THE DAILY CLIPS

April 9, 2010

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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Report: Teachers tied to test scores
By Mary C. Schulken
Special to The Daily Reflector
Thursday, April 8, 2010
If state universities such as East Carolina want to boost public schools they should adopt new
teacher training practices such as summer boot camps and intensive mentoring programs that
target weak spots, researchers said Thursday.
A new report tying North Carolina student test scores to individual teachers shows inexperienced
instructors and those trained out of state post poorer results than experienced teachers and those
trained in-state. It also shows the state has high numbers of inexperienced and out-of-state
teachers in its classrooms.
At a time when state education dollars are unlikely to expand, the research points to an urgent
need for reform, the head of the University of North Carolina system said.
“We’re not talking about money,” Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC system, said. “What
we’re talking about is doing what we’re doing now better, and in a different way.”
The research, presented to the UNC Board of Governors, is the first time detailed data has linked
teachers with how they entered the profession, where they were trained and how their students
performed. North Carolina and Florida are the only two states using such data to reshape teacher
training.
UNC will use it as a basis to decide how to improve teacher preparation programs at public
campuses such as ECU, Alisa Chapman, who oversees K-12 education for UNC, said.
“The research allows us to discern best practices from routes (by which teachers enter teaching)
and campuses that have significant and positive impacts,” Chapman said.
ECU began as a state school to train teachers. It leads the state in the number of teachers trained
as well as the number of teachers it graduates through a lateral entry program. Lateral entry
allows non-teachers to enter the classroom and gives them three years to be certified.
The report analyzed more than 2.2 million test scores, 772,871 students and 18,561 teachers with
less than five years of experience.
Lead researchers Charles Thompson of ECU and Gary T. Henry from UNC-Chapel Hill set out to
benchmark the performance of teachers who were prepared in UNC system programs against the
performance of those with other types of preparation: out-of-state, lateral entry, Teach for
America and state private and independent colleges.
Some highlights:
UNC undergraduates (32 percent of teacher work force) perform in the middle of the pack,
scoring better than others in 15 comparisons, worse in nine and no different in 76.
Inexperienced teachers make up 7-10 percent of classroom teachers in any given year. Yet first-
year teachers are less effective in nine out of 11 comparisons; second and third-year teachers are
less effective in five of nine comparisons.
Out-of-state undergraduates make up 23 percent of the teacher work force and perform worse than UNC undergraduates in key areas, particularly in elementary math and reading and in high school math and social studies.

Lateral entry teachers (15 percent of the work force) perform worse than UNC undergraduates, notably in high school, where they are concentrated.

Teach For America teachers (3 percent of work force) outperform UNC undergraduates in five of nine comparisons, with no difference in four.

The report has been shared with the deans of North Carolina’s 15 teacher-training programs, Thompson said. The next step will be to pilot new practices.

One example: Teach for America is a nonprofit that recruits outstanding college graduates to teach for two years in low-income urban and rural communities. The organization uses so-called “soft skills” to identify potentially successful teachers rather than using test scores. ECU is working on an assessment tool and pilot program the system can apply, Thompson said.

Another reform suggested by researchers is a six-week summer boot camp for teachers trained out of state to immerse them in the state’s course of study.

“We have to decide whether we spend the money we have for teacher development the way we spend it now or whether we spend it differently,” Bowles said. “We have to choose what is most effective.”

Mary C. Schulken is the former editorial page editor of the The Daily Reflector and former associate editor of The Charlotte Observer.

**Who trains teachers?**

Numbers are from 2007-08
Unc school Traditional graduates Alternative completers
ECU 481 210
ASU 439 36
UNC Charlotte 338 222
UNC Greensboro 328 53
UNC Wilmington 281 44

Source: UNC general administration
ECU School of Music puts on 'The marriage of Figaro'

The Daily Reflector
Friday, April 9, 2010

Springtime not only ushers in warmer weather and budding gardens, it also marks the beginning of the wedding season. Complementing the seasonal weddings, East Carolina University’s School of Music is following suit with performances of “The Marriage of Figaro.”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s opera will be performed by ECU’s School of Music at 7 p.m. Thursday-April 17 with an additional show at 2 p.m. April 17 in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall. Mozart began composing “Figaro” at the end of 1785. He collaborated with Lorenzo Da Ponte who wrote the Italian libretto, or words. The story was based on a stage comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais, “La Folle Journée, ou le Mariage de Figaro,” a play that had been banned in Vienna for its satire of the aristocracy.

