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SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2008 • NASHVILLE

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JOHN PARTIPILO / THE TENNESSEAN

Nashville Sounds pitcher Lindsay Gulin, in his 14th year as a minor-league player, says "it's really fun to play baseball."

SLOW TRACK TO BIG LEAGUES

At 31, Sounds pitcher Gulin is chasing the majors despite a not-so-fast fastball

By **PETER COOPER**
Staff Writer

A gun without a barrel menaces Lindsay Gulin.

Gulin, the Nashville Sounds' extraordinary left-handed pitcher, won't say as much. He'll talk about the mechanics of pitching. He'll talk about how much he's enjoying this, the 14th season in which he's been paid to play a game. He'll talk about his father's influence, and how hundreds of hours playing catch with his dad were as



Search **SOUNDS** for an audio slide show about pitcher Lindsay Gulin.

valuable as anything he's learned as a pro. What he won't do is blame a radar gun for keeping him out of the major leagues.

Gulin (it's pronounced "guh-LEEN") is an all-star this year in Triple-A, the minor-league level that's closest to the bigs. Since signing a pro contract in 1995, he

has made five all-star teams, thrown two no-hitters and a one-hitter, won games consistently and bested future major-league stars such as Matt Holliday, Andruw Jones and Adrian Beltre.

That's what the record states. But when Gulin, 31, winds up and throws a fastball at Greer Stadium, a scout sits in the stands and points a bulky plastic apparatus toward home plate. That appara-

► Please see **GULIN, 16A**

Few in Metro use free tutoring



PHOTOS BY SHELLEY MAYS / THE TENNESSEAN

Marcus Johnson, a rising eighth-grader, gets help from his tutor Kathy Miles at a tutoring session at Huntington Learning Center in Madison on Monday.

Effect on scores is unclear

By **NATALIA MIELCZAREK**
Staff Writer

Only a fraction of Metro students eligible for free, private tutoring are getting it, six years after the federally mandated program first came to Tennessee.

For students who do get it, results are negligible, a University of Memphis study and a state comptroller's report reveal.

But for many families who sent their children to about 40 contracted providers in the state — some offering hourlong sessions for \$70 — the program was the only way past educational challenges.

"If it wasn't for A to Z (In-Home Tutoring), he would have never been able to show what he could do; he wouldn't have graduated with a regular diploma," Shirley Percle said of her son, Tommy. "He's more outgoing now. All his shyness is gone; he doesn't feel ashamed."

Tommy Percle has a learning dis-



Jarius Robinson reads with his tutoring group at the Martha O'Bryan Center on Monday.

ability but graduated in May from Maplewood High School with a regular diploma. He plans to join the military.

The No Child Left Behind federal education law requires Title I schools — those with high numbers of financially poor students — that fail to meet performance standards in three consecutive years to offer private tutoring to those students. It's paid for with the

ONLINE MONDAY

Tennessee schools will find out Monday if they made enough progress last academic year to meet the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind law. Go to **Tennessean.com** to see how they did.

schools' Title I money, which typically goes for teacher training or extra learning materials.

Of more than 31,000 eligible students across the state in the 2006-07 school year, 5,065 received the services — a trend in school districts across the country. In Metro last academic year, 12,389 children in 19 schools qualified for help but a mere 1,510 took it, district officials said.

Nationally, only about 20 percent of eligible students enroll in the free

► Please see **TUTORING, 15A**

VW opens door for auto jobs across TN

Plant will attract suppliers and status

By **G. CHAMBERS WILLIAMS III**
Staff Writer

As significant as 2,000 new Volkswagen jobs will be to the economy of Chattanooga, the German automaker's new U.S. assembly plant will spread benefits far beyond the plant's borders, bringing more jobs — and attention — to Tennessee as it moves toward playing a bigger role in the U.S. auto industry.

