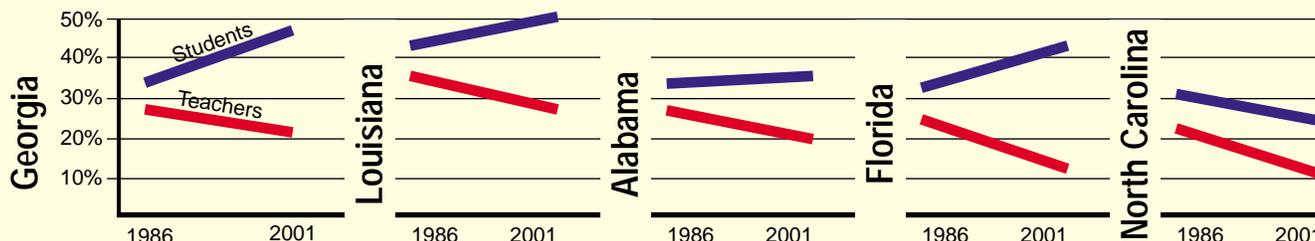


Role Model Gap

Minority student enrollments are mostly rising, while minority teacher employment is dropping. States are shown from left to right in descending order of their 2001 gap between student and teacher percentages. Story, page 3.



Source: "Patterns of Excellence," a report of The Southern Education Foundation, 2001. www.sefatl.org

Smith is one of 4 finalists for big honor



Smith

Following through

Maryland's vision for closing achievement gap focuses, in part, on implementing programs never fully funded

CMS Supt. Eric Smith in late December was named by the American Association of School Administrators as one of its four finalists for its Superintendent of the Year award.

The other three finalists – combined – oversee only 12% of the number of students Smith is responsible for.

Tuesday, the four finalists will be at a National Press Club news conference. The winner's name will be announced at the association's national conference Feb. 15 in San Diego.

The other three finalists are Lorraine Costella of the 2,900-student Kent County Public Schools in Chestertown, Md.; R. Stephen Rasmussen of the 7,900-student Franklin Pierce School District in Tacoma, Wash.; and Gail Anderson Uilkema of the 2,600-student Piedmont Unified School District in Piedmont, Calif.

The AASA is a 14,000-member international professional organization of educators founded in 1865.

A new Maryland task force report chides state lawmakers for failing to appropriate the money to implement school programs mandated by the legislature.

"It is unreasonable to expect and demand success without providing schools and at-risk students with effective assistance to meet the expectations and standards," the report notes.

An earlier state initiative, "Every Child Achieving," laid out a plan for academic interventions, teacher and leader training and early-child education. But the programs were never fully funded, the report says.

The gap in achievement levels among various school subpopulations nationwide is well-documented.

The factors associated with educational failure are equally well-known: poverty, parents' education level, teacher quality, hours spent on homework (and television), attendance, parental involvement, even the number of parents in the home.

But if what will eliminate the gap is equally known, it's not clear from the shelves of reports devoted to solving the problem.

Report after report calls for – new reports – to determine what helps overcome the gap.

The Maryland example is instructive:

"Achievement gaps occur for numerous and complex reasons," says the final report from an achievement gap task force group, a part of a Department of Education Visionary Panel.

"Clearly, factors outside school control, such as parent's level of income and education, are strongly connected with academic success of students. Although poverty

SAT in CMS

Year	Whites	Blacks
2001	1,070	835
2000	1,060	843
1999	1,050	842
1998	1,060	851
1997	1,043	850
1996	1,041	857
1995	1,043	860
1994	1,040	854

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation

To new readers of *Educate!*

a community journal on
public education in
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Welcome to this week's edition. Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen interested in the welfare of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

To be removed from our distribution list, message:
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Educate! is published by The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204. Voice: 704-342-4330 Fax: 704-342-4550. E-mail: SwannFello@aol.com Lucy Bush, president; B.B. DeLaine, vice president. Published since September 2000. Six-week average circulation through last issue: 2,395.

