

'No Child': The tasks ahead

North Carolina receives federal approval for launch into No Child Left Behind era; Charlotte conference frames policy debate as teachers and students brace for tests

Leaders are nudging North Carolinians toward taking No Child Left Behind seriously. Yet the task is immensely difficult:

The No Child law is complex. Loads of questions about its implementation have no answers. The intentions of its advocates and supporters are suspect in some quarters. And federal funding has, thus far, fallen short of promises.

And in the present frenzy to meet federally imposed deadlines, many philosophical and practical questions are simply being set aside for another time.

Meanwhile, of course, students and teachers in third through 12th grades are preparing for the one-shot, one-size-fits-most-everybody end-of-grade and end-of-course tests that will determine whether their schools are cast in the laudatory spotlight, or the dunce-corner shadows, of No Child Left Behind.

A watershed week

In Raleigh and Charlotte last Friday, N.C. officials marked a key milestone: Their proposal to absorb No Child's mandates into the existing N.C. ABCs accountability plan was approved by Education Secretary Rod Paige.

The announcement was made by undersecretary Gene Hickok at Merry Oaks Elementary in Charlotte. North Carolina became the 12th state to have its plans approved. All state plans are due to be approved by this summer.

And at Queens University Friday, the National Center for Educational Accountability and

the Educational Testing Service hosted a regional event aimed at raising activity among foundations, business-school partnerships and state policy-makers.

The event, along with an April 16 briefing for area education reporters sponsored by the N.C. Public Education Forum and public-relations efforts by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, reflected a growing drumbeat of activity to engage the public in what lies ahead with No Child.

The crescendo will build toward the late summer release of test scores. Those scores, state officials predict, will show vast room for

improvement at more than half of North Carolina's, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg's, schools.

The basics

No Child Left Behind became law in January 2002. Based on testing and accountability systems pioneered by Texas and North Carolina, the legislation ties federal dollars to the states meeting whatever achievement standards they set for themselves.

Minimal mandatory testing began last year and by 2005-06, all states must test for reading and math achievement in grades

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Deferring the dream yet again

County poised to demolish another community accord that had schools tending to growth, renewal in tandem

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners will keep school bonds off the November ballot, and now is talking about offering the school board just enough money from bonds not requiring voter approval to build two high schools to relieve suburban overcrowding.

All sides agree that those high schools are needed. But equally pressing equity projects were to be in a November bond package.

Working on parallel tracks to build new schools for growth and to rebuild older schools to meet equity standards has helped cement community support for overall school funding and has

calmed outrage in minority communities over past failures to provide equal educational opportunities in this once-segregated county. County action now may put that consensus at risk.

Earlier this month, the county board voted to hold bond referenda only in even-numbered years. That means the earliest vote on school bonds would be November 2004. Bonds could sold in 2005, but could also be delayed until 2006, suspending financing for the schools' ongoing construction program for three years.

Three elected officials Tuesday confirmed that there was talk

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County may fund 2 schools in suburbs

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about using non-voted certificates of participation, or COPs, to build the high schools. One school would be built off Community House Lane in the south, the other on the northeastern edge of the county.

The county will sell COPs after July 1 to build a new courthouse. Certificates for the high schools could be sold at the same time, minimizing procedural costs.

At a meeting of a school board-commissioner liaison committee Tuesday afternoon, school board members made the case not only for the high schools, but for urgent renovations at Dilworth and Hickory Grove elementaries.

The county board's policy on even-year referenda also impacts Central Piedmont Community College, which reportedly had earlier agreed to delay its bond requests until 2003.

"I am very concerned by what I am hearing," said school board vice chair Louise Woods Tuesday. "I'm not interested in taking care just of growth...."

At the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum, Woods included Sedgfield Middle in a list of schools having urgent renovation needs.

Woods said COPs seemed like

High school overcrowding

Percent overcrowded 2002 vs. projected 2003, and number of mobile units planned for 2003, by campus

School	'02	'03	M
Berry*	46	72	0
Butler	112	119	18
East	122	119	21
Garinger	82	95	0
Harding	116	119	12
Hopewell	121	119	9
Indep.	123	119	22
Myers Park	120	119	22
North	123	120	13
Northwest	114	119	4
Olympic	74	87	0
Providence	113	119	19
South	116	119	4
W. Charlotte	84	89	0
West Meck.	85	96	0
Vance	122	119	39
Waddell	76	80	0

*Opened with 9th-10th. Source: CMS

an unusual tool for a county board now dominated by fiscal conservatives. First, Woods said, COPs cost a bit more than voter-approved bonds. And second, paying off a certificate-funded project still creates a load on the county's annual budget. "It is non-voted debt, but it is still debt."

Last September, six high schools were at 120% or more capacity. This fall, 11 schools are projected to be at 119%-120% of capacity. The numbers would be far higher except that a total of 183 mobile classrooms will be in use. Each of the new high schools will have about 95 classrooms.