The state has progressed from zero auto jobs 30 years ago to become one of the leading auto-industry hubs, a position strengthened recently not only by Volkswagen's mid-July announcement that it would build in Chattanooga, but also by Nissan's move of its North American headquarters to the Nashville area two years ago, and General Motors Corp.'s decision this year to reopen the former Saturn plant in Spring Hill to build a new Chevrolet crossover utility vehicle.

While there is some concern that the state could be investing too heavily in a single industry — incentives for the VW plant alone are approaching \$300 million by conservative estimates — state officials and economists insist that there is room for more auto expansion in Tennessee.

► Please see **AUTO, 14A**



FILE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Volkswagen's new assembly plant will bring 2,000 jobs to Chattanooga.

TENNESSEE BECOMES AUTO HOT SPOT

>> Volkswagen announces it will build an **assembly plant in Chattanooga**, a boost of 2,000 direct jobs.

>> VW also could create as many as **4,000 extra jobs** in and around Chattanooga for auto supply companies.

>> Nissan dedicated a \$100 million **headquarters in Cool Springs** and announced plans to build electric vehicles with some help from the Tennessee Valley Authority and state government.

>> GM plans to begin producing the **Chevrolet Traverse in Spring Hill** on Sept. 2, bringing back about 2,400 workers who were laid off in April 2007.

>> The GM reopening could create more than **1,000 additional jobs** for suppliers that make parts for the Traverse.

— G. CHAMBERS WILLIAMS III

"The American dream has become a nightmare for countless families."

SEN. CHRISTOPHER DODD, D-CONN.

Senate passes housing bill, but analysts doubt its rescue power

By **LORI MONTGOMERY** and **PAUL KANE**
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Even as a huge bipartisan majority in the Senate voted Saturday to send a sprawling housing bill to the White House, economists, consumer advocates and other analysts said the package of programs for cash-strapped homeowners and shaken

lenders is unlikely to relieve the foreclosure crisis that is driving the nation toward recession.

"This is not the end of the housing crunch," said Jared Bernstein, a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute. "Housing prices have already fallen 15 percent, and they need to fall 10 percent more. This bill isn't going to change that equation."

ON 1E

The housing and financial crisis is powering a new wave of government regulation.

The Senate voted 72 to 13 to approve the bill, which seeks to halt the steepest slide in house prices in a generation, rescue hundreds of thousands of families from foreclosure and

restore confidence in the nation's largest mortgage-finance firms. White House officials said President Bush is likely to sign it by midweek, despite his opposition to nearly \$4 billion in aid to local communities.

During Senate debate, Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., chairman of the Senate Banking Committee and one of the bill's

lead sponsors, cited a litany of grim statistics about the mortgage crisis, including that an estimated 8,500 families a day are falling into foreclosure and that one in every eight homes is projected to enter foreclosure over the next five years.

"The American dream has become a nightmare for count-

► Please see **HOUSING, 14A**



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WEATHER > 6B

93/73
A THUNDERSTORM

GAIL KERR > 1B

City won't take no for an answer.

DWIGHT LEWIS > 21A

Our challenge: making sure every child learns English.

DAVID CLIMER > 1C

Kevin Mawae, 37, dives into training camp with a rookie's enthusiasm.

FROM PAGE ONE

Tutoring: Travel, lack of awareness are barriers

FROM PAGE 1A

tutoring mandated by No Child Left Behind, and even fewer take all their hours.

Education experts have cited lack of transportation and low awareness among parents as the main culprits for poor participation.

"There are also a lot of logistical challenges," said Steven Ross, director of the Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis. He reviews the effectiveness of NCLB tutoring on boosting student achievement for about a dozen states, including Tennessee.

"It's very challenging to get the needy kids into the tutoring because their parents don't sign them up because they don't know or don't understand, or the kids don't want to go."

Denise Gregory, who oversees the NCLB tutoring in Metro, said students' age also plays a role.

"High school students typically access (tutoring) to a lesser degree because they have sports, jobs and don't have the time," she said. "It's a shame. You're frustrated that not every student that needs to be double-dipped is getting it. It's their money. They have to use it."