The name: The Swann Fellowship was named for Darius and Vera Swann, who on behalf of their son James became the lead plaintiffs in *Swann vs. Mecklenburg* in the 1960s. Darius Swann was the first African American Presbyterian missionary ever assigned outside of Africa. His experiences in India led him to appreciate the value of an integrated society for human development.

The vision: As people of faith, our vision is that all children in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system will have excellent educational opportunities which are both equitable and integrated.

The background: Formed in 1997 out of several Charlotte religious congregations, the Fellowship focuses on being a witness to the value of diversity, and educating the public on public school issues as they relate to this and allied subjects. The Swann Fellowship is a nonprofit organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code 56-2106776. Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

From Readers

Holiday store a neighborhood success

The writer is United Family Services director of community building and neighborhood development.

An update on the holiday store I told you about in early December:

Thanks to your contributions, the first ever Parents' Choice store in Brookhill/Southside was a smashing success. Contributed gifts filled the fellowship hall of the neighborhood church so parents could come shop for two very full days!

More than 150 families shopped for their children and spent over \$2,000 in the store. Everyone agreed the bargains were great, the selection was excellent, and being able to "shop" right in the

neighborhood with other neighbors lifted everyone's spirits.

The resident committee that planned the store worked tirelessly and experienced all the ups and downs of a first-time endeavor. We learned A LOT in this partnership about empowerment and community building.

Profits from the store are being used for projects in each of the neighborhoods and to seed future store operations.

It was energizing to see residents generating \$2,000 from their community to be spent in their community. Thanks for your help in making this all happen. Great things are dawning with the New Year....

Joanne Stratton Tate

Sound off! for quality education

Your words in support of a quality, equitable, integrated education can help make the case for community support of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Pick up your pen! Or get your mouse in motion! Here's information on how to submit your letters to area media.

The Charlotte Post: By e-mail: thepost@clt.mindspring.com; by fax: 704-342-2160; by mail: Editor, The Charlotte Post, 1531 Camden Road, Charlotte, NC 28203-4783.

The Charlotte Observer: By e-mail: opinion@charlotteobserver.com; by fax: 704-358-5022; by mail: The Observer Forum, The Charlotte Observer, P.O. Box 30308, Charlotte, NC 28230-0308.

The Charlotte World: By e-mail: warren.smith@thecharlotteworld.com; by fax: 704-503-6691; by mail: 8701 Mallard Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28262-9705.

The Leader: By e-mail: editor@leadernews.com; by fax: 704-347-0358; by mail: 800 E. Trade St., Charlotte, NC 28202-3014

Creative Loafing: By e-mail: charlotte@creativeloafing.com; by fax: 704-522-8088; by mail: P.O. Box 241988 Charlotte, NC 28224-1988.

La Noticia: 6101 Idlewild Road Suite 328, Charlotte, NC 28212.

Educate!: By e-mail: educate@educateclt.org; by fax: 704-342-4550; by mail: 1510 E. 7th St. Charlotte, NC 28204-2410.

Study: Need for black teachers growing

Minority children “can go through 13 years of public education without meeting a single teacher from their same racial or ethnic group,” says a report on the nation’s supply of minority teachers.

The gap between the percentage of minority children in schools and the percentage of minority teachers on faculties is widening, says the Southern Education Foundation, an Atlanta advocate of equity in education with roots that go back to 1867.

Charts on page 1 of Educate! illustrate the gaps in five of the states the SEF studied. North Carolina’s chart is above. North Carolina is the only state in which white in-migration has reduced the overall percentage of minority students in the school population. Yet the percentage of minority teachers has fallen even more precipitously, creating a wider gap, as in other states.

The SEF report makes this case for why having minorities on staff is important:

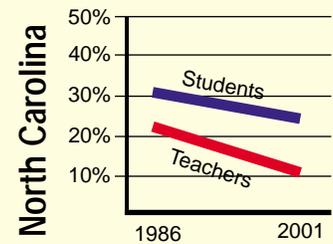
“There is a growing body of research showing the positive influences of teachers of color on the academic achievement and personal development of minority students,” Leslie T. Fenwick writes in the report, “Patterns of Excellence: Policy Perspectives on Diversity in Teaching and School Leadership.”