This journal will continue for
16

more issues, based on the funds on hand at the beginning of this month. We offer our thanks to the

8%

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CMS's Fries among award nominees

A longtime Charlotte-Mecklenburg teacher and administrator is among the nominees for a statewide leadership award named for former CMS Supt. Jay Robinson.

John Fries, executive regional superintendent of CMS, is among the nominees for the award, which is given by the Public School Forum. The award, and a \$5,000 cash prize, will be presented in Raleigh June 2.

Other nominees are Surry County Supt. Dr. Marsha Bledsoe, Henderson County Supt. Tom Burnham, Johnston County Supt. Jim Causby, Watauga County Supt. Richard Jones, and N.C. PTA President Tannis Nelson.

Robinson, the Forum's first president, was superintendent in Cabarrus and Mecklenburg, lobbied for the UNC system and then was chairman of the State Board of Education. He died in 2000.

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3-8. Science must be added in 2007-08.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is called for toward having 100% of students proficient by 2013-14. The states must also show that they have tested 95% of students.

The law requires that the entire school, and all subgroups within a school's student population, meet the goals. Separate test scores will be calculated for these groups: the whole school, African-American, Asians, Hispanic/Latino, multiracial, Native American/Pacific Islander, white, subsidized lunch, limited English proficient and students with disabilities. The law requires public notification via district and state report cards.

Schools that do not meet AYP face sanctions that get progressively more severe the longer that progress is not made. Sanctions include forcing school districts to pay for tutoring, to allow parents to transfer their children out of low-performing schools, and ultimately to overhaul schools through staff changes.

CMS officials believe that no more than one CMS school could become subject this year to No Child's sanctions.

Because the act is a rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first approved in 1965, the legislation affects virtually all federal K-12 education programs, from Reading First and school dropout prevention programs to mentoring and professional development programs, magnet school assistance and gifted and talented programs.

Battling the 'failing' tag

Among the many messages at Friday's briefing at Queens was one forcefully presented by the Business Roundtable and captured in the flier reproduced on this page.

States will soon be putting out lists of schools not making annual yearly progress goals, said Susan Traiman, a staff member with the Roundtable, an association of business executives.

"The press has a tendency to call these failing schools."

Calling the schools failing, the Roundtable flyer says, is "just unfair and doesn't give the public a truly accurate picture about what's going on in our schools.

"Worst of all, mislabeling a school a 'failure' can demoralize students, teachers, parents and the community. None of us wants that."

Traiman urged business advocates of higher-quality education to insist on a place at the decision-making table. "You've got to elbow your way in," she asserted. She urged executives to seek, in their lobbying efforts, "a balance between agitation and cooperation, between patience and urgency."

Making the case for nuance

Please don't call a school
a "failure" if it isn't.

The adequate yearly progress (AYP) provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act are complex -- to say the least.

AYP measures how much improvement a school is making toward meeting state academic standards for all student subgroups. Some schools meet or exceed their AYP targets. Some schools fall to short. And some come close.

Of course, some schools are failures. They're the ones that persistently fail to make any sort of progress at all, year after year. But most schools don't fall into that category, and don't deserve to be painted with the same brush.

So what words would we suggest for describing schools that don't make AYP?

in need of improvement
The state said P.S. 101 is a failing school.

The problem is that people sometimes lump together all the schools that don't make AYP -- the ones that miss it by a lot and the ones that miss it by a little -- and call all of them "failures."

That's just unfair, and doesn't give the public a truly accurate picture about what's going on in our schools. Worst of all, mislabeling a school a "failure" can demoralize students, teachers, parents, and the community. None of us wants that.

Think of it this way: if two people go on a diet and set out to lose 10 pounds, is it fair to say they're both "failed" if one lost 9-10 pounds while the other didn't lose an ounce?

The federal government suggests "in need of improvement" to describe schools that do not make AYP for two years. Many states are developing their own language to differentiate among schools that show different levels of progress toward making AYP.

We realize that reporters sometimes use the exact "failing" to describe schools because educator officials themselves use it. The key is that we all need to be as accurate as we can.

We know you're a stickler for accuracy. And we know you want to be fair to kids and teachers. So if a school is a failure, call it a failure. But please don't call a school a failure if it isn't.

The distinction is important.



The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations committed to advancing public policies that foster vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy.

Flyer from The Business Roundtable is aimed at journalists, and says "people sometimes lump together all the schools that don't make AYP -- the ones that miss it by a lot and the ones that miss it by a little -- and call all of them 'failures.'" A speaker at Friday's conference said, "The press does not do nuance."

Polling, she said, showed businesses had most credibility with opinion leaders, and least with mothers and teachers. Put your leaders in front of people "with whom we are influential" and use others to lobby those "who find business people less warm and fuzzy," she advised.

Suspicious about motive

But for some people and organizations, there is deep suspicion that some of the framers of No Child really do want to label most schools "failing." The goal, some say, is to crush opposition to privatizing education in the U.S. It is easy to forget that North Carolina's journey toward universal public education goes back only to the 1880s.

In that time, N.C. Supt. Mike Ward told the Queens audience, it has taken until the present day to nearly achieve the goal of universal access. Now, under No Child, the state has just 12 years to

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achieve universal proficiency.

