

Saving teachers a bundle



Members of the Charlotte Chamber's Partners for School Reform teacher committee were honored at the last school board meeting for programs that save new CMS teachers some money as they arrive in Mecklenburg. Duke Energy, Piedmont Gas, and BellSouth have waived security deposits, and Time Warner has waived installation fees. The committee recruited corporate partners to guarantee the teachers' creditworthiness. Stephen Bernhardt (second from left) negotiated the program.

The ABCs

CMS celebrates gains, but state has failed to raise the bar in testing program

Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools showed overall gains in the state's testing program last week. Such gains bring money to teachers and aides, and a morale boost as well.

But the operative word is "overall." And the state has recommended trashing a pilot program that usefully showed whether or not all student groups were benefitting from the overall gains.

The ABCs compare children's work in math, reading and other subjects with a standard that is considered "on grade level." From the individual data, each school is categorized – by the percentage of children at or above grade level, for example, or by whether or not, on average, each child learned a year's worth of work.

So, for example, just 7% of CMS schools had 95% or more of their students on or above grade level. In Winston-Salem it was 2%; in Guilford, 3%; in Wake, 14%.

Similarly, 14% of CMS schools did not meet the growth expectation. In Winston-Salem it was 20%; in Guilford, 24%; in Wake, 12%.

The state's rewards program, however, accentuates the positive.

Teachers at 49 CMS schools qualify for \$750 bonuses for having met growth expectations. Teachers at 62 additional schools will receive \$1,500 bonuses for having achieved "high growth."

Eastover was one of the state's most-improved elementaries in the state. A coding error put J.M. Alexander Middle on the state's list of most-improved high schools.

Chamber retools its internal agenda to get in closer touch with community

A long-running if uneasy coalition between Charlotte's business elite and the city's black community had helped pass many a bond issue – until the 57%-43% defeat of the June 2001 advisory referendum on building a new arena.

The vote was not just a setback for the city's NBA presence. It shook the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce to the core. The broad consensus had collapsed that, in many leaders' minds, had created modern Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Then, as the economy took a nosedive, chamber officials felt they were out of touch with their city, and particularly with the black community. "We cannot live with the perspectives we're getting," said one.

At the direction of chairman Bill Coley, the chamber launched a period of inquiry and introspection that ended this week with

formal approval of a Standard of Living Agenda.

The formal launch of the agenda won't be until Oct. 23, but here are its main elements:

- A recommitment to listen to "strategic information from Charlotte's communities."

- Support for school bonds and equity money at low-wealth schools; for "corporate social responsibility;" for "more affordable/mixed use housing."

- Support for "strengthening Charlotte's pool of minority and women owned businesses and... their utilization in the public and private sectors"; for "programs that help the financially vulnerable to build their financial and human capital" and for the utilities' "Share the Wealth" programs.

- Help with opening doors to

Continued on Page 4

Continued on Page 3

Social science testimony no longer plays well in court

Testimony from social scientists doesn't persuade courts as it once did, a University of Virginia researcher told August's Chapel Hill conference on resegregation of Southern schools.

Evidence suggesting that schools would resegregate after courts declared districts unitary and no longer under court decree has not been influential, James E. Ryan said. The evidence is contested, and legal rules don't allow much empirical evidence. There is no question, he said, that court-ordered desegregation is in its twilight.

Despite the number of desegregation cases still on court dockets, it is hard to imagine the courts taking up the subject again on a big scale in our lifetimes, Ryan said. Instead, the next big court battles will be over efforts to block voluntary integration plans.

Magnet schools, for example, offer controlled choice. Because of affirmative action rulings, even voluntary integration plans may be challenged, for state action to promote integration has not universally been held to be a "compelling" government interest.

Ryan recommended taking care in making the case for such a compelling interest at the K-12 level. Lawyers are defending voluntary plans, he said, on the grounds that courts are traditionally deferential to local authority, and that student rights have been curtailed in the past to allow for local education decisions.

Should the goal continue to be avoiding racial isolation? It might be easier to defend reducing it, Ryan said. The courts may decide that there can be no race-based decision-making at the university level, even voluntary, and may then turn to K-12 education. The fight is far from over, but should it come to that, the options could include assignment plans based

on socioeconomics, like the one in Wake County.

The good news is that research supports the educational value of socioeconomic integration plans more consistently than it supports race-based plans.

Socioeconomic assignment will probably prove easier to defend constitutionally, he said, since it will likely only fall under the legal standard of "rational basis" rather than the tougher standard of "strict scrutiny."