“Indeed, in schools where there are large numbers of African-American teachers, African-American students are less likely to be placed in special education classes; less likely to receive corporal punishment; less likely to be suspended or expelled; more likely to be placed in gifted and talented programs; and more likely to graduate from high school.

The report cites a 1999 study that “found that African American teachers were more likely than their white peers to describe

N.C. Demographic Changes

N.C. minority student enrollments decreased as a percentage of total enrollment, but minority teacher employment dropped even faster during the period examined.



Source: “Patterns of Excellence,” The Southern Education Foundation www.sefatl.org

African-American male students as “intellectually capable” and to report that these students engaged in positive school behaviors such as completing homework, attending school regularly, and acting as leaders in group situations.”

Many of the findings hold for Latino teachers, the report says.

Minority teachers are also needed as role models, the report argues.

“Teachers do more than just teach content. They stand as models for what it is like to be an educated person.... If students are to believe that they may one day be educated people who can make positive contributions to society, then they need to see diverse examples.”

Among the report’s recommendations is to “invest in future teacher programs at the middle-school level rather than waiting for high school ... middle school students might benefit from early exposure....” Such programs could involve both future teacher clubs and magnet programs focused on teachers in the way such programs now concentrate on banking and the health professions.

“The minority teacher shortage is not a new problem,” the report concludes. “In the South, it has its roots in the desegregation of public schools. Desegregation, while an important and necessary civil rights achievement, ushered in the displacement of thousands of

African-American teachers and principals.... More than half a century later, the nation’s schools are still experiencing the fall-out....

“Few efforts of scale have been mounted to build on existing minority teacher pipeline programs and press for greater diversity in the ranks of the nation’s school leaders – particularly principalships. Only about 16 percent of the nation’s principals are educators of color. Approximately 11 percent are African-American, 4 percent are Hispanic/Latino, and less than 1 percent are Asian Americans.

“More than 80 percent of public school superintendents, school board presidents, and central office directors are white males, as are nearly 60 percent of principals. Yet white males make up less than 25 percent of the nation’s teaching force....

“The nation needs qualified, capable, and dedicated school leaders. As we begin to examine the school leadership shortage, more critical dialogue and action must occur about eliminating the barriers to leadership ascension.”

Among the report’s recommendations: Involve historically black colleges and universities; cut the gap in pass rates on licensing exams; encourage university-school collaborations; add scholarships; and draw teachers’ assistants into teacher education programs.

School Calendar Notes

Thursday's and Friday's snow days will be made up on Friday, Jan. 18, and Tuesday, Feb. 19 ... barring unforeseen winter storms, of course.

'02-'03 Calendar

August

12-16 Teacher work days
19 First day for students

September

2 Labor Day holiday
16 Teacher work day
27 Teacher work day

October

24-25 Fall break; parent conferences

November

5 Teacher work day
11 Veterans Day
27-29 Thanksgiving break

December

23-Jan. 3 Holiday break

January

6 Classes resume
20-21 King holiday, teacher work day

February

13-17 Teacher work days; Presidents Day

March

28 Teacher work day

April

14-18 Spring break

May

26 Memorial Day break

June

10 Last day of classes
11-13 Graduation

1st Quarter: Aug. 19-Oct. 23

2nd Quarter: Oct. 28-Jan. 17

3rd Quarter: Jan. 22-March 27

4th Quarter: March 31-June 10

Mid-Quarter Progress

Reports: Sept. 19-20; Dec. 2-3; Feb. 24-25; May 5-6.

Report cards: Nov. 6, Jan. 29, April 9, June 10 for elementaries, June 17 by mail for middle and high schools.

Makeup days: Jan. 21, Feb. 13, Feb. 14, Feb. 17, March

Following through on achievement gap

Continued from Page 1

is a factor, it can't explain the entire achievement gap. Grade and test-score disparities are present in middle-class and wealthy families and communities, as well.