But to those who suggest that No Child is “part of a grand anti-public-school conspiracy,” Ward said, “I don’t buy this one.... It is legislation aimed at very lofty goals.”

“You can’t argue the goals. That’s motherhood and apple pie.” Both parents and educators need to “accept it as the right stuff.”

Similarly, he said he rejects the complaint that achievement gains won’t be achieved by throwing money at the problem. “The hypothesis has never been tested,” he quipped. “To not invest is to eat your own seed corn.”

The 4 principles

The Bush administration says No Child honors four principles: “stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.”

“We haven’t known all we need to know about how high this mountain is that we need to climb,” Hickok told a lunchtime crowd of dignitaries at Queens Friday.

“We’re on the edge of an American education revolution that has the potential to change everything forever.... What’s at stake is the next generation of Americans, a generation that will look very different from the one I grew up in, and confront a world very different from the one I grew up in.”

In his speech, Hickok said the four principles would be applied again, when the administration begins to overhaul federal policies on higher education.

Grade structure

In an online chat Tuesday sponsored by Education Week to mark the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking “A Nation At Risk,” an earlier generation’s call for broad educational reform, Peter Samulski, an education associate at the S.C. Department of Education asked:

NCLB a great opportunity to improve teaching

Two excerpts from a speech by Hayes Mizell, fellow of the National Staff Development Council, to an April meeting of the Maryland Council of Staff Developers.

“Maybe the NCLB does overestimate the capacity of states, school systems, and schools to implement the law, just as many schools overestimate the capacity of some educators to teach effectively with limited content knowledge.

“The NCLB is not flawless, but it is not an aberration. Its mistakes, to the extent they exist, are not unlike those of the legislative and regulatory process at any level of government. Perhaps the law could have been wiser, more practical, and less complex, and perhaps over time it will become so, but it does represent a legitimate means to achieve a necessary end.”

“We can hope that rather than wasting energy on reacting to the law as a conspiracy, or getting off task by obsessing about compliance, educators will seize the NCLB as an opportunity for creativity. Exemplars of this response are not yet surfacing, though state departments of education, education organizations, and advocacy groups should start identifying and recognizing them.

“Here I am speaking of creativity not in implementing the law, but rather using the law to improve teacher quality and enable all students to become academically proficient.

“Implementing the law and using the law are not the same. Efforts to implement the law focus on minimums, the least effort required to demonstrate compliance. Efforts to use the law focus on maximums, milking the law for all it is worth to generate new vision and commitment, and put in place more effective policies and practices.”

– For other Mizell speeches: www.middleweb.com/mw/resources/HMreader.html

“In the politically charged, high stakes accountability era (No Child Left Behind) how do educators promote the courageous change from a educational system based on chronological age to a system where 95% of the students who enter public education can function in the 21st century? Currently less than 60% of students that enter high school graduate four years later with a high school diploma.”

Replied Ted Sizer, emeritus professor at Brown University and founder of a 1980s high school reform movement called the Coalition of Essential Schools:

“We must challenge the notion of age grading and replace it with a system of promotion by performance. My experience with this reminds me painfully that we need a variety of ways of assessing

a student’s real understanding of important things and forces us to invent a variety of ways of teaching as to assure a student’s mastery however he/she best learns.”

Questions left behind

No Child has raised new equity issues, as well as practical questions. And schools attempting to reach the law’s admirable goals will run directly into longstanding problems in American education. Some observers, including a number of people attending last week’s briefing at Queens, believe that the complex legislation must be altered in some of its details. Among the pending issues:

Sanctions: The N.C. State Board of Education has ruled that No Child’s stiff sanctions at schools not making the grade –

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including choice out for parents, and tutoring for children who stay behind – will be applied only to the roughly 1,100 of North Carolina’s 2,202 public schools receiving federal Title I funds.

At a recent briefing, state officials defended the decision, saying Title I funds would not be available at all schools to fund the activities called for by sanctions.

For teachers, the decision appears to put some at greater risk of being displaced.

And the effects on parents and children appear to be discriminatory. Parents of low-income children not making the grade at high-income schools may find themselves with fewer options than their peers across town. Litigation seems inevitable.

English-language learners: Several officials said the ESL rules must somehow be changed. Children can’t become proficient in a curriculum taught in English until they learn the language. Yet as soon as they learn the language, they are removed from the No Child subgroup of English-language learners. It follows, then, that this student subgroup will never be proficient, and that any school teaching such a subgroup will never escape the “needs improvement” label.

Special education: Most observers think that No Child can help raise achievement among children with disabilities. White House special assistant for domestic policy David Dunn spoke

Limits to parental involvement

The Pittsburgh Council on Public Education held a briefing and discussion on No Child for parents and grandparents. About a quarter of Pennsylvania’s schools are already on a “watch list” and No Child sanctions could follow after this spring’s testing. Faith Schantz’ summary of the discussion included this:

“While some commented that more parents need to get involved, the mother of two children who graduated from a high school on the watch list noted that in some communities, parents can’t take advantage of existing opportunities.

