability of the school to raise the achievement of its students. The central question for this study is how the quality of the teachers and principals in high poverty schools in North Carolina compares to that in the schools serving more advantaged students. A related question is why these differences emerge. The consistency of the patterns across many measures of qualifications for both teachers and principals leaves no doubt that students in the high poverty schools are served by school personnel with lower qualifications than those in the lower poverty schools. Moreover, in many cases the differences are large.

To see the full report:

<http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/research/papers/SAN06-08.pdf>

## **Friday Institute Leads Pilot K-12 Connectivity Initiative for State**

Imagine students using computer simulations to design a bridge or an airplane wing using high-performance computing resources on the other side of the state. Without high-speed access to the Internet, these new learning tools and practices are beyond the reach of most schools.

At the request of the N.C. Board of Education and Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University is leading the implementation of a \$6 million state-funded pilot project to provide high-speed network connectivity to all K-12 schools in North Carolina.

State government, educators and businesses are working to build an education network supporting K-12 schools by extending and expanding a statewide, high-speed network backbone developed over the past 20 years to support North Carolina's public universities. Friday Institute Director of Technology Phil Emer is leading the statewide implementation team to develop pilot projects to demonstrate the opportunities.

Such a statewide network would provide high-quality, reliable Internet access and instructional content everywhere in the state, including classes being developed by the North Carolina Virtual Public School. The Virtual Public School provides online classes that are not available locally, such as Advanced Placement courses.

A recent state-funded study found that less than 8 percent of elementary, middle and high schools in North Carolina have adequate high-speed Internet access to support new teaching and learning applications and content. Local school systems typically have limited budgets for technology tools and staff, and limited experience in fully leveraging federal funding opportunities. Other states are responding to the challenges. Today, 34 states have coordinated networks serving K-12 schools.

To address the challenges in North Carolina, the General Assembly approved the \$6 million pilot initiative in 2006. Rep. Joe Tolson, Sen. Vernon Malone, Rep. Doug Yongue and Rep. Marvin Lucas are primary sponsors of legislation filed for consideration in the 2007 legislative session for \$24 million a year to support full statewide implementation.

State funding would supplement federal funding available through the "e-rate" program that provides discounts of 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of telecommunications and Internet services to schools and libraries. By leveraging federal e-rate funding support estimated at more than \$30 million a year, establishing regional networking initiatives, and partnering with commercial providers to connect each K-12 school to the statewide backbone, teachers and students would have access to new tools and resources required to transform education in the 21st century.

In addition to supporting the statewide broadband education network and coordinating applications for federal funding, the plan provides for regional technical and engineering support. The statewide investment would also free resources for local school systems to purchase technology equipment for classrooms and have technology support staff in local systems focused on helping teachers use technology in the classroom.

"Technology is the chalk and blackboard of the 21st century," said Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue. "Our students need 21st century technology to compete in today's global economy. This initiative will help level the playing field by allowing all students access to 21st century learning options with state-of-the-art technology, regardless of where they live. Students don't just learn from 8 to 3; 21st century technology gives students, their families, and all citizens access to learning, 24/7. This is a critical investment at the right time for North Carolina schools."

Rep. Tolson, a member of the General Assembly's Joint Technology Oversight Committee and a leader in securing support for the \$6 million pilot initiative, said he is encouraged by the teamwork and commitment of all parties dedicated to provide teachers and students with the tools required to succeed in the 21st century.

"We must all collaborate to leverage our strengths and resources to develop a unified, seamless broadband network to support education at all grade levels," Tolson said. "Education is the key to economic development and quality of life for all North Carolinians. The deployment of these pilot projects by the Friday Institute helps demonstrate the benefits as we work to ensure that all schools have high-quality connectivity to the Internet and other educational content in every corner of the state. This initiative is a worthy investment in our future."

NC State Chancellor James Oblinger said that reliable high-speed access is critical to delivering interactive content and creating new approaches for teaching and learning in the 21st century.

"NC State and the Friday Institute are committed to using innovative information and communication technologies to help develop technologically advanced teachers and students. This high-speed network plays an important role in helping us to achieve this goal. In addition, we are placing a special emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math education at our state's K-12 schools. At NC State, we're using our research to help prepare and retrain new teachers," Oblinger said.