"Inadequate housing, high mobility, higher health risks, and unsafe communities are all factors in the achievement gap.

"But many factors well within school control also affect student achievement. In fact, research findings indicate that all too often, schools may be contributing to the low performance of many students.

"School factors that lead to disparities in achievement for minority and low-income students include: lower expectations, watered-down curriculum and low-level instruction, inadequate or poor quality resources, language barriers, low numbers of experienced teachers, and cultural and social learning differences."

The N.C. State Board of Education this week takes a look at mandating another reporting tool that could show whether the gaps are closing (story, page 7).

But no amount of reporting will alone close the gaps.

Educators and politicians focus, rightly perhaps, on what they can control. The Maryland report, for example, urges broader access to preschool and to quality curriculum and teachers; additional class time, mentors and similar strategies for underachievers; and alternatives to tracking – the conscious or unconscious acts that prevent some children from reaching their full potential.

But in tight times, it's hard to make progress on expensive initiatives.

Mecklenburg commissioners Chairman Parks Helms' recent warning that county departments and the schools should write tight budget proposals means school

programs will be squeezed. There will likely be no expansion to serve the last of the at-risk 4-year-olds eligible for Bright Beginnings. With most new money going to handle growth and open new school buildings, other programs will no doubt be cut.

And meanwhile, who is looking at the nonschool factors? the ones the Maryland report summarizes as including parent's level of income and education, poverty, inadequate housing, high mobility, health risks, unsafe communities – and the human choices that, made in rich homes and poor homes alike, lead children to resist the opportunities that dedicated educators lay before them every day.

Raising the bar for all children will indeed take the entire village.

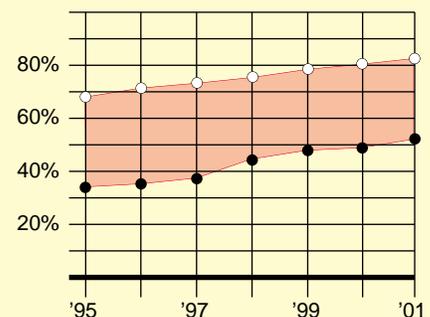
Educate! welcomes your comments, and suggestions on how to galvanize the village into action.

The task group's report is part of a larger study of the future of Maryland public education coordinated by the Center on Education Policy in Washington. Links to task force recommendations are online at www.ctredpol.org.

N.C. black-white gap

N.C. percent of students at or above Level III in both reading and math, grades 3-8.

● Blacks ○ Whites



Source: N.C. State Testing Results "The Green Book," October 2001

Forging a chain of readers

Groups prepare for Read-In Chain on Feb. 3-4 during Black History Month

National groups are putting reading first during Black History Month.

They're encouraging children and adults to put their attention on books by African-American authors on Sunday, Feb. 3 and Monday, Feb. 4.

In fact, the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English has been making this appeal since 1990, and has been keeping track of the results. The

number of participants has grown from 24,000 to nearly 450,000 last year.

A packet of information on the project can be downloaded at www.ncte.org/special/aa-read-in.shtml. The group gathers its participation statistics from forms submitted voluntarily by readers across the country

But reading, of course, is for every day, not just one or two, and for readers familiar with only a

few African-American authors, the group has put together two reading lists.

Below is the list for children. In a future edition, Educate! will include the list of adult titles.

In the list below is some information on age-appropriateness and other matters, as provided by the council of English teachers. But parental discretion is of course appropriate to every month, and every season.

A reading list for children of books by African-American authors

The Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English created a list of "selected 'must-read' books" for young children by African-American authors from books recommended by caucus members.

The list was compiled by Sandra E. Gibbs. It can be downloaded at: www.ncte.org/special/Booklist2-2002.pdf

Barnwell, Ysaye M. **No Mirrors in My Nana's House**, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1998.

Belton, Sandra. **McKendree**, Greenwillow Books, 2000. Fiction

Bontemps, Arna W. **Bubber Goes to Heaven**, Oxford University Press, 1998. [Ages 9-12]

Bontemps, Arna W. & Langston Hughes. **Popo & Fifina**, Oxford University Press, 1932. Reissued 1993. Fiction

Boyd, Candy Dawson. **Breadsticks and Blessing Places**, Macmillan Children's Book Group, 1985. (Children's author. Plus any of her other works. Check library for out-of-print titles.)