Wendy Parker settled many a school desegregation case out of court. She told attendees at the conference she wondered at the time whether she was "being a wimp," settling too often for her clients' good.

Parker, a University of Cincinnati law professor, recently completed a study of a 10-year period of district court opinions. She found that if she had been a wimp, she was not alone.

The rate of settlement in these cases is high, and those settlements include a surprising number of mutual declarations of unitary status. Moreover, when the cases are not settled, the defendant school districts arguing for unitary status tend to win. Indeed, one of the few situations in which school districts lose in court is when the state and school district disagree on what to do.

However, in Alabama, 35 or more desegregation cases remain open, she said. Recently, two judges have worked together, educating themselves and working

together with plaintiffs and school districts to find solutions. The U.S. Supreme Court's standards for these cases allow judges much flexibility, and some lower court judges are willing to use it.

Settlements can go beyond what is required by law, and districts don't always go for unitary status. There are over 400 cases still pending, and districts don't seem to mind them too much. Given these facts, there's still room for courts to do good work, she said.

— Abigail J. Cudabac

Educate! a journal on public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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.

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Assignments given; bonds outlined

Continued from Page 1

For parents and other assessing how schools are doing in educating all children, the data below is unsatisfactory. That's because the data's aggregated across the entire student body. Are whites doing well but minorities falling through the cracks? Are the scores of kids from advantaged homes masking serious achievement problems among economi-

cally disadvantaged children?

The N.C. pilot program, which CMS sought and participated in, was designed to illuminate such issues. Scores for student groups were calculated, then published. To be rewarded, a school had to see gains among all groups.

While the school-by-school pilot program data has not been published, CMS had 39.8% of its schools achieving with all student groups. That's appalling, but is an increase from 31.1% last year. Winston-Salem's figure dropped this year, from 30.1% to 25.5%.

Key to the usefulness of the

ABCs is the standard: What counts as "on grade level"? The standard, set in 1997, was a political decision: It was set low so that not too many children would fail, and so some number of teachers would be rewarded for their work. The expectation was that the standard would be toughened over time. That hasn't happened.

Today, the state has 299 Schools of Excellence, not the 12 that qualified in 1997. It has 648 Schools of Distinction, not the 158 of 1997. Unfortunately, we are still judging schools by watered-down standards from 1997.