Metro parents of eligible students receive tutoring information at least three times, including a mailing and a phone message. Individual schools typically send home fliers and hold informational fairs to walk parents through the process, Gregory said.

Brick Church sees results

The tutoring is part of No Child Left Behind's progressive steps to take education and administration from the hands of teachers and principals at consistently unsuccessful schools.

For example, after two years of failure, students from a Title I school can choose to attend another public school in their districts and receive busing there.

After four years, the state can remove a school's principal and appoint its own person. The idea is that the intervention will help schools turn around — and if not, dissolve them under state supervision and reopen with new staff.

On Monday, Tennessee schools will find out their standing under the federal law based on their performance on

the most recent round of achievement tests in the spring — and whether they'll have to offer tutoring this coming school year.

"We've seen it time and time again, schools that take the greatest advantage improve in the first year and get off the list," Gregory said.

Parents pick three tutoring companies from a list to teach their children, and the district pairs students with companies based on need and convenience. The tutoring begins in November, she said.

Metro is the only district in the immediate Nashville area forced to offer the tutoring program.

Last school year, the system set aside \$4.4 million in its \$22 million Title I allotment — the required 20 percent — to fund tutoring and school choice, according to state education officials. Of that pool, the district only spent about \$1 million on tutoring because 12 percent of eligible students received it, state and Metro education officials said.

Districts are allowed to re-budget the leftover money for other programs to increase academic achievement for their high-poverty students, said Rita Fentress, who works in the office of federal programs at the state Department of Education.

Metro could spend up to \$1,272 on tutoring for each eligible student last academic year. That amount bought an average of 35 hours of tutoring, usually delivered during 11 weeks, district and state officials said.

Last school year, Brick Church Middle School enrolled the highest percentage of eligible students, district statistics show — 252 of 498 eligible.

"It has certainly paid off. Brick Church made the adequate yearly progress last year for the first time for all subgroups (of students), and the extra remediation paid off," former Principal Steve Chauncy said. He got an advance look at the school's achievement results to be released Monday.

"We looked at all the kids who didn't meet the standards and we went down the list and contacted their families to sign them up."

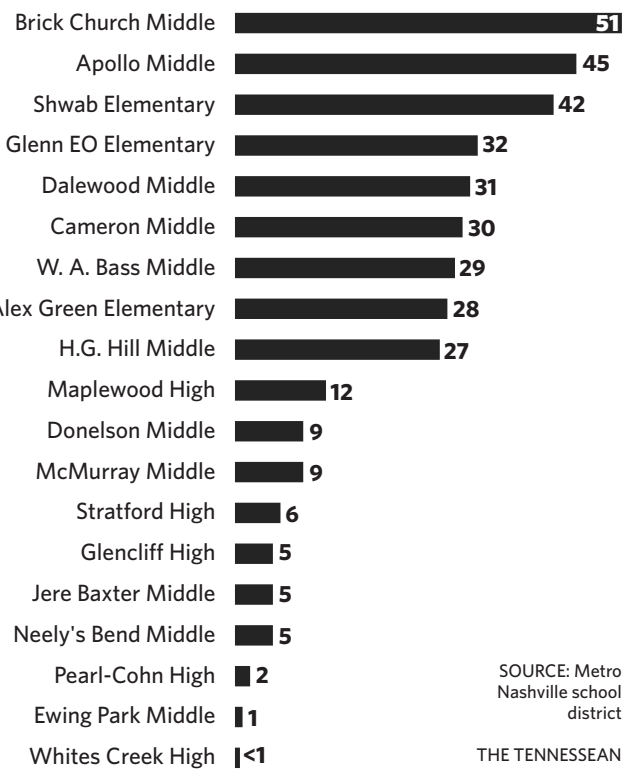
Supporting data lacking

Despite anecdotal evidence, studies that measure the effectiveness of such tutoring on

FEW STUDENTS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TUTORING

Nineteen Metro Nashville schools are under mandate to offer free, private tutoring, but only a fraction of their eligible students typically take advantage.