Bradby, Marie. **More Than Anything Else**, Orchard Books, 1996. Fiction [Ages 5-8]

Bray, Rosemary L. **Martin Luther King**, Greenwillow Books, 1995. Biography

Bridges, Ruby. **Through My Eyes**, Scholastic Press, 1999. Autobiography

Bryan, Ashley. **Ashley Bryan's ABC of**

African American Poetry, Simon & Schuster, 1997. Poetry; **Sing to the Sun**, HarperCollins Children's Books, 1992. Poetry (Children's author. Plus any of his other works.) [Ages 4-up] **Turtle Knows Your Name**, Macmillan Children's Book Group, 1989. Folktale

Burrowes, Adjoa J. **Grandma's Purple Flowers**, Lee & Low Books, Inc., 2000.

Caines, Jeannette. **Just Us Women**, Harper & Row Publishers, 1982. Fiction [Ages 6-10]

Chocolate, Debbi. **On the Day I Was Born**, Scholastic, 1995. Fiction [Ages 5-9]

Clifton, Lucille. **Three Wishes**, Doubleday, 1992. Fiction (Children's author. Plus any of her other works which include poetry for secondary and adult.)

Coleman, Evelyn. **To Be A Drum**, Albert Whitman & Co., 1998. Folktale [Ages 4-8]; **White Socks Only**, Albert Whitman & Co., 1996. Fiction [Ages 8-up]

Cosby, Bill. Little Bill Books for Beginning Readers Series, Scholastic, Inc.: **Money Troubles**, 1998; **Shipwreck Saturday**, 1998; **Super-Fine Valentine**, 1998; **The Meanest Thing to Say**, 1997; **The Treasure Hunt**, 1997; **The Best Way to Play**, 1995.

Crews, Donald. **Cloudy Day, Sunny Day**, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999.

Curtis, Christopher. **Paul Bud, Not Buddy**, Delacorte Press, 1999. **The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963**, Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1995. Fiction [Ages 5-up]

De Veaux, Alexis. **An Enchanted Hair Tale**, Harper & Row Publishers, 1987. [Ages 5-8]

Draper, Sharon M. **Romiette and Julio**, Simon & Schuster, 1999; **Forged by Fire**, Atheneum Books, 1997. [12 & up]; **Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs: Lost in the Tunnel of Time**, Just Us Books, Inc., 1996. Fiction [Ages 12-up]; **Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs**, Just Us Books, Inc., 1994. Fiction [Ages 12-up]

English, Karen. **Neeny Coming, Neeny Going**, Troll Communications, 1996.

Everett, Gwen. **Li'l Sis and Uncle Willie**, Hyperion Books, 1991.

Feelings, Tom & Muriel Feelings. **Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book**, Dial, 1987. Non-Fiction [Ages 4-8]

Flake, Sharon G. **The Skin I'm In**, Hyperion Books, 1998. [Ages 10 and up]

Flournoy, Vanessa & Valerie. **Celie and the Harvest Fiddler**, Tambourine Books, 1995. Fiction [Ages 8-10]

Giovanni, Nikki. **The Genie in the Jar**, Henry Holt & Co., 1996. Poetry [Ages 3-7]; **The Sun Is So Quiet**, Henry Holt & Co., 1996. Poetry [Ages 5-9];

