

# Trend Is Toward Slowly Declining Enrollment in EUP Schools; 3 Districts Report Growth

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almost matching the 266 students the School Board had estimated when budgeting. The district had 10 more students last year, said Superintendent Jim Wilcoxin.

"What I see over the last few years is that kindergarten classes are not as big as they used to be," Mr. Wilcoxin said. "That's the trend. Maybe families just aren't as large. Engadine, 30 years ago, had about 500 kids in the school. Families used to be a lot bigger."

Mr. Wilcoxin said while school administrators are happy about the per-pupil funding hike this year, but noted that rising costs of heat and bus fuel this year will quickly offset the increase.

"Any increase is better than nothing, and we are happy they increased it, but \$175 isn't going to go very far," he said.

## Mackinac Island School Gains Nine Students

One of the schools to report an enrollment surge this fall is Mackinac Island Public School, which grew in population from 72 students last year to 81 this year.

The growth does not impact funding for the district, said Superintendent Jack Dehring, because the school is one of a few in the state that does not qualify for

foundation allowance.

"We look forward to a good school year," Mr. Dehring said. "We are up in student population, and we like to see that. It's good to have students to fill those seats."

Mr. Dehring did note at a September school board meeting that student numbers may continue to fluctuate during the school year, as a few students move off-Island when seasonal businesses close late in the fall.

## Gros Cap School Notes Enrollment Drop of Nine

Eighty students are enrolled at Gros Cap School in Moran Township this year, down from 89 a year ago, said Superintendent Bill Peltier. The school is completely funded by property taxes, he said.

"The foundation allowance has no bearing on Gros Cap School," Mr. Peltier said. "Money from our school is not coming from the state but from local non-homestead property owners. There are only a few schools, last year I think it was seven schools, in the state that operate on non-homestead property tax only. One way to look at it is that through their contribution to homestead property taxes, people who live on Mackinac Island, and at Gros Cap and Mackinaw City are helping to fund education for other areas throughout the state." Rather

than drawing foundation allowance funds from the state, he explained, homestead taxpayers in the district are putting money "into the pot" of state funds for education. Lottery money and sales tax also plays a part in the state's funding of education, he said.

## Mackinaw City School Loses Two Students; High Gas Prices Take 8 to 10 from School of Choice

There are 231 students enrolled this fall at Mackinaw City Public School, down just two students from last year. Adding four-year-old students in the school's preschool program, however, brings the total number of youngsters at the school to 246, said Superintendent Jeff Curth.

While the state's foundation allowance funding does not affect Mackinaw City school district, the rising cost of gasoline this year has hit the school in an area that last year was strong: the school of choice program. Last year, the choice option drew some 60 stu-

dents from neighboring Cheboygan and Pellston districts. The program represented at least 25 percent of the district's enrollment, making it a strong factor in student numbers at the school. A more typical draw of school of choice students would be roughly 10 percent to 15 percent, Mr. Curth said.

"We are holding our own, but gas prices have hurt school of choice for us," Mr. Curth told *The St. Ignace News*. "We have lost eight or 10 students this fall because families can't afford to drive the extra 20 or 25 minutes. They are not choosing to go to the districts they live in, but instead they are being home schooled."

Mr. Curth noted that high district test scores, for example scoring three points higher than the state and national average on the ACT college admission test, have drawn students from neighboring districts to Mackinaw City in recent years.

## Rudyard Area Schools Budgets for 1,000, Enrolls 1,003

An unofficial count at Rudyard Area Schools reveals a population

of 1,003 students this year, up from 1,000 a year ago. Population remained fairly consistent, as anticipated, said Superintendent Nancy Berkompas. "We balanced the budget on 1,000."

Times are tight for school funding at all Michigan schools right now, Mrs. Berkompas said. "We are, of course, looking at all options for constraining our budget," she said of managing the district's finances. "We are keeping our students uppermost and we are not planning any cuts to academics, sports, or fine arts. Efficiency is the biggest issue, and we want to take a look at each thing we do, and ask ourselves, 'Are we doing this efficiently?'"

## Enrollment Surge Boosts Bottom Line at DeTour

DeTour Area Schools has 236 students enrolled this year, compared to 220 last fall and 230 last winter semester. Interim Superintendent Angela Reed said a few families moved into the district, and class sizes are still in the desirable range, with 20 to 25 students in high school

classes. Most of the district's revenue comes from property taxes, she said, although the district does receive a portion of the foundation allowance funds that other area schools get. As waterfront property values continue to rise in the district, she pointed out, more and more of the district's funding will come from non-homestead property taxes, and proportionately less will be needed from the state's foundation allowance.

