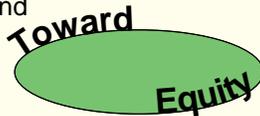


## Audio-Visual Equipment

Schools were asked to report compliance with district standards for media and audio-visual equipment required to "carry out the instructional program." Columns below track responses on these four standards: TV: One per classroom and two in the media center; Cam.: One digital camera per school; Video: One camcorder per school; Disc: One laserdisc or DVD player per school.



	TV	Cam.	Video	Disc
<b>Four Misses</b>				
Midwood/TAPS	X	X	X	X
Oakdale	X	X	X	X
<b>Three Misses</b>				
Eastway Middle		X	X	X
Reid Park	X		X	X
<b>Two Misses</b>				
Berryhill	X	X		
Garinger			X	X
Hawthorne Trad.	X	X		
Highland	X	X		
Lake Wylie	X		X	
McClintock Middle	X	X		
Merry Oaks	X	X		
Sedgefield	X	X		
Villa Heights	X	X		
Windsor Park		X		X
<b>One Miss</b>				
Briarwood		X		
Collinswood	X			
Cornelius	X			
Cotswold	X			
Coulwood		X		
Crestdale	X			
Eastover	X			
First Ward	X			
Idlewild		X		
Independence High	X			
Lansdowne		X		
Lebanon Road				X
McAlpine	X			
Myers Park High	X			
Newell		X		
Northeast Middle	X			
Olde Providence		X		
Olympic	X			
Pineville	X			
Pinewood		X		
Quail Hollow		X		
Selwyn				X
Sharon			X	
Shamrock Gardens		X		
Smith Middle			X	
South Charlotte	X			
South Meck High	X			
Statesville Road	X			
Sterling		X		
Thomasboro	X			
Westerly Hills		X		
J.T. Williams Middle	X			
Wilson Middle				X
Winterfield		X		

Data from CMS

# Any vestiges of old segregation?

## Appeals Court judges pester Swann case lawyers for answers to fundamental, unresolved question

By ARAMINTA S. JOHNSTON

RICHMOND — Are the inequities that exist today in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools the result of the county's rapid growth or are they the result of multiple CMS school boards' failure over thirty years to eliminate "root and branch" the vestiges of a school system segregated by law?

That was a central question before the 11 judges of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday, since as Judge Paul V. Niemeyer, reported to be a potential Bush Supreme Court nominee, noted early in the arguments, "If you are remedying past vestiges, there are some grounds for using race conscious policies."

Joining the court for the hearing was Judge Robert L. Gregory, the court's first black member, named by former President Bill Clinton as an interim appointee.

Attorneys for the white plaintiffs have argued since the 1999 trial of the case before U.S. District Court Judge Robert Potter that the inequities are the result of demographic changes, and Potter agreed with that position in his ruling when he declared that the school system is

unitary -- that it had done what it could to eliminate those vestiges.

Attorneys for both the CMS school board and the Swann plaintiffs, however, have argued that the inequities that continue to exist between schools populated predominantly by white children and those populated predominantly by black children are indeed vestiges of the de jure (by law) segregated system.

A three-judge panel of the appeals court agreed with their position in a ruling issued late last year.

Tuesday's arguments before the full court replayed those positions, but with some interesting twists.

While it was very clear during the trial of the case that attorneys for the white parents could rely on a sympathetic hearing from Judge Potter, the judges of the generally conservative appeals court were not such an easy mark. Two members of the court, Chief Judge Harvie Wilkinson III and Judge Michael Luttig, both also rumored to be strong candidates for a potential Supreme Court nomination, repeatedly

Continued on Page 2

## 'Separate and unequal, again'

### A look at the new segregation

See Page 4

# Richmond hearing: Do vestiges remain?

Continued from Page 1

pressed Texas attorney Lee Parks, who represents the white plaintiffs, to demonstrate to the court that the inequities are not vestiges.