Continued on Page 6

NCTE reading list for children

Continued from Page 5

- GrandMothers Poems, Reminiscences, & Short Stories about the Keepers of Our Traditions**, Henry Holt & Co., 1996.; **Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking at the Harlem Renaissance Through Poems**, Henry Holt & Co., 1996; **Spin a Soft Black Song**, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1987. Fiction [Ages 4-10]
- Greenfield, Eloise. **Angels**, Hyperion Books, 1998; **Easter Parade**, Hyperion Books, 1998. Fiction; **Nathaniel Talking**, Writers & Readers Publishing, 1988. Poetry [Ages 7-12] (Plus any of her other works); **Honey, I Love & Other Love Poems**, HarperCollins Childrens Books, 1986. [Ages 6-10]; **I Can Draw A Weeposaur and Other Dinosaurs**, Greenwillow Press, 2001 [ages 4 and up].
- Grimes, Nikki. **Hopscotch Love: A Family Treasury of Love Poems**, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1999. Poetry; **Come Sunday**, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. [Ages 5-8]; **From A Child's Heart**, Just Us Books, 1993. [Ages 3-5]
- Hamilton, **Virginia Bluish**, Scholastic, Inc., 1999; **Zeely**, Macmillan Publishing, 1987. Fiction [Ages 8-14]
- Hudson, Cheryl & Wade (Eds.). **In Praise of Our Fathers and Our Mothers: A Black Family Treasury by Outstanding Authors and Artists**, Just Us Books, 1997
- Hughes, Langston. **The Dream Keeper and Other Poems**, Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1994.
- Humphrey, Margo. **The River That Gave Gifts**, Children's Book Press, 1987. [Ages 5-8]
- Hunter, Kristin. **The Soul Brothers & Sister Lou**, The Women's Press, 1997.
- Johnson, Angela. **The Wedding**, Orchard Books, 1999; **Toning the Sweep**, Scholastic, 1994. Fiction [Ages 12 - up]; **When I Am Old with You**, Orchard Books, 1990. (Ages 4-8)
- Johnson, Dolores. **What Kind of Baby-Sitter Is This?**, Macmillan Publishing, 1991. [Ages 3-5]; **What Will Mommy Do When I'm at School**, Macmillan Publishing, 1990. [Ages 3-5]
- Johnson-Feelings, Dianne (Ed.) **The Best of the Brownies Book**, Oxford University Press, 1996. (Original stories from The Brownies Book, a 1920s magazine for African-American children.)
- Lester, Julius. **What A Truly Cool World**, Scholastic, Inc., 1999; **John Henry**, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1994. Folktale; **The Blues Singers: Ten Who Rocked the World**, Hyperion Books, 2001 [ages 10 and up].
- Mathis, Sharon Bell. **Ray Charles**, Lee & Low Books, 2001.
- McKissack, Patricia C. **Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North**, Scholastic, Inc., 2000.
- Medearis, Angela Shelf. **Poppa's New Pants**, Holiday House, 1995. (Plus any of her other works)
- Mendez, Phil. **The Black Snowman**, Scholastic Inc., 1989. [Ages 5-8]
- Morrison, Toni. **The Big Box**, Hyperion Books, 1999.
- Myers, Christopher. **Black Cat**, Scholastic Press, 1999.
- Myers, Walter. **Dean At Her Majesty's Request: An African Princess in Victorian England**, Scholastic, Inc., 1999. History; **Brown Angels: An Album of Pictures & Verse**, HarperCollins Children's Books, 1993. (Plus any of his other works)
- Pinkney, Andrea Davis. **Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters**, Harcourt, Inc., 2000; **Duke Ellington, The Piano Prince and His Orchestra**, Hyperion Books, 1998. [Ages 5-9]; **Hold Fast to Dreams**, Morrow Junior Books, 1995. Fiction [Ages 10-12]
- Ringgold, Faith. **My Dream of Martin Luther King**, Crown Publishing Group, 1995; **Dinner at Aunt Connie's House**, Hyperion Books, 1993; **Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky**, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992; (plus any of her other works.); **Tar Beach**, Crown Publishers, 1991. [Ages 4-9]
- Rollins, Charlemae Hill (Ed.) **Christmas Gift: An Anthology of Christmas Poems**, Songs, & Stories, by and about African Americans, William Morrow & Co., 1993.
- Rosales, Melodye Benson. **Leola and the HoneyBears**, Scholastic, Inc., 1999;
- 'Twas the Night Before Christmas: An African-American Version, Scholastic, Inc., 1996; **Minnie Saves the Day**, Little, Brown & Co., 2000.
- St. James, Synthia. **The Gifts of Kwanzaa**, Albert Whitman & Co., 1994.
- Sims-Bishop, Rudine. **Wonders: The Best Children's Poems of Effie Lee Newsome**, Boyds Mills Press, 1999. [Ages 4-8]
- Smalls, Irene. **Kevin and His Dad**, Little, Brown & Company, 1999; **Irene Jennie & the Christmas Masquerade: The Johnkankus**, Little, Brown & Company, 1996 (plus any of her other works); **Ebony Seas**, Longmeadow Press, 1995
- Steptoe, Javaka. **In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers**, Lee & Low Books, 1997; **Stevie**, HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. [Ages 4-9]
- Tarpley, Natasha. **I Love My Hair!**, Little, Brown & Company, 1998. [Ages 3- 8]
- Taylor, Mildred D. **The Well: David's Story**, Dial Publishers, 1995. [Ages 8-12] (plus any of her other works.)
- Thomas, Joyce Carol. **Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea**, HarperCollins Children's Books, 1993. Poetry; **The Angel's Lullaby**, Hyperion Books, 2000 [ages 1-3].
- Turner, Glennette Tilley. **Follow in Their Footsteps: Biographies of Ten Outstanding African Americans**, Cobblehill Books, 1997. Biography and Dramatic Skits
- Walter, Mildred Pitts. **Second Daughter: The Story of a Slave Girl**, Scholastic, Inc., 1996. Fiction [Ages 12-up]
- Williams-Garcia, Rita. **Like Sisters on the Homefront**, Puffin Books, 1995. Young Adult (plus any of her other works.)
- Woodson, Jacqueline. **Lena**, Random House, 1999. Fiction (Young Adult); **Sweet, Sweet Memory**, Hyperion Books, 2000.
- Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. **Something Beautiful**, Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1998.
- Yarbrough, Camille. **The Little Tree Growin' in the Shade**, Putnam Publishing Group, 1996. Fiction [Ages 7-10]; **Cornrows**, Putnam Publishing Group, 1992. Fiction (Children's author)