	Percent on grade level	Expected growth	High growth		Percent on grade level	Expected growth	High growth		Percent on grade level	Expected growth	High growth
ELEMENTARIES				Shamrock Gardens	61.3	Y	Y	MIDDLE SCHOOLS			
Westerly Hills	57.8	N	N	Devonshire	62.8	Y	Y	Cochrane	56.2	N	N
Briarwood	60.0	N	N	Berryhill	65.7	Y	Y	Ranson	65.8	N	N
Windsor Park	62.1	N	N	Pawtucket	68.0	Y	Y	Albemarle Road	67.7	N	N
Allenbrook	62.5	N	N	Winterfield	68.5	Y	Y	Bradley	78.3	N	N
Derita	66.6	N	N	Sterling	68.9	Y	Y	Wilson	60.6	Y	N
Druid Hills	69.3	N	N	Merry Oaks	69.5	Y	Y	Eastway	61.7	Y	N
J.H. Gunn	70.5	N	N	Morehead	69.6	Y	Y	Coulwood	68.0	Y	N
Oakdale	71.0	N	N	Montclair	73.5	Y	Y	Martin	76.4	Y	N
Hickory Grove	74.1	N	N	Statesville Rd.	73.6	Y	Y	Hawthorne Trad.	58.7	Y	Y
Oakhurst	78.0	N	N	Greenway Park	75.2	Y	Y	Sedgefield	70.7	Y	Y
Chantilly	78.2	N	N	Billingsville	76.0	Y	Y	Randolph	73.4	Y	Y
Bruns Avenue	82.6	N	N	Idlewild	76.0	Y	Y	Northridge	76.7	Y	Y
Reid Park	82.6	N	N	Univ. Meadows	76.4	Y	Y	Quail Hollow	77.2	Y	Y
Thomasboro	62.5	Y	N	Pinewood	77.7	Y	Y	Smith	77.5	Y	Y
Ashley Park	64.0	Y	N	Lebanon Road	78.5	Y	Y	McClintock	80.7	Y	Y
Sedgefield	65.3	Y	N	Highland	78.8	Y	Y	Piedmont Open	81.2	Y	Y
Dilworth	66.8	Y	N	Collinswood	79.3	Y	Y	Robert F. Kennedy	82.4	Y	Y
Lincoln Heights	67.0	Y	N	Starmount	79.6	Y	Y	Spaugh	83.1	Y	Y
Cotswold	67.3	Y	N	Nath. Alexander	79.9	Y	Y	Carmel	83.5	Y	Y
Hidden Valley	67.7	Y	N	Beverly Woods	80.0	Y	Y	Northeast	84.2	Y	Y
Rama Road	68.7	Y	N	Steele Creek	80.0	Y	Y	J.M. Alexander	84.7	Y	Y
Tuckaseegee	71.2	Y	N	Newell	81.2	Y	Y	Alexander Graham	85.4	Y	Y
Park Road	72.1	Y	N	Huntersville	81.5	Y	Y	J.T. Williams	89.5	Y	Y
Irwin Ave. Open	73.2	Y	N	Smithfield	81.9	Y	Y	Marie G. Davis	94.2	Y	Y
Paw Creek	73.2	Y	N	Albemarle Road	82.0	Y	Y	Crestdale	95.1	Y	Y
University Park	73.4	Y	N	Nations Ford	83.5	Y	Y	South Charlotte	95.1	Y	Y
Long Creek	74.2	Y	N	Piney Grove	83.5	Y	Y	Davidson IB	99.4	Y	Y
Winding Springs	75.1	Y	N	Eastover	85.0	Y	Y	HIGH SCHOOLS			
Sharon	75.9	Y	N	First Ward	85.4	Y	Y	Northwest	65.8	N	N
Oaklawn	78.1	Y	N	Bain	91.5	Y	Y	West Charlotte	31.2	Y	N
Clear Creek	78.6	Y	N	Barringer	91.7	Y	Y	Garinger	36.7	Y	N
Selwyn	78.9	Y	N	Cornelius	92.5	Y	Y	E.E. Waddell	40.2	Y	N
Lansdowne	79.1	Y	N	Matthews	93.4	Y	Y	Olympic	49.8	Y	N
Pineville	79.4	Y	N	Olde Providence	94.0	Y	Y	Vance	57.8	Y	N
Hornets Nest	79.6	Y	N	McAlpine	95.9	Y	Y	Independence	60.7	Y	N
Blythe	80.2	Y	N	Davidson	96.6	Y	Y	East Meck	64.9	Y	N
Lake Wylie	80.5	Y	N	Hawk Ridge	97.6	Y	Y	Harding	64.9	Y	N
Reedy Creek	80.5	Y	N	Elizabeth Lane	97.7	Y	Y	Hopewell	65.9	Y	N
Huntingtowne	83.3	Y	N	McKee Road	98.1	Y	Y	North Meck	66.0	Y	N
Crown Point	83.7	Y	N	Villa Heights	100.0	Y	Y	South Meck	66.6	Y	N
Mallard Creek	85.3	Y	N				Myers Park	70.4	Y	N	
Myers Park Trad.	85.7	Y	N				Providence	78.9	Y	N	
Amay James Mont.	87.4	Y	N				West Meck	48.1	Y	Y	
David Cox Road	90.6	Y	N				Butler	64.7	Y	Y	
Elizabeth Trad.	92.0	Y	N								

International Baccalaureate diplomas up

CMS last week reported gains in the number of students receiving International Baccalaureate diplomas. Among the milestones:

9% Increase in one year in number of diplomas earned.

87% of exams taken received score of 4 (passing) or more.

3.6% of exams taken received highest possible score of 7.

47% of all 1,333 exams were taken by students in the Myers Park High program.

94% of the exams taken at North Mecklenburg High received a score of 4 (passing) or more.

Chamber redefines its internal agenda

Continued from Page 1

decision-makers on these issues, and cajoling governments, corporations and foundations to address the "actual needs of our whole community."

– And finally, "we will do more to educate key new business executives about Charlotte's approach to social issues."

The chamber's resolves will be tested as early as Monday. That's when Charlotte's city council discusses a proposed city program that would bar contracts with any company that does business with a second company found to be discriminating.

Chamber officials have reportedly opposed the concept on grounds that it would make Charlotte a lightning rod for court challenges of this innovative approach to maintaining a nondiscriminatory environment.

IB diploma programs, by 2002 rate of diplomas received

School	2000			2001			2002		
	Percent granted	Kids	Diplomas	Percent granted	Kids	Diplomas	Percent granted	Kids	Diplomas
North	63.0%	27	17	70.0%	24	16	94.7%	38	36
Myers P.	93.6%	78	73	92.6%	81	75	87.2%	86	75
CMS	69.0%	216	149	80.2%	197	158	81.5%	211	172
East	100.0%	5	5	94.1%	17	16	78.9%	19	15
Indep.	47.4%	76	36	63.8%	47	30	69.0%	42	29
Harding	60.0%	30	18	75.0%	28	21	65.4%	26	17

But the program is undergoing a sea change. Whether the number of diplomas granted in the future will rise or fall is unknown.