Parks replied that the school system eliminated its previously segregated system in 1975, the year of the late Judge James B. McMillan's decision to place the 1960s desegregation suit on inactive status and essentially remove the court from supervision of the school system's practices.

McMillan's "Swann Song" ruling followed the completion of the first year of the school board's assignment plan that bused black children in grades K-3 to schools in white neighborhoods and white children in grades 4-6 to schools in black neighborhoods. This approach was known as "pairing," and was a significant factor the judge's decision to put the case on inactive status.

Parks' reply, however, failed to take account of a 1979 decision by McMillan, who, when asked by a group of white parents to rule that the school system had eliminated a dual system and was therefore unitary, refused to do so. Potter's 1999 decision was the first to declare CMS unitary.

The question of whether Potter was correct in ruling CMS unitary was one of the major questions before the court on Tuesday, but it appeared that Parks' answers did not satisfy the two conservative judges. Luttig

responded that Parks' argument "doesn't answer the legal question" and asked, "What confirms in your mind that these [inequities] are not vestiges?"

When Parks responded that at a point during the last 25 years the school system had achieved racial balance and that increasing segregation in CMS schools is the result of rapid demographic change, Wilkinson pressed him, "Why do you think that these complaints about facilities, [school] siting and transportation don't relate to vestiges?"

Among other statistics, Parks appealed to the degree of racial balance in magnet schools, but Judge Diana Gribbon Motz, who chaired the three-judge panel, interrupted Parks to note that the balance was the result of a magnet school lottery that has taken race into account in magnet school assignment, part of a policy that the white plaintiffs would like the court to disallow. Parks' interest in having the court take an active role in supervising school system policy represented another stumbling block for the more conservative judges on the court, since conservatives have not generally favored an activist judiciary.

Niemeyer, Wilkinson and Luttig, as well as Judge H. Emory Widener, all questioned Parks about whether it made judicial sense for a court to declare the school system unitary and in compliance with the law, but then order it to follow certain assignment practices.

Wilkinson said, "You are asking us to presume that the school board will not act in good faith,"

and Widener added, "Why should we presume that the school system is going to violate the law?"

Parks replied that "the school system has shown some willingness to violate the law."

Luke Largess, representing the black parents who, with the school board, had appealed Potter's ruling, argued first on Tuesday.

He told the court that successive school boards since the mid '70s have been "committed in principle but not in practice" to eliminating the vestiges of segregation.

Largess said that even prior to rapid population growth and

Continued on Page 3

## Calendar

- 6** "Diversity in Education: When it's not all Black and White," Charlotte Chamber brown-bag lunch, 330 S. Tryon St., 11:30 a.m.
  - 8** Curriculum committee, board conference room, 9:30 a.m.
  - 10** Urban League awards dinner, Convention Center, 6:30 p.m.
  - 12** School board and commissioners lunch, noon.
  - 13** School board meeting, Board Room, 6 p.m.
  - 16** School board budget work session, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
  - 20** Bond oversight committee, Services, 7:30 a.m.
- School board budget work session, 5 p.m.-8 p.m.
- 27** School board meeting, Board Room, 6 p.m.

## **Educate!** a newsletter of The Swann Fellowship

1510 E. 7th St. Charlotte NC 28204  
704-342-4330 SwannFello@aol.com Locally produced content © The Swann Fellowship. Lucy Bush, president; B.B. DeLaine, vice president. Published since September 2000. 6-week avg. circ. through last issue: 2,461

To unsubscribe, send us a "Remove" message. If you'd like to see it regularly, message us with "Subscribe."

**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 non-profit 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.

## Richmond hearing: Do vestiges remain?

Continued from Page 2

development in Mecklenburg County during the last 10 to 15 years, Charlotte-Mecklenburg school boards had never acted to correct the inequities that existed as a result of segregation.