N.C. to set test standards, has chance to put spotlight on achievement gap

At its meeting Wednesday and Thursday in Raleigh, the State Board of Education is scheduled to set performance standards for the spring's end-of grade tests.

Also on the agenda is a how schools are to be held accountable for serving all children and closing the achievement gaps among various subpopulations.

The legislature has mandated that EOG reporting include a way to track whether such gaps are closing.

The state board must confront the touchy issue of whether gaps should be reported at the systemwide level, or at the school level. Some argue that variations year to year at the school level can be caused by issues outside the teachers' control.

But last year's pilot program on finding a better way to track the achievement gap showed how school-by-school reporting can get educators' attention.

CMS was involved in the pilot, and just 31.1% of the schools met score growth goals among all the grad 3-8 subpopulations identified last October.

The subpopulations included ethnic groups, low-income and higher-income students, and students lagging, and surpassing, grade-level standards.

"We will not be fully satisfied until every child and every school is achieving and meeting expectations," Supt. Eric Smith said at the time.

By focusing its reporting on the smallest justifiable scale, the state board has a chance to turn mere data collection into a project of shining a spotlight on schools that are succeeding in narrowing the gap.

The CMS middle schools that achieved score growth goals with all subpopulations were Marie G. Davis, Kennedy, A.G., Smith, Northridge and Coulwood

Tell your friends to get an *Educate!*ion

Please forward this issue of *Educate!* to people you think would find the information useful.

And if you don't receive *Educate!* regularly, do this:

Message:
imailsrv@educateclt.org

In body of the message, type the following on one line:

- the word subscribe
- the word swann
- then your e-mail address

The line should look like this:

subscribe swann name@domain.etc

'Kids don't know anything'

Elinor Burkett is 55. She spent a year at Prior Lake High in Minnesota. She didn't try to pretend she was a teen-ager. In a book written about her observations, she doesn't try to pretend that all is well in America's high schools

In an interview with Sage Stossel for *Atlantic Unbound*, Burkett said, "The reality is that our kids don't know anything."