“ ‘They don’t have the availability or time to go to meetings during the day,’ she said, ‘or to sit in and investigate a teacher, participate in a class, police the school, so to speak.’

“Another mother suggested that a pattern of disengaged parents might translate into low achievement at the elementary and middle schools in that community as well. By the time those students get to high school, she said, ‘you’ve got an education built on sand in some cases.’ ”

– www.ed4allkids.org/PVPS_site/Index.html

at Queens about the need to end the “soft bigotry of low expectations.” Yet educators worry that proficiency levels set low enough for disabled children to meet will rob high-achieving of a rigorous standard. Mark Christie, president of Virginia’s State Board of Education, said a child’s Individual Education Plan should determine that child’s proficiency level.

Subgroup triggering: Let’s say one subgroup at a school is underachieving one year. Over the next 12 months those students make headway, and in the second year those kids test proficient. But also on the second-year test,

a different subgroup of kids falls below standard. Under No Child, the school become labeled and subject to sanctions. Mississippi Supt. Henry Johnson, who raised this issue, thinks the trigger should be a subgroup two years in a row, rather than any subgroup two years in a row. Federal officials said they had no leeway under the legislation to make an exception.

Beyond the school: At Queens last week, former Tennessee congressman and Reagan Labor secretary Bill Brock suggested that No Child wasn’t addressing the effects of poverty on children’s cognitive development. Advocates of higher achievement are only “treating this as a school issue,” he said.

Department of Education official Doug Mesecar acknowledged that, without vigilance, gains achieved in the early grades dissipate before students enter high school.

Equal funding: Educational Testing Service President Kurt Landgraf said American businesses must “demand, not ask,” that funding to all schools be equalized so that all children, across all states, have an equal chance at a

Easley on what’s ahead

N.C. Gov. Mike Easley, in a statement Friday, on federal approval of N.C. plans to incorporate No Child standards into its existing ABCs accountability system:

“Because North Carolina’s plan includes high standards and tough accountability measures, I expect the test results will show many of our schools needing improvement, especially when it comes to closing the achievement gap.

“We should embrace these tough standards and never be satisfied with the status quo. I am convinced the only way we will prepare our children for the future is to challenge ourselves to do better.”

– www.ncpublicschool.org

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quality education. Keeping the schools chiefly dependent on widely varying local property tax bases “will never get us the democracy we need.”

Changing behavior

In an online chat Tuesday sponsored by Education Week to mark the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking “A Nation At Risk,” an earlier generation’s call for broad educational reform, Kansas algebra teacher Jenny Yem asked:

“As a teacher of seventh- and eighth-graders, I feel it is very hard to make up for all that is not being taught at home (responsibility, respect of self and others, manners, etc.) How can we adjust our methods of reaching children so that we can still teach our subject matter while constantly working on these basic rules of living in a society?”

Replied Michelle Fine, a social psychology professor at City University of New York and director of the Race, Ethnicity, Class and Opportunity Gap Project:

“There is strong evidence that in small schools, in which youth are engaged with rigor and treated with respect, these questions of ‘civility’ are far less likely to erupt. I would argue that there are key features of school organization that will exacerbate or diminish the likelihood of lack of respect,

Don’t we know where the problems lie?

Research psychologist Gerald W. Bracey, writing in the Washington Post marking the anniversary of the 1983 report, “A Nation At Risk.”

“Blaming public schools for social ills has a long and dishonorable history, of which the 1983 report is only one particularly egregious example. Yet in the international reading study released this month... (Educate! April 24)

), American students finished ninth among 35 nations. White American students outscored top-ranked Sweden 565 to 561. Americans attending schools with less than 10 percent of the students in poverty (13 percent of all students) scored a whopping 589, and only those attending schools with more than 75 percent of the students in poverty (20 percent of all students) scored below the international average.

“These statistics tell us how wealth and poverty affect achievement, and where we need to allocate resources. We don’t need to spend billions to test every child every year in reading, math and science, as the No Child Left Behind legislation requires, to find out.

“Overall, ‘A Nation at Risk’ was a grand April Fools’ joke. No Child Left Behind shows we haven’t learned a thing in 20 years.”

irresponsibility etc. I have seen youth who are considered disrespectful rise to the occasion when placed inside settings of rigor and respect.”

Melding 2 systems

North Carolina and Texas are among the states that had moved most thoroughly toward testing and accountability before No Child begin to take shape.

But in North Carolina’s case, the testing system was premised on a different strategy of success.

Now state officials have decided to meld together two systems of accountability, and the confusion has only just begun.

North Carolina’s ABCs system, initiated in 1996-97, was designed to encourage – and reward – incremental progress toward better achievement. If a school improved its rating on end-of-grade tests, for example, the school won favorable publicity and teachers won bonuses.

The No Child strategy is to force all states to define what it means for a child at most grades to be educationally proficient. These standards vary widely, but North Carolina says that a child testing at Level 3 or Level 4 is proficient. No Child then says that all students must be proficient by the year 2013-2014.