The change, which went into effect this fall, was to allow students to take less than a full diploma load in the IB program. IB certificates will now be given to students who enroll in three or more courses each year.

At the last school board meeting, member Vilma Leake suggested that with the change, "We're going to be growing the certificate program, rather than growing the IB [diploma] program."

Lloyd Wimberly, assistant

superintendent for high school curriculum and instruction, said the change responded to parents who wanted their children to pursue IB in their best subjects "without exposing the child to doing some things they cannot do quite as well."

Board chair Arthur Griffin termed the change "an expansion of the opportunity, not a contraction."

But Supt. Jim Pughsley promised a report later on the implications of the administrative change, which was made last year without notice to the board by former Supt. Eric Smith.

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Briefs

Texas gloom: Trade groups for Texas school board members and administrators have begun lobbying legislatures, the Star-Telegram reported, for overhaul of the state's school finance system. Educators say the combination of state and local taxes that now raises \$24 billion annually will not grow enough in the future to meet children's needs.

www.dfw.com

Dropouts: The Latino high school dropout rate nationwide is 28%, according to a Pew Hispanic Center study, the Washington Post reported. About 7% of whites and 13% of blacks drop out.

www.washingtonpost.com

Exit exams: Education Week surveyed research on whether exit exams increase the number of dropouts. Evidence is conflicting, but the debate is sure to intensify as more states impose exit exams. Terry Cash at the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson said the "test is one issue in a long line" that includes many nonschool issues like pregnancy, poverty and unstable family lives that lead to enrollment at school after school.

www.edweek.org

Review without rancor: In the Principals Bulletin, Scott L. Day says that in a study of under-achieving middle schoolers using module-based learning in a technology lab, one of the salient findings was that kids came to prefer video or computer instruction over live instructor lectures: "All they needed to do if they did not grasp material... was to rewind a recording and review it..." The system "eliminates teacher frustration from repetition, accompanying negative cues (intentional and inadvertent) toward a student in need of repetition, and similar feelings of impatience

among the rest of the class."

www.principals.org

Accountability: In a profile of the Bush administration secretary of education, the Monitor quoted Rod Paige on accountability this way: "Some of us may not want our vulnerabilities to be seen. But they must be in order to be corrected. Even those who argue about disaggregating data ... don't want us to say – well, these African-American kids are not doing well, the Hispanic kids are not doing well, the rural kids are not doing well. But when you say they're not doing well ... you've got to do something. If you don't see them not doing well, they stay invisible."

www.csmonitor.com

"Bell ringers": Teachers at exemplary West Mesquite High in Dallas County, Texas, the Dallas News reported, initially reviewed students' scores on the state's skills test, found weaknesses in math, then began every period – in every subject – with a five-minute mini-lesson in a math skill. This past year, the "bell ringers" were broadened to include reading and writing drills.

www.dallasnews.com

Master plan: California's new master plan for education from pre-K to university, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, requires full-day kindergarten, offers two years of public pre-school, increases expert teachers on college staffs, and bans the hiring of teachers on "emergency" permits.

www.sfgate.com

Looking for payoff: Two Chicago researchers studying California data said they found no evidence that the federal e-Rate subsidies to connect classrooms to the Internet have resulted in improved test scores, eSchool News reported. Some subsidy proponents say it's too early to show the program's results. Other sug-

This is about last year, but the pattern will be repeated this year and next year and right up until this community decides that stability of school assignment is essential if a child is to excel. That it's particularly essential when a child's family life is anything but stable.

The teacher had only about 16 children in her class at any one time last year. But over the course of the year, 29 children were in the class. Low-income families would come and go, as adults moved from job to job and from one low-rent abode to another.

At year's end, just seven children enrolled on the first day remained.

Send us your story. For addresses, see page 2.

gest that the benefits may not show in testing as much as in students' preparation for the workplace.

www.eschoolnews.com

Not a clue: The only way at this point to identify a great teacher is to look at the students' achievement, the Washington Post reported. Education Trust director Kati Haycock said, "We don't yet know a lot about the characteristics of the teachers who are so much more effective than their peers."

www.washingtonpost.com

Calendar

September

19 Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Board Conference Room.

24 Board meeting, 6 p.m., Board Room