"The most intellectually capable kids in this high school were the most disaffected. They had no realistic sense of how smart they were. So their ability to plan their lives was extremely cramped. I saw no upside to schools having gotten rid of tracking. I mean, I realize that tracking used to be

done poorly sometimes, and obviously I don't want racist tracking or anything like that.

"But I think we have gone too far in trying to protect these kids' feelings. The truth is, most kids do not feel bad if other kids are considered smarter than they are. Their parents feel bad - their parents can't stand it, but I have yet to find a regular public high school where being the smartest kid is better than being the prettiest girl...."

- - -

Burkett's book is "Another Planet: A Year in the Life of a Suburban High School (Harper-Collins, 336 pp., \$26). The interview with Stossel is online at www.theatlantic.com

Briefs

Open Court: A couple of California school districts are having success with Open Court reading programs. Last fall, Oakland switched its 45 lowest-performing schools to Open Court, the same reading program initiated this fall in CMS. Last year's kindergartners at those 45 schools make up the bulk of the district's first-graders this year. This year, all 61 elementaries are on Open Court. In fall tests, according to the Oakland district, 72% of first-graders are at grade level – up from 59% last fall. "We are getting results from our reading program," Louise Waters, the district's assistant superintendent for accountability, said in a statement.

www.ousd.k12.ca.us

Higher standards: In Montgomery County, Md. Supt. Jerry Weast wants at least 40% of graduating seniors at every high school to have completed "college-rigorous" coursework, the Washington Post reported. The system already meets the standard, but rates for high schools now fall as low as 17%, just half the county's high schools meet the standard.

www.washingtonpost.com

Making it in AP: One-quarter of all the Minnesota children of color enrolled in Advanced Placement classes attend one school: Como Park High in St. Paul, the Pioneer Press reported. Encouragement to take challenging courses begins in middle school, and kids see the payoff in college acceptances and course credit they won't have to pay for. The Press reported that Como Park's leaders have decided that teens who score as low as the 65th percentile in reading can make it in AP classes.

www.pioneerplanet.com

Paying for growth: A member

of the Utah legislature suggests a \$2,100 income tax credit to state residents or local organizations that pay to send a child to a private school, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. The purpose: to reduce the investment the state must make over the next 10 years as it anticipates 100,000 new students.

www.sltrib.com

Telling data: Wake County in 1998 set a goal of 95% of third- and eight-graders passing end-of-grade tests by 2003. The News and Observer reported that, overall, whites have all but met the requirement. But on eighth-grade reading, low-income whites were at 76%. And officials noted progress: Third-grade low-income black boys were at 36% passing in 1998, and are now just above 50%.

www.newsobserver.com

Cambridge choice: The Cambridge, Mass., school committee, which is headed by the mayor of the hometown of Harvard in greater Boston, has made econom-

ic diversity a top consideration in its school choice plan, the Boston Globe reported. Beginning with next year's kindergartners, elementary schoolchildren will be assigned so as to make each school student body about 40% on subsidized lunch. The Globe said the unanimous board action was based on research that showed that at-risk students benefit from the high expectations brought to school by educated or better-off parents and their children. In the Cambridge choice plan, parents rank three schools in order of preference. Taking socioeconomic into consideration will increase the number of parents who don't get one of their three choices by only a few dozen, officials said. The plan will be phased in, and schools in the first year will be allowed a variance of 15 percentage points off the systemwide average of 40% of children on subsidized lunch. The variance will fall later to 5%. Schools now have from 13% to 72% of all students on subsidized lunch.

www.boston.com

Calendar

14 Final meeting of Student Advisory Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Board Room. The citizen oversight and auditing aspects of this committee will be handed off to a newly constituted Equity Committee.

18 Schools in session for snow make-up day.

February

19 Schools in session for snow make-up day.

March

22 "High Schools That Work," an address by Southern Regional Education Board's Gene Bottoms. The Charlotte Chamber. Contact kramer@charlottechamber.com