Percent of eligible students participating in tutoring



SOURCE: Metro Nashville school district

THE TENNESSEAN

increasing student achievement are scarce, and those that exist are inconclusive or suggest no positive impact.

The University of Memphis' Ross has studied the topic — and written reports for the state Department of Education — for years.

"We don't really have enough kids to say what really happens," he said. "We're still really learning how to get the kids to go, what's the best kind of tutoring, how to relate tutoring to" achievement tests.

To expect that a relatively short tutoring program will turn around failing schools isn't realistic, he said.

"We know tutoring is effective, but will it make a big blip on the (achievement test) radar screen? I don't think so, unless one has a tutor one works with just about every day. ... Do you really expect to turn a school around by tutoring a kid 20 hours a year?"

A 2006 audit done by the office of Tennessee's Comptroller of the Treasury reviewed different approaches used in the state to improve failing schools, including the mandated tutoring. It found, among other things, that partic-

ipation has been low and "it is unclear whether these services will improve students' achievement."

The audit went on to say that parents in failing school districts, including Metro, seem to be uncertain about making decisions about tutoring choices, despite districts' well-organized and frequent dissemination of information.

Under No Child Left Behind, states are required to monitor the quality and impact of tutoring services on achievement. Alongside Ross' study, state officials also conduct annual on-site monitoring.

The results have caused some national watchers to say the program ought to be scrapped altogether or the law that mandates it reformed.

"It's a waste of money; it's not worth the money," said Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, a

"We've seen it time and time again, schools that take the greatest advantage improve in the first year and get off the list."

DENISE GREGORY, who oversees Metro's NCLB tutoring

nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank in Washington, D.C.

"There's evidence students are not doing better on state tests. One of the problems is, many of the tutoring programs nationally aren't directly related to what children are experiencing in school."

One policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., wants to see No Child Left Behind and the tutoring provision reformed.

The tutoring "was a promising idea just by allowing families some greater control over how their kids are educated if they're otherwise stuck at a failing school," Dan Lips said.

"That's a good reasonable idea, but when you look at how it has been implemented, it's tough to expect that much from (the program) because it's still a small amount of tutoring."

Natalie Johnson, a mom of two Cameron Middle students who received the free tutoring last school year, said she doesn't need studies or audits to know her kids are doing better. Both students received remedial help at the Huntington Learning Center.

"As far as their confidence level, I can tell there's been a big improvement," she said. "My son was frustrated at school and wasn't doing his work. But he's excited now. The other day he got up and asked me to quiz him on multiplication tables."

There are believers

Last year, Metro parents used 25 tutoring providers, including nonprofit Martha O'Bryan Center in East Nashville, which charges \$23.13 per session, and Huntington Learning Center, which charges \$45 per session. Some are online;

some work with students at school or in their homes.

School districts that aren't in good standing under No Child Left Behind, like Metro, can't offer their own tutoring, but scores of Metro teachers get hired by tutoring companies to deliver the lessons.

At Martha O'Bryan Center, a nonprofit community center, 45 students — mainly from Stratford High and Dalewood Middle schools — received the mandated tutoring last school year. The center also offers other tutoring programs.

More than half made gains in reading worth six months of learning, said Misty Moody, reading specialist, tutor and director of education programs at the center. Most of her students come in at least two years behind, she said.

Moody uses national tests to measure each incoming student's abilities, she said. She retests them twice more, in December and January, to gauge progress. Based on the results, she writes every lesson plan for all children herself, she said.

"When I'm sitting here in my office and three middle school boys walk in and ask me: 'Are we reading today?' that's huge. That's how I measure success," she said.

Huntington Learning Center in Madison has served an average of 25 Metro students per year in the past three years, said Len Silverman, who coordinates tutoring there.

"My average student has had a 10 percentile increase on the test. The school would love that kind of performance," he said.

"I honestly believe that if the majority of the kids took advantage of it, we'd see better statistical results."

Contact Natalia Mielczarek at 615-259-8079 or nmielczarek@tennessean.com.

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