Emperor Joseph II accepted the opera and “Figaro” premiered at the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 1, 1786. Mozart himself directed the first two performances.

The local production’s cast is comprised of ECU students and the orchestra is a combination of students and ECU faculty.

To provide a greater number of students the opportunity to perform, there are two casts. One will perform Thursday and for the April 17th matinee, and the other will perform at 7 p.m. April 16-17.

“To see and hear Mozart’s work in the hands of a new generation of musicians is a joyous experience,” said director John Kramar.

The opera is set in 1780 at the Almaviva family castle, Aguas Frescas, near Seville, Spain. It opens on the morning of Figaro and Susanna’s wedding.
Turns out, however, that the Count — who is married to Rosina — has secretly been wooing Susanna.
The opera takes place throughout Figaro and Suzanna’s wedding day as the soon-to-be-married couple work both together and separately not only save their own wedding but Count Almaviva’s marriage to Rosina as well.

"Figaro’ is a work where the composer is able to exploit comic and dramatic situations to show humankind’s deepest emotions, all the while pouring forth our world’s most beautiful music," Kramar said.

If you Go!
What: “The Marriage of Figaro”
When: 7 p.m. Thursday-April 16; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. April 17
Where: A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall
Cost: $5-$15
Call: 328-4788
Erin O’Leary, left, and Bryan Pollock work on a scene from “The Marriage of Figaro.”
Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

Photos by /The Daily Reflector Cast
members Jessica Laliberte, right, and Christian Waugh work on a scene from Mozart’s “The Marriage of Figaro” during rehearsal in ECU’s A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall on Wednesday.
Justin Falls

Cast members sing during rehearsal for Mozart’s “The Marriage of Figaro.”
Justin Falls
Better teacher, better students

Rookie teachers are much less effective than their more experienced colleagues, a new report says, pointing to a need for better preparation for prospective teachers and for more support once they're standing in front of classrooms.

As North Carolina looks to improve public school students' achievement, the report from University of North Carolina researchers makes an important link between where new teachers are educated and how their students perform on standardized tests.

Education leaders and policymakers are focused on teacher effectiveness as a key to improving student performance. Good teachers lead to measurable student gains, while students who have ineffective teachers can lose ground.

"The results are surprising, to say the least," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC system Board of Governors. "They shatter a lot of our preconceived ideas about what it takes to truly prepare a teacher."

The study, presented to the board Thursday, showed that teachers who graduated from the state's public universities were in the middle of the pack in terms of effectiveness, while teachers who are in the Teach for America program excel in high school classrooms and in teaching middle school math. Students in Teach for America teachers' middle school math classes get the equivalent of about 90 extra days of learning.

Teach for America is a national nonprofit that recruits college graduates to teach in schools with low-income students. Teach for America teachers are employed in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and in 12 Eastern North Carolina school districts, but they make up a tiny percentage of the work force.

Ideas for improvement

The results pointed to a number of areas where the universities and the state Department of Public Instruction can look to improve teacher preparation. For example, the UNC system is working with DPI on a plan to support new teachers in their first three years on the job. The UNC system is also interested in replicating what it can from Teach for America's teacher preparation.

"Our teachers aren't dummies," said UNC system President Erskine Bowles. "Our teachers are pretty smart. That's not the problem. It's how you train them - how you select them."

The study looked at student scores on end-of-grade and end-of-course tests and connected that information to their teachers, how long they'd been teaching and where they learned to teach. The focus was on teachers with less than five years experience. All school districts were included.

Rookie teachers are less effective in nine out of 11 measures. Elementary school math students in inexperienced teachers' classrooms lose the equivalent of 21 days of school, and middle school math students lose the equivalent of 47 days of school.
Practice is key

Lindsey Evans of Cary recently won an award from the Wake County district given to first-year teachers. Evans, an N.C. State University graduate who teaches eighth-grade social studies at Apex Middle School, said she was a student teacher in both the subject and grade she now teaches. UNC researchers said that factor was important.

"There's a huge difference between a sixth-grader and an eighth-grader," Evans said.

She also said she has a lot of support from experienced teachers at Apex Middle, including her mentor and the teacher in whose class she worked while in college. One reason some teachers struggle is that they don't have anyone they can turn to with questions, she said.

Who needs a boost?

Teachers who attend out-of-state colleges then move to North Carolina to teach perform worse than UNC-system graduates in elementary school math and reading and in high school math and social studies. Wake County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg have some of the highest concentrations of teachers hired from out-of-state.

