

View thousands of Homes...

CUT YOUR COMMUTE

Huntington LEARNING CENTER

PLACE THANKSGIVING HAPPY ADS HERE

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL sponsored by

Parent Nation

POHANKA AUTO CENTER

FUG



48°F Wind: W9MPH Partly Cloudy 12:21 PM

RSS

Search

Tue, Nov. 25, 2008 | make us your homepage

Weather Forecast

ADVERTISE - Alerts - Mobile - Closings - Contact

THE FREE LANCE-STAR ENTERTAINMENT PICS & VIDEO BLOGS COMMUNITY FREDTALK CLASSIFIEDS REAL ESTATE JOBS WHEELS STAR DIRECTORY SHOPPING SITE MAP

YOUR COMMUNITY: Caroline | Culpeper | King George | Fredericksburg | Orange | Spotsylvania | Stafford | Westmoreland

advertisement

National Carpet & Rug

Huge Selection of Rugs Featuring College and Pro Teams!

Design Center
Rt. 3 West
540/786-2626

Earl's Shopping Center
540/373-3434

Microsoft Live Search

tree houses

Build a Tree House This Season (or just check out these crazy pictures!)

DRAG ME

advertisement

POHANKA AUTO CENTER
81 Fredericksburg
540/898-5200

NISSAN · CADILLAC
HYUNDAI

A GREAT PLACE TO BUY A CAR

POHANKA
PREFERRED USED CARS
540/898-5200
FINANCING AS LOW AS 3.9%

CARFAX
VEHICLE HISTORY REPORTS

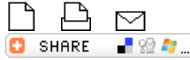
Hundreds of Imports at Low Prices!

The Free Lance-Star

U.Va. study shows inaccuracies in school census, tax allocations

BY ZINIE CHEN SAMPSON

Date published: 11/25/2008



BY ZINIE CHEN SAMPSON

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

RICHMOND

--Virginia's school divisions don't always get an accurate count of their school-age residents, resulting in misallocations of tax money--possibly by as much as \$17 million--for public education, a University of Virginia study shows.

Researchers at the university's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service in Charlottesville compared their population estimates with the counts reported by 98 of the state's 132 school divisions and found that the way localities conduct their census varies widely, and often has resulted in undercounting or overcounting of Virginia residents age 5 through 19.

"The concern is unfair funding," Qian Cai, director of the center's demographics and workforce section, said yesterday. "The pot of funding is fixed, so the concern is how to allocate, how to cut up the pie."

Under Virginia law, 1.125 percent of the state's sales tax goes to school divisions for public education. The money is distributed according to the number of school-age children reported by school divisions once every three years. The most recent triennial census was conducted in 2008; the next one is scheduled for 2011.

The study found that as much as \$17 million may have been misdirected to localities overreporting school-age children in 2007. "That same \$17 million theoretically should have gone to localities undercounting their population," the report said.

Sixty-seven school divisions underreported the number of school-age children in 2005, resulting in too little funding; 27 divisions reported too many children, resulting in too much funding, the report found. Only four school divisions--Grayson, James City, Nelson and Russell counties--counted accurately.

The study also found that the total triennial census in 2005 may have undercounted more than 41,000 children, or 4.2 percent of the overall total in the 98 localities.

Localities that are home to colleges and universities were excluded from this particular study because of differences in the way the school census and the Cooper Center count children who attend college away from home.

The problem is the Virginia Department of Education provides guidelines for conducting the census, but local school divisions are responsible for planning, paying for it and carrying it out. Often that responsibility is assigned to people who lack proper training or adequate time.

The state's largest school division, Fairfax County, for example, spent \$600,000 in 2005, according to the report.

"The triennial census presents a burden of time and resources on public school divisions, and unfortunately, does

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

www.umw.edu

540/286-8000

FIND THE JOB YOU WANT.

jobfetch.com

get it together.

not result in accurate data," the report says.

Solutions suggested by the report include establishing a state-level triennial census with a standardized questionnaire and giving localities the option of using the Cooper Center's estimates of the school-age population to determine sales-tax distribution.

The report was presented recently to the education subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee and is expected to be distributed to all General Assembly members.

Date published: **11/25/2008**

Breaking News - click here to have the latest delivered to your email box or cell phone

What do you think?

Enter your FredTalk username and password to post a comment on this story. If you are registered on FredTalk or another part of this site, use that login here. Otherwise, you can just [REGISTER here...](#)

Username: Password:

Post title:

Please keep it brief: (512-character limit)
 (Posts that exceed the 512-character limit will be deleted.)

By checking this box, you agree to the terms of the [FredTalk User agreement](#).

Stay Current! SUBSCRIBE!
Have The Free Lance-Star delivered everyday!

Local News Updates:

- [Slain FBI agent has local connection](#)
 (Tuesday, 08:53, The Free Lance-Star)
- [Man, 21, convicted in child's beating](#)
 (Tuesday, 00:36, The Free Lance-Star)
- [Suit attempts to stop mall road project](#)
 (Tuesday, 00:36, The Free Lance-Star)
- [Road to Grandma's not too crowded](#)
 (Tuesday, 00:36, The Free Lance-Star)
- [State News Headlines](#)

Today's Popular Stories:

- [Slain FBI agent has local connection](#)
- [Man, 21, convicted in child's beating](#)
- [Suit attempts to stop mall road project](#)
- [Man charged with rape after woman reports years of assaults](#)
- [Relax a little, Stafford, with regard to cell phones in schools](#)

Most commented items in past 48 Hours:

- [Impeach these war criminals!](#)
 11/17/2008 (106 comments)
- [Hold on now, your tilt left is showing](#)
 11/19/2008 (73 comments)
- [Calls for impeachment are totally irrational](#)
 11/21/2008 (51 comments)
- [Historic election overlooked gay rights](#)
 11/23/2008 (48 comments)
- ['We the people' includes the gay](#)



Copyright 2008, The Free Lance-Star Publishing Co. of [Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA](#)
 Permissions - [Privacy Policy](#) - [Send email to Support Staff](#) - [Send email to the News Team](#)

To contact all other newspaper departments, please [click here](#) or call 540-374-5000.
 To contact the Free Lance-Star please use the following numbers:

Main Switchboard: 540-374-5000, Advertising: 540-374-5460, Classifieds: 540-374-5001, Subscriber Services: 540-374-5002, Toll-free: 800-877-0500