Mrs. Reed, formerly the district's principal for kindergarten through 12th grade, replaces Joe Powers as superintendent. Mr. Powers took a position as school superintendent in Grayling. Mrs. Reed now serves as interim superintendent and elementary school principal, while special education teacher Angela Nettleton serves as middle school and high school principal in addition to teaching half-time.

"This is an interim solution, while the school board is considering how to fill positions and whether to conduct a full superintendent search," Mrs. Reed said.

# Great Waters Tourism Workshop To Focus on Combined EUP Efforts

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by bringing attention to the Lake Superior Trail, Ms. Hudson said. It does the same with the Lake Huron Trail and the Lake Michigan Trail, which travels along the lake before turning north and connecting to Seney Wildlife Refuge. At some point, Mrs. Hudson said, she would like to add the St. Mary's River to the list and create an official touring loop.

The Great Waters connects approximately 35 sites, and trail guides employed by EUPNTA will be part of The Great Waters project, providing a way to enhance tourists' outdoor experiences at their chosen locations.

According to Ms. Hudson, the initiative is driven by the realization that

the EUP is the only place in the world where such great and varied bodies of water meet, a region with beautiful natural areas as well as a rich history.

"Water, trees, and history can be found in other places," she said, "but this is the only place that has such a powerful combination."

The Great Waters project connects its various trails by established walks, and information on the Web site, tourists can explore The Lake Huron Trail theme, for example, which is based on "sheltered bays and ancient paths." The Lake Huron Trail theme focuses on voyageurs, Native American history, and scientific information concerning glaciers, Ms. Hudson said.

The Lake Michigan Trail theme will be based on "windswept dunes"

and "hidden lakes." The Lake Superior Trail, a maritime theme, will be based on "rugged shores and falling water," she added.

Key to the project is The Great Waters Web site, which sets itself aside from other tourism-based sites by keeping strictly to these themes, promoting local businesses and artists, and keeping to a strong conservation ethic.

"Through this project," Ms. Hudson said, "we are trying to help build an economy compatible with the place we live."

At the upcoming meeting, organizers will provide business operators with trail maps they can give to tourists. The Great Waters organization will also offer a 70-page trail guide detailing activities to attract new travelers. The meeting will discuss ways to lengthen the stays of tourists and ways to get new businesses into the fold.

At the workshop, board members

will explain how businesses can be linked to, or listed on, The Great Waters Web site.

BrightBridge Studios created the Great Waters site, which is found at [www.greatwaters.net](http://www.greatwaters.net).

At the workshop, Jon Roth, principal of BrightBridge Studios, will discuss current trends in electronic marketing that uses the Internet, e-mail, and mobile telephones. Mr. Roth will provide business representatives with ways to manage Web sites, and explain how to develop site content.

There will be two other seminars to promote The Great Waters initiative.

Registration for the event costs \$35 per person. Additional members of a business can attend at a reduced rate of \$15 per person.

Interested parties can call the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce for more information at (906) 632-3301.

# Planners Share Ideas at Conference

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Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District, Gwen Worley, the executive director of Michigan Works, and Glenn Lahti of the Great Waters tourism project.

The conference was sponsored by Chippewa, Luce, and Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporations, Sault Ste. Marie

Schools, Bay Mills Community College, Lake Superior State University's Center for Social Research, Michigan State University Extension Service, Chippewa County Health Department, War Memorial Hospital, Michigan Works, EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission, and the Multipurpose Collaborative Body of Chippewa County.

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# Community Calendar

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**Sault Ste. Marie**  
•Sundays: **Raber AmVets Auxiliary Bingo**, 6 p.m., Raber Township Hall, Goetzville.

**Brimley**  
•Saturday, November 5: **26th Annual Brimley Christmas Craft Show**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Brimley School.

**Naubinway**  
•Wednesday, November 2: **DNR Open House**, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., DNR Naubinway Field Office.

**Cheboygan**  
•Friday, November 18: **American Red Cross Blood Drive**, noon to 5:45 p.m., St. Thomas Lutheran Church.  
•Friday, November 28: **American Red Cross Blood Drive**, noon to 5:45 p.m., St. John Lutheran Church.

**Gamblers Anonymous Meetings**, at 1 p.m., Harbor Hall at 520 North Main Street, Number 106.

•Thursday, November 3: **Basic Diabetes Class**, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Tribal Health Center Auditorium. Call (906) 632-5210 for information.

•Tuesday, November 15: **American Red Cross Blood Drive**, 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., U.S. Coast Guard Base.

•Wednesday, November 16: **American Red Cross Blood Drive**, 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., First Church of Christ.

•Wednesday, November 23: **American Red Cross Blood Drive**, 10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Faith Lutheran Church.

*To submit your group's information for consideration in this space, fax information including complete date, time, and location to (906) 643-9122 or call The St. Ignace News at (906) 643-9150. Please submit information at least two weeks prior to scheduled event.*

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