The No Child rules allowed the states to choose how to reach 100% proficiency. North Carolina chose an even step plan. At grades 3 through 8, for example, all schools must have 68.9% on grade level this year and next. The benchmark rises to 76.6% in 2004-05, to 84.4% in 2007-08, 92.2% in 2010, and 100% in 2013-14.

Teachers still thrown in to sink or swim

A new Harvard study of teacher hiring in four collective-bargaining states found that:

- Only half of the new hires are interviewed by teachers with whom they will be working, and only 1% talked to a student.
- 46% of the new hires are lateral entry, and average 38 years old.
- Just 7.5% of applicants were observed teaching before they were hired.
- 43% reported no contact with a mentor or experienced teacher during their entire first year of teaching.
- 77% say their course loads and other tasks are essentially identical to those asked of experienced colleagues.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Project on the Next Generation of Teachers focused on California, Florida, Massachusetts and Michigan. More information is at www.gse.harvard.edu/news/features/ngt04222003.html#breakdown

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Some states have elevated the level of cynicism over No Child by suggesting the educational equivalent of a home mortgage balloon payment, with the bulk of the educational gains being required in the year or two before the 2013-2014 deadline.

North Carolina is building No Child mandates into the old ABCs program. Some are easy: The mandate that at least 95% of students in all subgroups be tested fits nicely into the accountability plan.

But problems arise in the rewards program, which now honors improvement. State documents candidly predict that this spring's testing will produce Schools of Distinction that will be labeled as "needs improvement" under No Child. Mixed signals are inevitable, and may erode public understanding – and probably public interest – in the whole subject.

Asking right questions

In an online chat Tuesday sponsored by Education Week to mark the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking "A Nation At Risk," an earlier generation's call for broad educational reform, Bruce Post, director of federal affairs for the Vermont Student Assistance Corp., asked:

"When A Nation At Risk was released, I was responsible for elementary and secondary education law for the U.S. Senate Education Subcommittee under congressman. Stafford. Now, 20 years later, troubling reports about our schools continue to be released: last year, the report about the senior year in high school; and just the other day, the report on writing. My question: Is there something fundamentally wrong with American society that 'infects' our schools in such a way that, despite our efforts, their problems persist? Are we, in essence, not naming the right problems?"

Replied Ted Sizer, emeritus professor at Brown University and founder of a 1980s high school reform movement called the

Achieving NCLB will take a culture change

Excerpts from a paper published by Teachers College Record written by Sandra Mickens, an elementary principal in Patterson, N.J.

"We live in a society where if a person is different (be it race, language, dress, intellectual ability, socioeconomic status, religion, etc.), it is at times more acceptable for one to criticize, categorize, and isolate. The melting pot is simply an illusion. Children are missing the opportunity to embrace and enhance another perspective. Regrettably, different is deadly in the world of a minor...."

"When the doors of education are open to violence, due to ridicule, blame, and intolerance of cultural, racial, and religious differences, the doors to knowledge are shut tight. In order to combat school violence, we must create caring and nurturing schools. We must accept the fact that teaching values and respect for self and others is imperative to the sanctity of the school environment. Students must learn the importance of accepting others and showing compassion for those who are struggling.

"To accomplish the education goals of No Child Left Behind, we must work to ensure that No Child is Left Maligned."

– www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=11152

Coalition of Essential Schools:

"That is a wonderful question. No, we are not naming the right problems. The big problem is local concern, local energy to do right thing for all students. The more we try to solve problems far away from the communities, the more we let the local community off the hook. We are compounding our error by trying to solve the problem long-range. Local democracy is weak at the moment and only local democracy will lead to really good schools. Responsibility at the local level will only take hold if the local leadership has the authority to make the crucial decisions. Having local authorities be the carriers-out of centralized directives won't work."

For more information

An immense amount of information is available about No Child Left Behind. Some pointers:

North Carolina has collected its No Child materials at www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/

The Public School Forum of North Carolina's recent report on the No Child challenges facing the state (reported in *Educate!*, April 17) and its recommenda-

tions for change, including a rebuilding of the state's central educational administrative capacity, may be downloaded at www.ncforum.org

North Carolina's approved plan for implementing No Child will be posted shortly at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/index.html

The federal Web site is www.nclb.gov/

A federal desk reference to the law, published last year by Hickok's office, is available in its entirety and by chapter at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/reference.html

The Public Education Network's guide may be downloaded from www.publiceducation.org/

The National Education Association teachers union explains its reservations over No Child at www.nea.org/neato-day/0305/cover.html

The Education Commission of the States has an collection of explanatory material and explanations of how the states are implementing the law under a "No Child Left Behind" button at www.ecs.org.