"The stubborn facts of history persist," he said, "and if they are left unattended, they fester." In Charlotte-Mecklenburg's schools, he said, "things have been left to fester."

Attorney James Ferguson, who has been involved in the representation of black parents since the original Swann suit was filed in the 1960s, reinforced Largess' points with an eloquent closing.

After the hearing Ferguson said that his colleagues had not told him until Tuesday morning that they wanted him to make the final argument. "We didn't want him to get nervous," one joked.

Ferguson told the court that it must "look at the case as a continuum." "African American children have never been given the oppor-

tunities they deserve to have," he said.

"In 1975 the court said the school board shows promise, but in 1979 it found that the board hadn't done what it had promised. In 1979 it was given a road map to change, but it did not do it," Ferguson said.

In 1992, he noted, CMS greatly enlarged its magnet school program in an effort to integrate schools voluntarily, but because the school system failed to monitor transfers of white students out of their assigned schools into magnet programs, that policy had also contributed to new patterns of segregation.

He also pointed to such issues as the relatively higher number of black children bused for integration purposes, the vast majority of new schools sited in white neighborhoods and various school boards' failure to site schools in areas midway between black inner city neighborhoods and predominantly white suburbs.

Ferguson hammered again and again on the dates 1974, 1975, 1979, and 1992 in his effort to convince the judges that CMS has never eliminated the vestiges of a

dual system.

Concluding his argument, he said, "Black kids are still bearing the brunt, just as they did in 1974, 1975, 1979, and 1992."

John Borkowski, attorney for the school board, took a middle position during Tuesday's hearing. He maintained the school board's earlier position that the system has not yet achieved unitary status, but in answer to a question from Motz, Borkowski said that status could be achieved in three to five years.

He also argued that unitary status could be more easily achieved if the court kept its hands off the system, rather than releasing it from one court order only to place it under another.

### Young Artists:

Share with all of us what you see! Send your words, digital photos and digital artwork to SwannFello@aol.com. Mail goes to The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204-2410.

## State must re-examine ABCs testing program

*The writer is fair testing organizer of the Common Sense Foundation in Raleigh.*

Public education is the last bastion of democracy in America. Our schools should be the one place where race and class do not impact the quality of services.

North Carolina has adopted an accountability model in which the educational future of students will be solely determined by their performance on standardized tests.

Although evidence about the benefits of high stakes testing is questionable and contradictory,

the impact of high stakes testing on students, teachers and schools is clear. Drop-out rates, retaining a disproportionate amount of poor and minority students and teacher flight from low performing schools represent some of the concerns raised about high stakes testing.

We are establishing a Commission on Fair Testing thanks to a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The Commission will conduct hearings so community members may voice their experiences.

We will publish a report based on the information, and recommend policy changes to make the testing less harmful to poor

and minority children.

The commission will include parents, teachers, community leaders, PTA members, policy-makers, and other allies.

I encourage you and your organization, if you are not already involved, to join the struggle for meaningful assessment of our students. Please contact me at The Common Sense Foundation. I am looking forward to meeting with groups of parents, teachers and concerned community members to provide information and answer questions.

Daniella Cook  
daniella@common-sense.org  
919-821-9270

### Letters

# 'Separate and unequal, again'

**In a 6-month study, News & Observer finds that resegregation comes at a fearful cost to minority students, is poorly preparing all for a diverse world, and is further complicating the state's push to improve achievement.**

North Carolina's public schools, which went from Jim Crow segregation in the 1950s to widespread integration in the 1980s, are in the midst of a dramatic shift that is once again separating students by race and class.

The new segregation, revealed in an extensive analysis of test scores and school demographics by The News & Observer, is damaging the academic performance of minority students.

It is creating concentrations of poor children in low-performing schools, where more than half of the students commonly fall below grade level and where principals struggle to find and retain experienced teachers.

Last year, 17 percent of the state's black students – or roughly 69,000 children – attended schools with minority enrollments of 80 percent or more. The number of such schools has doubled since 1993 to more than 220.

