

Yo!, No Low Riders Allowed!

FACTS:

Young men were molested by older and stronger inmates.

They became suicidal because of what happened to them.

Prison officials took away their belts to prevent them from hanging.

That ended up being a symbol that the young man was actually someone's **GIRLFRIEND!**

This style began in PRISON!

SAGGERS



This is not cool! It's a disgrace! Sagging is "Not Cool!" It is **unacceptable** to girls, women and ladies!

There are more black men in US prisons today than there were slaves in 1850

The New Jim Crow - Michele Alexander



Many young Black men graduating from college today in the United States are less prepared to succeed in American society than their forefathers who were released from slavery in 1865.

When Black men were released from slavery in 1865, they became blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, merchants, teachers, doctors, lawyers, farmers, ranchers, cooks, soldiers and more. They built houses, towns, communities, businesses, families, schools, universities, institutions and

futures. Most of these men had less than a third-grade education. Given today's astronomically high unemployment rates for Black men in some cities, even Black men with college degrees might not find suitable employment, ever.

One hundred forty-nine years after slavery has ended, sixty years after the Brown versus Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court ruling and twelve years after the No Child Left Behind legislation, only 10 percent of 8th-grade Black boys in public schools across America read at or above a proficient level according to the 2011 U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The failure of Black boys in American schools is an unaddressed, undeclared and uncared about national disaster in the United States!

Not being able to read at an 8th-grade level means that young Black males in America have fewer options than their forefathers who were freed slaves. They do not have the option to attend college, or enlist in the military, or even to earn a living wage! Their lack of school success directly contributes to their super-high unemployment rate, their hyper-incarceration rate in the prison system, the vicious breakdown of the family unit, the social and economic decay of the Black community, and the crippling, senseless violence that has over taken many Black communities. In fact, as many of these young Black men cycle into the criminal justice system, they find that they have virtually re-entered a slavery system similar to the one their forefathers left-modern prisons.

There is no positive future in America for young Black men who cannot read at an 8th-grade level. They will have trouble working, living and surviving legally in America, and in most of the developed world. Truth be told, they are not better-off than their forefathers who were released from slavery. Appallingly low percentages of 8th-grade Black males read at or above a functionally proficient level according to data from the U.S. Department of Education:

2011 Reading Levels of 8th-Grade Black Males from 15 Low-Performing American School Districts*

City/Percentage of 8th-Grade Black Males Proficient in Reading

- Milwaukee - 3%
- Cleveland - 3%
- Detroit - 5%
- Washington (D.C.) - 6%
- San Diego - 7%
- Dallas - 7%
- Baltimore City - 7%
- Chicago - 9%
- Jefferson County, (KY) - 9%
- Atlanta - 9%
- Los Angeles - 9%
- Philadelphia - 9%
- Austin - 9%
- Houston - 9%
- Hillsborough County (FL) - 9%

There is nothing more important to the future of Black American communities than to ensure that Black boys can read proficiently. The education of Black boys is too important to leave solely to schools and government. For young Black men to continue to exist and to begin to thrive as viable human being, parents, families and communities must take control of their learning. Black communities are responsible for teaching young Black men to read, to think, to build, to father and to love!

Black communities must open their own reading academies in churches, community centers, libraries and parks to ensure that young Black men will learn to read well before the 8th grade. Black communities must create their own mentoring, tutoring, employment, entrepreneurship, technology, and father development classes for young Black men and boys. We can no longer afford to wait for America's solution to this catastrophe. Constructive help is not coming! The destruction of Black males in the U.S. can no longer be considered an American problem. These horrific statistics are evidence that America does not care—or worse!

School Backpacks may soon be Lighter as NC Modernizes to Digital Textbooks

By NC Representative D. Craig Horn



Raleigh – When was the last time you used a set of encyclopedias to look up a critical piece of information? Seems like the transition to the digital age has seamlessly happened as we look up facts via Google, manage our bills and banking online or send co-workers e-mails to arrange meetings. North Carolina's schools are embarking on the same shift as the state transitions into the digital environment in public education.

Most of the texts that the schools use can be part of a digital bookshelf kept on an Internet cloud, a more efficient way to store information and increasingly the way that students learn. The online content is much richer. "You've got assessments,

you've got virtual labs and you've got blogging," explains one teacher.

Online history books, for example, include videos on subjects ranging from Winston Churchill to Malcolm X, science books show scientific processes in motion and online English books grade an essay and offer a student a worksheet on the proper use of various grammatical applications. The school technology directors say the textbooks can be updated three times a semester or as often as needed whereas printed textbooks are outdated the moment that they are handed to a student.

The economic advantage is clear as well. For example, the average cost of a middle school math textbook is well over \$50 – compared to a grade-level digital textbook that can be made available for a few dollars. Even better, the digital textbook prices are rapidly falling.

The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) has correctly identified the way forward for students in this digital world. This past session, the NCGA set aside nearly \$30 million in the 2013-15 budget for digital learning and technology, \$11.9 million in lottery funds and \$18 million in civil fines and forfeiture funds. The NCGA also made good on the promise to expand local control by giving Local Education Areas (LEA's) the ability to use other sources of funds for textbook purchases. Many of the state's districts have already moved decisively to develop and implement digital learning resources to fill their unique needs.

But the transition to digital textbook technology is only part of the ongoing discussion that has been taking place regarding textbook funding. The current Republican Majority took on this issue after 300 N. Salisbury St., Room 419A, Raleigh, NC 27603 (919) 733-2406 – Craig.Horn@ncleg.net the previous Democrat-controlled legislature slashed textbook funding in the 2009-10 school year by more than \$100 million. Since then, the Republican Majority has been working to restore textbook funding which is now 10-fold greater than when Republicans took over the majority in 2011 – as well as promoting the modernization of text books through digital options.

Just as you wouldn't revert back to looking up information via encyclopedias, the future of education is not in handing out expensive printed textbooks for students to lug back and forth from school to home. And while digital textbooks are no panacea for education outcomes – there is much work ahead including the challenges of connectivity, bandwidth and access to devices - it's clear that the digital approach is the future to make our students among the most competitive and best in the nation.

North Carolina's schools will not meet the challenges of the future by focusing on the past. We - each parent, teacher, legislator and taxpayer - must be involved in making North Carolina a leader in the digital world – and digital textbooks are an essential way to start.

Great is Thy Faithfulness