For more information about the K-12 Connectivity Project, please see <http://connectivity.fi.ncsu.edu>

## **2007 GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL SELECTIONS ANNOUNCED**

Eight hundred North Carolina rising high school juniors and seniors have been selected to attend the 2007 Governor's School, a six-week summer program for academically or intellectually gifted students.

Local school superintendents, charter school directors or private school headmasters nominate students to attend Governor's School. Each school system is allotted a certain number of nominations based on its 10th and 11th grade populations. Students are nominated in one of 10 curriculum areas: Art, Choral Music, Dance, Drama, English, Foreign Language (French and Spanish), Instrumental Music, Mathematics, Natural Science and Social Science. The curriculum focuses on the exploration of the most recent ideas and concepts in each discipline, and does not involve credit, tests or grades. Students do not pay a fee to attend the program as the N.C. General Assembly funds all program costs.

The Governor's School of North Carolina is the oldest statewide summer residential program for academically or intellectually gifted high school students in the nation.

The program, which is open to rising seniors only, with exceptions made for rising juniors in selected performing/visual arts areas, is located on two campuses: Governor's School West and East. Governor's School West is located at Salem College in Winston-Salem and Governor's School East is located at Meredith College in Raleigh. The 2007 session runs from June 17 - July 28.

The complete list of Governor's School East and West participants is available online at <http://www.ncgovschool.org/nomination/>

## **SCHOOLS' TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS RECEIVE BOOST THANKS TO GRANT**

Five North Carolina middle schools will be able to enhance their technology programs thanks to their recent receipt of the IMPACT II Model School Grant awards, which were today approved by the State Board of Education. Grant monies, which range from \$240,000 - \$318,000, will be used to provide the necessary personnel, resources, technology access, professional development, and student instruction to develop technologically literate students by the eighth grade.

Schools receiving the IMPACT II Model School Grant are:

- Canton Middle School, Haywood County Schools
- Walkertown Middle School, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
- Pembroke Middle School, Public Schools of Robeson County
- Union Middle School, Sampson County Schools
- Swain Middle School, Swain County Schools

North Carolina Department of Public Instructional Technology Director Frances Bradburn said that receipt of this grant would have a significant impact on the academic achievement of students at these schools. "Technology instruction is a critical component of a 21st century education. Our graduates will need to be technologically savvy to compete in a global economy. This grant will provide students with a strong foundation to build on in high school."

In order to qualify for these grants, applicants completed extensive self-studies, planning, and visioning over a four-month period before submitting their grant proposal. Once they implement their programs, the schools will be subject to careful, continuous evaluation by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction staff to ensure that federal No Child Left Behind mandates for state grant renewal are followed.

Part of the federal No Child Left Behind program, IMPACT II Model School Grants are North Carolina's competitive grant component of Title II, D, Enhancing Education Through Technology, and are aligned with the North Carolina Educational Technology Plan and IMPACT: Guidelines for Media and Technology Programs in North Carolina.

## **North Carolina's Top Two Youth Volunteers Selected In 12th Annual National Awards Program**

***Wilmington and Raleigh students earn \$1,000 awards, engraved medallions  
and trip to nation's capital***

### **Honors also bestowed on other top youth volunteers in North Carolina**

**Caroline Johnson**, 17, of Wilmington and **Mason Gonzales Park**, 11, of Raleigh have been named North Carolina's top two youth volunteers for 2007 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 12th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Caroline was nominated by John T. Hoggard High School in Wilmington, and Mason was nominated by West Millbrook Middle School in Raleigh. As State Honorees,

each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees – one middle level and one high school youth – from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2007 at that time.

**Caroline**, a junior at John T. Hoggard High School, started a club at her school to raise money and public support for victims of genocide, natural disasters and other crises around the world. Before moving to North Carolina last August, Caroline learned about the crisis in Darfur, Sudan, and became active in her Kansas school's Save Darfur Club. "I became very upset and moved by the entire situation," she said. Caroline intended to launch a Darfur club at her new school in Wilmington, but after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast, decided to expand her focus and work on behalf of people everywhere who need funds and attention.

She secured approval for her new "G.A.P.P. Club" (for Global Awareness and Peace Promotion) from the student council, and recruited a teacher advisor and student members. The club now meets every week and schedules one or two activities a month. It has conducted a frappacino sale for UNICEF's AIDS fund, a bake sale for earthquake victims in Pakistan, awareness campaigns for genocide victims in Sudan and Uganda, and events to raise money by selling candy, bracelets and buttons. "I hope and believe that we have shown our fellow students that it is very cool and very important for young people to be involved in things that some might say are too big or too faraway for us to be able to help," said Caroline.

