

Public schools go virtual, create learning options

BY CAROLINE MOAKLEY
STAFF WRITER

Public education in North Carolina is now just a click away. Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue officially launched last month the N.C. Virtual Public School, a program that makes a variety of online courses available to students.

"North Carolina's economic success for tomorrow is about what's happening in our classrooms today," she stated in an e-mail. "In order to compete in the global economy, kids need to learn in the classroom and online."

Perdue said online education is essential in providing equal opportunities statewide. "This is another step to ensure students have access to high quality courses and learning regardless of their ZIP code."

During the summer, a pilot program for the state's online initiative offered Advanced Placement exam reviews through the Internet for high school students.

John Boling, interim director

of the virtual school, said almost 8,500 students took advantage of the online review within a period of three weeks. The recently enacted virtual school is attracting similar enrollment.

"This fall we have roughly 5,000 high school students around the state taking courses online," Boling said. "And we anticipate that number to grow."

All courses offered by the virtual school will be taught by a state-certified teacher.

"We know that not all one size fits all in education," Boling said. "Students who have a need to take a course that otherwise they can't take at their local high school will have interest in the program, students who work will have interest, students with special needs."

He said the program also could help link Spanish-speaking students struggling with chemistry, for example, with a Spanish-speaking chemistry teacher in another part of the state.

The N.C. General Assembly has guaranteed \$2.6 million in annual funds for the virtual school. The budget this year includes about \$200,000 extra for the program.

The virtual school will not be limited to high school students, either. "They want to have a plan established for middle and elementary schools by mid-next year," said Tim Crowley, Perdue's spokesman.

He added that the General Assembly has appropriated \$6 million to upgrade broadband Internet technology in schools.

Similar programs have enjoyed success in other states. Florida has been operating a virtual online school since 1997.

The new school is working with the providers to evaluate their course offerings, and Boling said an important goal is providing quality education. "The new definition of literacy is who can learn online."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Students object to Title IX

Say policy hurts, not helps, athletes

BY MOLLY MALLOY
STAFF WRITER

It was an animated scene Thursday outside the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., as James Madison University athletes, coaches and supporters rallied in protest of Title IX.

Title IX was enacted in 1972 as a gender-equality law, but in 2006, U.S. student athletes are still reeling from its repercussions.

Just ask one of the 144 athletes at JMU whose program was cut because of Title IX regulations earlier this fall.

"I can't say that there's one student who's happy with this," said JMU Student Body President Brandon Eickel.

Eickel said he and other JMU students view the program cuts as the last straw in Title IX.

"This must come to an end," he said. "If this thing keeps up and continues to take teams and athletes away, then I'm not sure where we're headed."

The program cuts, which affected seven men's varsity teams and three women's varsity teams, will

go into effect July 1 of next year.

Andy Perrine, JMU spokesman, said that the administration was not happy about the decision, but that as the university's enrollment shifted to include more female students, the school needed a correlating percentage of female athletes.

Adding more women's programs was not a financial option with the school already boasting 28 varsity sports teams, Perrine said.

"We were so far out of compliance that we would have had to add over 220 women athletes," he said. "It was a tough decision, and sometimes those have to be made."

Still, other universities initially out of compliance with Title IX have avoided cutting programs.

Paul Plinske, athletic director at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater said the administration focused on adding opportunities rather than decreasing them.

"We looked at it more as roster adjustments more than roster cuts," he said.

The university has added 50 participation opportunities for

women since 2005 and decreased 20 opportunities for men, without having to cut any programs.

"We are adamantly opposed to decreasing sports programs on our campus," he said.

Plinske added this stance is not limited to the athletic department, but it is one embraced by the entire administration.

Rally attendees said the JMU scenario exemplifies the outdated nature of Title IX.

Allison Kasic, director of campus programs for the Independent Women's Forum and a speaker at Thursday's rally, said the problem is how Title IX has been interpreted since its inception.

"It was obviously done at a time when women faced a lot of discrimination, not just in athletics," she said. "The truth of the matter is that women have made tremendous strides since 1972."

Kasic said Title IX takes away more than it provides, injuring the entire university population as well as the community.

"It doesn't benefit men. It doesn't benefit women," she said. "We want it to be fair to both sexes."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

National and World News

Baath party members may reclaim lost jobs

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A day after Saddam Hussein was sentenced to hang, the country's Shiite-dominated government offered a major concession to his Sunni backers that could see thousands of purged Baath party members reinstated in their jobs.

With a tight curfew holding down violence after Saddam's guilty verdict and death sentence, the government reached out to disaffected Sunnis in hopes of enticing them away from the insurgency, which has killed tens of thousands of Iraqis and is responsible for the vast majority of U.S. casualties.

The United States had recently called for the Iraqi government to stop purging members of Saddam's Baath party from their jobs. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, however, has balked at U.S. requests to set up an amnesty for insurgents.

Power shift possible in midterm elections

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — On the eve of midterm elections, Democrats criticized Republicans as stewards of a stale status quo while President Bush campaigned into the evening in a drive to preserve GOP control in Congress.

