

World and Nation

Study shows unequal school funding

By GLENN O'NEAL
Staff Writer

A report released by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research reveals an inconsistency in per-pupil funding in N.C. public schools.

There is a 56 percent difference on funding spent per pupil from the highest school system to the lowest, said Ran Coble, executive director of the center, an independent, non-profit organization that studies public issues and evaluates state programs.

A comparison between the 1973-74 and the 1987-88 school years of state, federal and local funding for education shows that state funding has remained consistently 69 percent, he said. During the same period, federal funding

has been cut nearly in half, from 14 percent to 7.7 percent. Local funding in the form of supplements has increased from 19 percent to 23 percent in order to pick up the federal difference, he said.

One of the effects of the funding difference is the number of course offerings, Coble said. A student at Blue Ridge High School in the Jackson County School System has 116 fewer choices in courses than a student at Northern Durham High School in the Durham County School System, he said.

According to a news release sent out by the center, Jackson County ranks 47th in per-pupil expenditures, while Durham County ranks 23rd. Durham County is places sixth in local supple-

ments, while Jackson County comes in 67th.

There are 140 public school systems in the state.

The funding disparity also affects the recruiting of qualified teachers for the systems, Coble said. "Districts that offer larger local supplements find it much easier to get the better teachers to go to their schools. That's a big advantage."

Kathy Travers, executive director of the Atlantic Center for Research in Education, said, "We have found that there are vast differences between the counties' ability to supplement state and federal funds available for education."

The state gives education funds on a

per-pupil basis, then counties contribute what they find necessary to supplement their school systems, she said. Counties with a large tax base can tax their citizens at the same rate as counties with a low tax base and generate far more money, she said. The end result is that students in counties with a low tax base end up with an inferior education.

"Students in the state should get the same quality of education regardless of where they live," she said.

Travers said the state should supplement counties that do not do as well as other counties in raising revenue for education.

Coble said some states had a state equalization fund to help narrow the gap between counties with different tax bases. The equalization fund is a special state fund appropriated only to school districts with low property values, he said.

The motivation of a student to take advantage of a school's available resources needs to be taken into consideration along with the money spent per child, said Ed Dunlap, associate executive director of the N.C. School Board Association, Inc.

The General Assembly recently passed the Educational Accountability and Improvement Act, which allows local school boards to develop school-based improvement plans. The plan allows the schools to spend state funds to meet student needs, he said. "This will go a long way to meet the problem."

Officials from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction were in meetings Thursday and could not be reached for comment.

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"You shouldn't have research at the expense of teaching or research just for research's sake."

Massey said Hardin's University Day speech expressed what he sees as the vision of the University.

"I fully applaud that (Hardin's

speech). To me that is a vision. To me, there is a difference between specific things you're going to do and a vision."

But Davis said he felt Hardin was not leading the University in the right direction. "He has not emphasized teaching, nor has he made an effort to get to know members of the General Assembly."

Hardin also needs to work with the General Administration and UNC-system President C.D. Spangler, Davis said.

"As C.D. Spangler says, it's easy to find one problem and focus on it, but Chancellor Hardin needs to step back

and see the entire UNC-system."

In reference to Hardin's proposal earlier this year and speculation that it might lead to UNC splitting from the rest of the system, Davis said, "Before anyone thinks about splitting away from the UNC system, they must first attempt to come up with a better plan for providing education to North Carolinians. I don't think they can find one."

The University also needs to keep Carolina attractive to faculty, staff and students, Lewis said. "We should treat people well and do everything we can to provide people with the capabilities to fulfill their tasks."

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Hurricane Jerry menaces Texas-Louisiana coastline

From Associated Press reports

NEW ORLEANS — Tropical storm Jerry developed into a hurricane Sunday and threatened to combine with the highest tides of the year to swamp the Texas-Louisiana coast with eight feet or more of water. Thousands were ordered to head for high ground.

"We're telling our residents to be prepared for high winds, high tides and surges, as well as to be prepared for numerous tornadoes," said Gary Stone, spokesman for the Emergency Operations Center at Galveston, Texas.

Jerry became a hurricane 110 miles off Galveston at noon EDT when its sustained winds hit 75 mph, or 1 mph above the threshold, said the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, Fla.

The hurricane was moving north-northwest about 10 mph and was expected to cross the upper Texas coast late Sunday night, with Galveston the most likely point to be hit by the storm's center. The city of 200,000 was the site of one of the worst hurricanes in U.S. history, a storm that killed 6,000 people in 1900.

Fed plan to contain market panic

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve put out the word Sunday that it stands ready to flood the banking system with money to prevent the second-biggest point drop in the history of the stock market from developing into something worse.

The Fed commitment came as the Bush administration continued its own efforts to reassure investors reeling from Friday's 190-point plunge in the Dow Jones industrial average.

White House Budget Director Richard Darman, who in recent weeks has been critical of the Fed's handling of monetary policy, expressed total confidence Sunday that the central bank and other government officials

News in Brief

would do everything necessary to contain the market turmoil.

Darman said that Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and Richard Breeden, the new chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, were keeping in close contact monitoring developments.

"I am sure they will do what is right, what is prudent, what is sensible," Darman said in an interview on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley."

Meanwhile, a senior Fed official said Sunday that the central bank intended to follow the example that Greenspan set following the October 1987 market crash.

Anti-apartheid leaders freed

SOWETO, South Africa — Eight leaders of the anti-apartheid movement became free men Sunday, seven of them after at least 25 years in jail, and told rejoicing supporters that equality for blacks in South Africa is in reach.

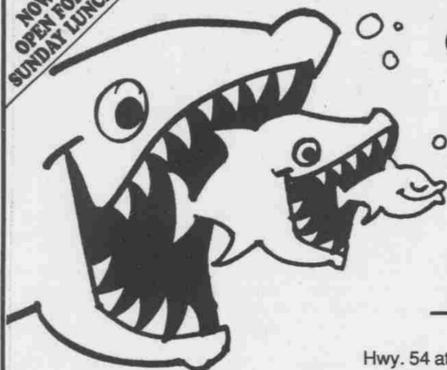
Walter Sisulu, 77, a friend and colleague of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, proudly presided over the first news conference held by the organization in South Africa since it was banned in 1960.

"Our determination has never been weakened by our long years of imprisonment," Sisulu told scores of reporters and hundreds of ANC followers who packed a church hall. "We have been strengthened by the developments in our country and our own clear vision of the future."

Some in the crowd wept as the freed prisoners, raising clenched fists, led their supporters in singing "God Bless Africa," the anthem of the anti-apartheid movement.

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