**Mason**, a sixth-grader at West Millbrook Middle School, has helped raise nearly \$48,000 for the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society over the past five years. "Diseases are out there so we have to help those who have them and keep raising money so scientists can find a cure to stop them," he said. In his first volunteer effort, Mason participated in a local school walk when he was just 6. "It was a great feeling to know that even at such a young age I could be involved and have such an impact on others," he remembered.

Now he engages in several fund-raising campaigns a year, participating as a team member in nationally sponsored events, and also pursuing his own fund-raising activities, such as washing cars, selling lemonade, recycling cans, setting up collection jars, canvassing for donations, and holding yard sales. In the process, Mason has given speeches to audiences of up to 3,000 people, appeared in TV and radio public service announcements, led flag ceremonies and sang the national anthem, and sent hundreds of letters and e-mail notes to potential sponsors. One

year, he even asked Santa Claus and birthday party guests to make donations instead of bringing him gifts. "It's the greatest feeling in the world knowing that I am part of someone else's success," said Mason. "If everyone would take the time to help change someone's life, the world would be a much better place filled with happiness and hope."

In addition, the program judges recognized six other North Carolina students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion:

**Elizabeth Buckholz**, 10, of Harrisburg, a member of the Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Council in Charlotte and a fifth-grader at Pitts School Road Elementary School in Concord, organized a Community Safety Day to help teach kids in her county how to be safe. At the event, more than 150 youngsters watched fire, police and sheriff's personnel demonstrate how to escape a burning building, what it's like to drive while impaired, how police dogs catch criminals and find drugs, and other safety topics.

**Mark Draelos**, 17, of High Point, a junior at The Early College at Guilford in Greensboro, developed a Web site for the Ward Street Mission to connect interested volunteers with the needs of the mission. Mark, who learned interactive Web site design to complete this project, hopes to soon include an online means of making donations and an electronic community newspaper.

**Ann Guggisberg**, 18, of Warne, a senior at Hayesville High School in Hayesville, organized and taught beginner art classes for elementary and middle school students in the summers of 2005 and 2006. In addition, she produced and sold note cards featuring the students' work, and then donated the \$1,000 in proceeds to local libraries.

**Svyatoslav Petrov**, 16, of Raleigh, a sophomore at Ravenscroft School, developed and implemented a hand-hygiene training program for medical workers at a local community hospital to prevent the spread of acquired infections. Compliance with proper hand-hygiene procedures increased from 32 to 75 percent during the five-month program, and Svyatoslav is now working to introduce it to schools.

**Haowei Tong**, 17, of Winston-Salem, a senior at West Forsyth High School in Clemmons, established a free tennis clinic for underprivileged children in her area. After soliciting tennis equipment from local businesses and promoting her clinic, Haowei recruited friends to help her teach basic tennis skills to more than two dozen kids, while emphasizing the importance of balanced nutrition, regular exercise and team-building.

**Kelly Wolfe**, 17, of Greensboro, a volunteer with the Greensboro Chapter of the American Red Cross and a junior at Walter Hines Page High School, helped raise more than \$10,000 to support victims of Hurricane Katrina by organizing a “24-Hour Swim for Relief.” Kelly, who started a volunteer group within her swim team, worked closely with fellow volunteers to plan the event and other fund-raisers to support those in need.

## **Nominate an Outstanding Teacher for the American Stars of Teaching Award**

The U.S. Department of Education is seeking nominations for its fourth annual American Stars of Teaching project, which recognizes exemplary teachers who raise student achievement, use innovative classroom strategies and make a difference in their students' lives.

Teachers across all grade levels and disciplines will be honored this fall as 2007 American Stars of Teaching. One teacher will be recognized from every state and the District of Columbia. Colleagues, parents, students, school administrators or members of the community may nominate a teacher they believe has demonstrated the skills, talents and qualities that personify an American Star of Teaching.

Last year, the Department received more than 4,000 nominations for the program. Honorees were selected by a committee composed of former K-12 teachers who now work for the U.S. Department of Education. As in the past, Education Department officials will visit the schools of American Star teachers to congratulate them on their success.

Nominations for American Stars must be submitted by March 31, 2007. The online nomination form and more information about the award are available at <https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/About.asp>

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