– Steve Johnston

Calendar

MAY

- 2 CMS Equity Committee, 8 a.m., Board Room.
- 3 District 6 parent leader meeting, 9 a.m., Matthews Presbyterian Hospital.
- 6 School board personnel policy committee, 7:30 a.m.
- 10 Walk Day for National Alliance for Autism Research, 8:30 a.m. check-in, 9:30 a.m. start time, Lowes Motor Speedway. Volunteers needed: 704-333-0051 or thenewman@comporium.net
- 13 School board meets, 6 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.
- 14 Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, 11th floor conference room.
- 15 CMS school board finance, capital & facilities committee, 4 p.m., Board Conference Room, Education Center.
- 20 CMS board policy committee, 3 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 20 Mecklenburg elected leaders forum, noon, Government Center Room 267.
- 20 Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services.
- 27 School board meets, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 27 CMS board curriculum committee, 3 p.m., Board Conference Room, Education Center.
- 28 Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, 11th floor conference room.

Bus service fees

The number of communities charging parents for school bus transportation is growing, the Seattle Times reported. Communities in California, Hawaii, Kansas, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota, Texas and Utah set fees, with waivers for low-income families.

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com>

Per-pupil spending, largest U.S. school districts

Last week, the Education Budget Advisory Committee told the county board not to judge CMS spending on a per-pupil basis, chiefly because the number of high-needs students varies so much among districts. Some commissioners still wanted the numbers. These are the top 50 districts, as listed in a U.S. Census report on the top 100 systems for fiscal year 1999. Full list is at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/100_largest/table_10_1.asp

By Enrollment		By Per-Pupil Expense		
1	New York City	1,072,628	1 Boston MA	\$11,040
2	Los Angeles	695,885	2 Buffalo NY	9,681
3	Puerto Rico	613,862	3 District of Columbia	9,645
4	Chicago	430,914	4 Minneapolis MN	9,625
5	Miami-Dade County	352,536	5 New York City	8,818
6	Broward County, FL	231,187	6 Montgomery County MD	8,604
7	Houston	210,179	7 Milwaukee	8,557
8	Philadelphia	207,465	8 St. Paul MN	8,119
9	Clark County NV	203,777	9 Atlanta City GA	7,944
10	Hawaii	188,069	10 Portland OR	7,941
11	Detroit	173,557	11 Detroit	7,862
12	Dallas	159,908	12 St. Louis MO	7,855
13	Hillsborough County FL	156,452	13 Fairfax County VA	7,735
14	Fairfax County VA	149,029	14 Cleveland OH	7,358
15	Palm Beach County FL	146,568	15 Cincinnati OH	7,286
16	Orange County FL	138,866	16 Baltimore City	7,282
17	San Diego CA	138,433	17 Columbus City OH	7,249
18	Prince Georges MD	130,259	18 Chicago	7,212
19	Montgomery Co. MD	127,933	19 Baltimore County MD	7,172
20	Duval County FL	127,411	20 Seattle WA	7,059
21	Memphis	111,682	21 Prince Georges MD	6,979
22	Pinellas County FL	110,582	22 Fulton County GA	6,738
23	Baltimore City	106,540	23 Anchorage AK	6,715
24	Baltimore County MD	105,914	24 Anne Arundel County MD	6,625
25	Jefferson County KY	101,438	25 Nashville-D'vson	6,608
26	Milwaukee	99,814	26 Cobb County GA	6,529
27	Gwinnett County FL	98,784	27 DeKalb County GA	6,502
28	Charlotte-Meck.	98,758	28 Jefferson County CO	6,468
29	DeKalb County GA	93,171	29 San Antonio TX	6,366
30	Wake County NC	92,256	30 Oakland CA	6,289
31	Cobb County GA	91,208	31 Los Angeles	6,245
32	Long Beach CA	89,214	32 Prince William County VA	6,227
33	Jefferson County CO	88,654	33 Charlotte-Meck.	6,193
34	Albuquerque NM	85,847	34 Aldine TX	6,179
35	Orleans Parish LA	82,176	35 Jefferson County KY	6,162
36	Austin TX	79,496	36 Miami-Dade County	6,141
37	Fresno CA	78,942	37 San Diego CA	6,122
38	Fort Worth TX	77,956	38 Hawaii	6,082
39	Virginia Beach VA	77,442	39 Guilford County NC	6,050
40	Polk County FL	77,300	40 Philadelphia	6,037
41	Cleveland OH	75,386	41 Lee County FL	6,015
42	Anne Arundel Co. MD	74,079	42 Denver County CO	5,897
43	Granite UT	73,474	43 Jefferson Parish LA	5,892
44	Jordan UT	73,286	44 Palm Beach County FL	5,871
45	District of Columbia	71,889	45 Wichita KS	5,870
46	Mesa AZ	71,284	46 Hillsborough County FL	5,851
47	Denver County CO	68,790	47 Gwinnett County FL	5,815
48	Brevard County FL	68,681	48 San Bernardino CA	5,804
49	Nashville-D'vidson TN	67,016	49 San Francisco CA	5,787
50	Fulton County GA	65,642	50 East Baton Rouge LA	5,786

CMS concentrations of special education students

Special education population in middle schools, by descending percentage of total student population.