Lateral-entry teachers, those who have college degrees but not teaching credentials, are concentrated in small districts such as Bertie, Halifax and Pasquotank counties. They performed worse than UNC-system graduates in two of 11 measures, notably in high school classrooms. Lateral-entry teachers in high schools teach 37 percent of students taking classes with end-of-course exams.

"We're concentrating lateral-entry teachers in places where they're least effective," said Gary T. Henry, director of the Carolina Institute for Public Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill and one of the report's authors.

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Editorial: PirateFest highlights city’s best for residents, visitors
Friday, April 9, 2010
With jagged inlets and clandestine sounds, the North Carolina coast served as a popular point of call during the so-called “Golden Age” of piracy in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. These rogues and their crews operated along the Outer Banks and across the eastern plain, forging a historical legacy for the region.
Just as East Carolina University tapped into that tradition in choosing a name for its sports teams, the city of Greenville has linked that era to its annual PirateFest celebration, now in its fourth year. With live music, ample food and drink, street performers and other amenities, the event fittingly highlights the best of this community with a moniker that nods to the region’s roots. From Grifton’s Shad Festival, to Farmville’s Dogwood Festival, to the Collard Festival in Ayden, eastern North Carolina cities and towns love their annual celebrations. They provide a time for the community to gather and show the things that make it special, while drawing out residents to spend time with one another. That they draw visitors and can boost revenue for local business is an added benefit.
For nearly two decades, Greenville’s annual International Festival served that noble purpose. An afternoon on the Town Common that typically drew healthy crowds, the event centered on the city as a regional hub that lures people from around the globe for school and work. In highlighting its diverse population, Greenville showed one of its best sides to residents and visitors alike.
Four years ago, the International Festival was incorporated into a larger event to be held on the weekend of the East Carolina football spring game and its annual Pigskin Pig-Out. Dubbed PirateFest, the weekend featured local bands, actors in pirate costume, places to eat and drink as well as the traditional International Festival. This prefaced the spring game, and was an immediately impressive but successful event.
This year, East Carolina will hold its events one week later, leaving the city to celebrate PirateFest without the activity surrounding a football scrimmage. However, that should provide a greater focus on the city’s downtown district and its front lawn for the many events and attractions scheduled for the weekend.
Rare is the occasion when this community can gather together, enjoy one another’s company and celebrate the things that make Greenville a unique and special place to live, learn and work. Take advantage by stopping by PirateFest today and Saturday.
Pharmacists could train in Asheville

DURHAM -- A UNC-Chapel Hill plan for a satellite pharmacy program in Asheville appears to have bested a competing proposal from UNC Greensboro.

A committee of the UNC system's Board of Governors recommended approval Thursday of a UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy request to establish a satellite program that would eventually produce about 40 pharmacists a year to work in Western North Carolina.

If approved by the full board today, the project would put the brakes on a far larger UNCG plan to create a new pharmacy school in downtown Greensboro. Committee members said the smaller proposal by UNC-CH, whose pharmacy program is one of the nation's best, made more sense than spending big on a new pharmacy school.

"We'll get far more bang for the buck by maximizing one of the top two [pharmacy] schools in the country," said James Deal, a committee member. "It makes perfect sense to me."

UNC-CH and UNC Asheville will work with Mission Hospital in Asheville to build the program. The program would be patterned on a similar distance-education project that UNC-CH's pharmacy school has run for about five years at Elizabeth City State University.

In the current economy, UNC system officials have shown little interest in spending big on new projects.

And the UNCG plan would be costly, requiring about $10 million in startup costs and an eventual new downtown Greensboro facility in the $50 million to $70 million range.

UNCG officials also said this week that private industry and community organizations in Greensboro have promised to pick up those costs.

UNCG Chancellor Linda Brady promoted her proposal Thursday as a way to reinvigorate the Triad. It would have a $234 million economic impact in its first 10 years and create 307 jobs.

But Erskine Bowles, the UNC system president, who recommended the UNC-CH plan, emphasized Thursday that the UNC system didn't need both initiatives.

Questions of need linger. A new report from UNC-CH's Sheps Center for Health Services Research has found that North Carolina, which for much of the last decade had a severe pharmacist shortage, now has as many as it needs except in rural parts of the state.

But officials from UNC-CH and the western part of the state argued that Asheville is one of those underserved areas. Buncombe County, where Asheville is located, has pledged $600,000 to help fund the UNC-CH program, and the local Chamber of Commerce promised a fundraising drive to kick in an additional $2.5 million.

Those contributions, coupled with tuition receipts, will guarantee the expansion won't cost taxpayers anything, Bowles said.

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