"They can't run anything right," said former President Clinton, taunting Republicans about the war in Iraq, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the scandal involving the House page program that complicated GOP efforts to win two more years in power.

Some late polls suggested momentum was swinging the Republicans' way, and Ken Mehlman, the party chairman, told allies the surveys summoned memories of 1998, when the GOP lost seats but held power.

Some Republicans signaled privately they expected to lose more than 15 seats and control of the House.

Pump prices drop again

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The price of gasoline fell to its lowest level in more than 10 months.

The federal Energy Information Administration said Monday that U.S. motorists paid \$2.20 a gallon on average for regular grade last week, a decrease of 1.8 cents from the previous week.

Pump prices are now 17.6 cents lower than a year ago and have plummeted by more than 80 cents a gallon since the start of August. The last time prices were below \$2.20, on average, was the week ending Dec. 26, 2005.

No loitering in this school

SHALLOTTE (AP) — Students who need to use the restroom at West Brunswick High School can't go alone. They have to be escorted by school administrators.

It's been that way since early October, when hall passes were revoked after trash cans were set on fire and fire alarms were pulled.

Some students complain of being treated like preschoolers, but principal Jim Jordan is more concerned with safety.

"It's sort of a life lesson we're trying to teach kids," Jordan said. "It takes all of us together to be a good school."

Cuba leader recovering

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba's foreign minister backed away Monday from his prediction that Fidel Castro will return to power by early December, leaving open questions about the pace of the communist leader's recovery from intestinal surgery.

Felipe Perez Roque told The Associated Press that Castro's recovery was "advancing," but declined to guarantee that Castro would be well enough to attend the postponed celebration of his 80th birthday on Dec. 2.

"It's a subject on which I don't want to speculate," he said.

Group offers pedestrian solutions

Requests overpass on Fordham Blvd.

BY JESSICA SCHONBERG
CITY EDITOR

Last January, UNC professor David Galinsky was struck and killed by a car while walking to a basketball game at the Smith Center.

Galinsky was one of five pedestrian deaths in Chapel Hill in the span of about a month.

A work group, formed in February to make sure no one else is hurt on the road where Galinsky died, took its recommendations to the Chapel Hill Town Council on Monday night.

Its chief recommendation was construction of an overpass that would cross Fordham Boulevard somewhere between Manning Drive and Old Mason Farm Road.

"This is the treatment that the group desperately wants out there," said Joe Hummer, a professor of civil engineering transportation systems and materials at N.C. State University who helped the group draft its recommendations.

The stretch of Fordham Boulevard studied has two lanes running in each direction with at least two turn lanes at the intersections.

UNC's main campus, the Smith Center, student housing and UNC Hospitals are on one side of the road, while Finley Golf Course, the N.C. Botanical Gardens, several neighborhoods and sports practice fields are on the other.

Nancy Tripoli, a member of the group, said it does not make sense to have a state road disconnecting

a state university from all of those other things.

"You've seen side one. You've seen side two," she said.

"The only way to connect those two is either by car or by peril."

Tripoli said that the bridge would help increase connectivity with the town and that it could be an icon for the University.

She suggested inscribing UNC-Chapel Hill on the side and writing about it in promotional literature.

The bridge would be a significant financial undertaking, but the group also recommended some cheaper solutions.

Marked crosswalks with push-button countdowns could be installed at each intersection.

The group also asked that police direct traffic at the intersection of Manning Drive during basketball games and all other Smith Center events. The N.C. Highway Patrol already directs traffic during foot-

ball games.

The work group asked that the University be required to study and fund its suggestions if proposed developments on South Campus are approved.

After listening to the group's suggestions, the council referred the proposal to town staff for consideration.

Council member Jim Ward, who worked with the group, encouraged other council members to consider all of their options.

"It's not a wish list," he said. "It's really a reasonable list of inexpensive easy-to-do-within-six-months sort of things."

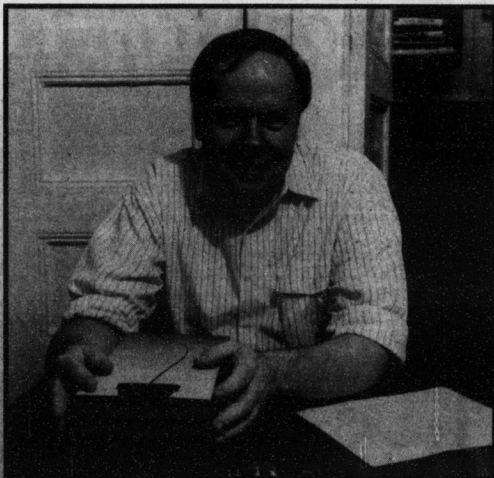
Ward also asked council members not to discount the idea for the bridge.

"I think we just cannot let ourselves be limited by what we think are insurmountable obstacles," he said.

"They don't have to be that way."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

The Not So Private Life of Allen Ginsberg



A talk by Bill Morgan
Ginsberg archivist and bibliographer

Wednesday, November 8

5:00 p.m. - Reception

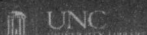
5:45 p.m. - Talk, followed by book signing

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