School	Special Ed.	Total	Pct.	School	Special Ed.	Total	Pct.
Randolph	74	848	8.73%	J.T. Williams	25	815	3.07%
Spaugh	38	550	6.91%	Kennedy	34	1,207	2.82%
Wilson	37	583	6.35%	Northeast	33	1,252	2.64%
McClintock	55	945	5.82%	Crestdale	33	1,407	2.35%
Marie G. Davis	32	568	5.63%	James Martin	41	1,881	2.18%
Ranson	45	803	5.60%	Piedmont	18	857	2.10%
Coulwood	56	1,170	4.79%	Albemarle Road	16	1,009	1.59%
Alexander Graham	36	756	4.76%	Bradley	22	1,594	1.38%
Cochrane	34	737	4.61%	Quail Hollow	15	1,135	1.32%
Smith	34	781	4.35%	Northridge	14	1,233	1.14%
Eastway	34	842	4.04%	Robinson	6	1,218	0.49%
Sedgefield	25	672	3.72%	South Charlotte	4	813	0.49%
Carmel	40	1,097	3.65%	Davidson IB	0	243	0.00%
Alexander	38	1,194	3.18%				

Source: CMS membership, 20th day, 9-17-2002

Volunteer for a May day

CMS needs volunteers to proctor end-of-grade tests on May 19, May 20 and May 21. Why? Because each classroom used during testing must have both a teacher and another adult present. Not all schools need help; some already have all slots covered either by volunteers or school staff. Proctors' morning session will begin with a training session on testing ethics, testing procedures and school procedures. School staff will be with the volunteer at all times.

The following schools have asked for assistance:

	Phone	Contact name	E-mail (@cms.k12.nc.us)	Time slot
Elementaries				
Albemarle Road	704-343-6414	Monique Gardner	monique.gardner@	8:15-10:45
Nathaniel Alexander	704-343-5268	Beth Blackwelder	b.blackwelder@	7:00-10:00
Crown Point	704-343-6535	Elizabeth Redder	e.redder@	8:30-11:30
Reid Park	704-343-5035	Clare Endres	clare.endres@	9:00-11:30
Smithfield	704-343-6550	Kathy Trotter	katherine.trotter@	8:00-11:30
Statesville Road	704-343-6815	Darnell Ivory	darnell.ivory@	9:00-12:00
Middle				
Albemarle Road	704-343-6420	Peggy Johnson	peggye.johnson@	8:15-11:30
Carmel	704-343-6705	Tammy Costello	tamalia.costello@	8:30-10:30
Cochrane	704-343-6460	Helen Giles	helen.giles@	8:15-11:30
Coulwood	704-343-6090	Dawn Smith	dawn.smith@	8:30-11:00
Eastway	704-343-6410	Linda Bolen	linda.bolen@	8:45-11:15
Kennedy	704-343-5540	Catherine Eldridge	catherine.eldridge@	8:30-11:30
Martin	704-343-5382	Gwen Nachman	gwen.nachman@	8:30-11:30
Northeast	704-343-6920	Tamara Stark	tamara.stark@	8:00-12:00
Piedmont Open	704-343-5435	Tammy Broadway	tammy.broadway@	8:30-11:30
Sedgefield	704-343-5840	Renee Flash	r.flash@	7:30-12:00
South Charlotte	704-343-3670	Kimberlee Nash-Zeitvogel	kimberlee.zeitvogel@	8:00-11:30
Smith Academy	704-343-5815	Heather Beck	h.beck@	8:00-12:00
Wilson	704-343-6070	Mike Mann	michael.mann@	9:00-12:00

Questions: Contact Pat Robson at p.robson@cms.k12.nc.us or at 704-343-6245.

Multicultural policy at CMS limited in its scope, use

A sustained push by members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee has put pressure on the school system to recommit itself to a 1993 multicultural education policy that, critics say, is mostly honored in the breach.

But a lengthy discussion Tuesday suggested just how many aspirations of the black community have been riding on a policy that, on its face, is limited in scope.

The multicultural policy, and its attendant regulations, are printed at right.

The rules came up as Assistant Supt. for planning and development Eric Becoats addressed the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum, a bipartisan and multi-ethnic group run by former school board member Sarah Stevenson.

When Becoats was asked about the policy, he replied that it was no considered in the development of the current family choice assignment.

Asked if it was a factor in the day-to-day operations of his office, Becoats said no.

Board vice chair Louise Woods said she was "shocked.... It seems to me it should affect every shop. If it's not we've got a problem."

The problem may be no deeper than the policy, which appears to be focused on "the curriculum, instruction and staff development."

Accompanying regulations cover the curriculum, instruction, staff development, human resources and parent/community involvement – but not student assignment.

Text of CMS multicultural policies

IFC Multiculturalism

I. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education is committed to a world class school system which supports educational excellence regardless of race, gender, national origin, different abilities, or religion. Equitable academic programs and services which respond to the needs of a diverse student population and which prepare all students for a changing workplace and pluralistic society are essential.

II. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education defines multicultural education as that which recognizes, values and affirms diversity in a pluralistic environment. Education that is multicultural fosters:

A. acceptance and appreciation of diversity,

B. development of greater understanding of cultural patterns,

C. respect for people of all cultures,

D. development of positive and productive interaction among people and experiences of diverse cultural groups, and

E. understanding of historical, political and economic bases of current inequities.

III. Multicultural education is not a limited experience but a continuous process which embraces and accepts the interdependence of national and global groups. These include racial, ethnic, regional, religious, and socio-economic groups, as well as men

and women, young and old, and persons with different abilities.

IV. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will acknowledge and appreciate the value of diversity throughout the curriculum, instruction, and staff development.

Date of Adoption: Jan. 12, 1993

Text at: http://nt5.scbbs.com/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=487168&advquery=multicultural&depth=2&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=charmeck.nfo&record={6C2}&softpage=PL_frame

IFC-R Multiculturalism

The following regulations will govern implementation of Multicultural Education in the following areas as designated by Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board Policy IFC:

I. Curriculum

A. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Performance Standards will incorporate goals designed to develop an understanding of cultural diversity, as it relates to local, national and global cultural patterns. These goals will be infused into all major areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.

B. Future curriculum development efforts will include multicultural information in the Performance Standards.

C. The process for selection of instructional materials (print and nonprint) will include evaluation criteria based on the accuracy of

Continued on Page 11

Woods said she hoped the diversity appreciation programs now offered to staff would also be extended to members of the school board. "We surely need it."

"If there is evidence that the policy is not being carried out, you need to bring that to us," Woods told the group.

The schools' multicultural education policy and its regulations are now being revised.

Persons wishing to comment should contact Rahman Khan at 704-343-6269 or r.khan@cms.k12.nc.us.

Text of CMS multicultural regulations, continued from Page 10

cultural representations and the acknowledgment of diverse cultural perspectives.

D. All Performance Standards and the instructional materials that supplement the standards will be continuously monitored to avoid or eliminate bias based on race, religion, sex, age, culture or physical ability.

E. Extracurricular activities made available within each school program will include options that represent the cultural diversity of the school district. Students will be provided equitable access to all extracurricular activities, avoiding bias based on race, religion, sex, age, culture or physical ability. Principals will monitor student participation in these activities.

II. Instruction

A. Classroom instruction will include accurate representation of a variety of cultures and will teach diverse cultural perspectives.

B. Instructional planning will incorporate strategies to facilitate student knowledge and an appreciation of individual differences and will foster student pride in cultural heritage.

C. Materials and resources utilized to supplement instruction will reflect a variety of cultural representations and will address student needs and learning styles.

D. Instructional activities and strategies will be incorporated to promote positive and productive interaction among students with diverse experiences and backgrounds.

E. Students will be provided equitable access to all instructional activities, avoiding bias based on race, religion, sex, age, culture or physical ability.

F. Data will be reported that disaggregates student achievement among all categories of culturally diverse student populations.

III. Staff Development

A comprehensive staff development plan will be implemented on

an on-going basis to increase multicultural awareness and education. A variety of staff development opportunities will be made available to all Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system employees.

B. School-based staff development activities and programs related to multicultural education will be implemented in each school.

C. Multicultural education components will be included in the development of School Improvement Plans and related strategic planning activities.

D. The principal will review data from the school profile with staff at the beginning of each school year. A School Improvement Plan or related strategic plan will be developed to identify and address the needs of culturally diverse populations of students.

E. The Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services will review the school system profile at the beginning of each school year. The needs of culturally diverse population of students will be addressed through on-going curriculum and staff development.

IV. Human Resources

A. The Human Resources Department will initiate and develop recruiting strategies that will result in an increase in hiring of a more culturally diverse workforce.

B. The instruments for assessing applicants will include questions that target appropriate experiences and/or ability to work with children and peers from all backgrounds regardless of race, religion, sex, age, culture or physical ability

C. The Human Resources selection process will target applicants who bring expertise and willingness to promote positive learning experiences for all children.

D. As part of its orientation and recruiting process, the Human Resources Department will dis-

seminate the multicultural policy and emphasize the school system's commitment to multicultural education.

E. The principal will review the multicultural education policy and regulations with site-based personnel each year.

F. Each Administrative unit head will review the multicultural education policy and regulations with personnel each year.

V. Parent/Community Involvement

A. Multicultural education information and reference material will be made available to parents and community members; either through informational presentations, staff development activities or resources available in the parent resource centers located in each school or community site.

B. Parent involvement efforts will include representation of a variety of cultures and will acknowledge diverse perspectives.

C. Workshops and training sessions for parents will incorporate strategies to facilitate parent knowledge and appreciation of individual differences and will foster family pride in cultural heritage.

D. Materials, information, and personnel will be utilized to facilitate effective communication that will reflect a variety of cultures and will address the various parent/family needs.

E. School Advisory teams will be representative of the school family avoiding bias based on race, religion, sex, age, culture or physical activity. (Reference: School Advisory Board)

Date of Adoption: Sept. 1, 1994.

Text at: http://nt5.scbbs.com/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=487168&advquery=multicultural&depth=2&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=charmck.nfo&record={6D1}&softpage=PL_frame