At the same time, the number of predominantly white schools has grown even as the percentage of white students has gradually declined statewide.

A few high-minority schools defy the odds and succeed academically. Far more often, they fail. As a result, resegregation is widening the achievement gap between white and minority students, even as state leaders look for ways to narrow it.

For six months, The News & Observer examined the new segregation by conducting dozens of classroom visits, more than 100 interviews and a computer analysis of standardized test scores

The Raleigh News & Observer's series "Separate and unequal, again" was published from Feb. 18 to Feb. 25. The series was written by Tim Simmons, with assistance from Susan Ebbs, Craig Jarvis, Jon Goldstein and others. These excerpts are reprinted with permission. The entire series is online at [www.newsobserver.com](http://www.newsobserver.com)

from every public school in the state by race and income level. Among the key findings are these:

- The academic achievement of students from all minority groups suffers when they are placed in largely segregated schools.
- Resegregation is hurting middle-class black children more than any other group.
- Despite fears often voiced by white parents, the racial mix of a school has little effect on the achievement scores of middle-class white students. Regardless of a school's racial mix, middle-class white students post passing rates of 80 percent or more in most school districts in the state.
- Predominantly black schools rely heavily on inexperienced and uncertified teachers, to the point that they sometimes make up 20 percent or more of the faculty. Such a large percentage, principals say, invariably means that some teachers are poorly prepared.

In some schools, the shift occurs with breathtaking speed. At Atkins Middle School in Winston-Salem, for example, the racial bal-

ance went from two-thirds white to 96 percent black during a single summer break when a school choice program took effect.

"We spent our whole careers believing schools should be integrated, but that's not life today," said Atkins Principal Debbie Blanton-Warren. "I don't believe the children here are better off – academically or socially – but they are here, and they need our help now."

Part of a national trend, resegregation is almost certain to continue in the coming years as more districts embrace neighborhood schools and parental choice programs.

Resegregation is occurring, first of all, because the courts have allowed it. In a succession of decisions beginning in 1991, federal judges throughout the country have removed the legal underpinnings that supported integration efforts for much of the past three decades.

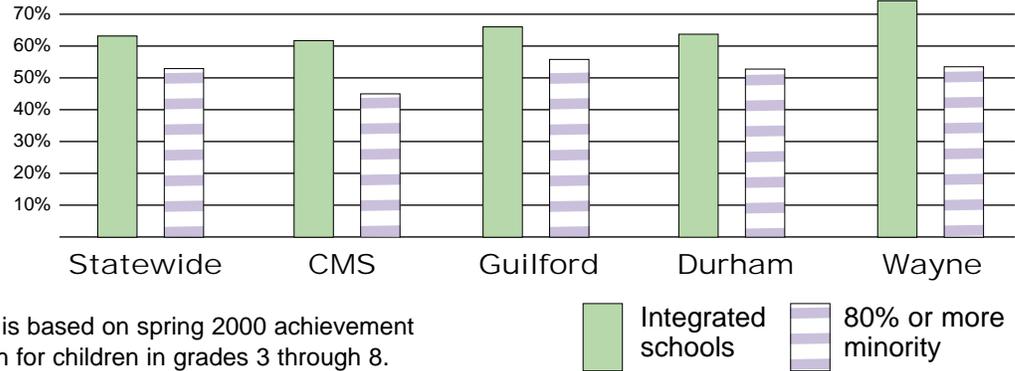
In response, many school boards have decided that integration is too expensive and too politically troublesome. Often, the public agrees. Even black parents and black community leaders – for years the most vigorous advocates of integration – have started to voice skepticism about the benefits of integration.

The drift toward resegregated schools collides directly with statewide efforts to address the racial achievement gap. In every North Carolina school district, the average scores for minority students – especially black students

**Continued on Page 5**

## Middle- and upper-income black children lag in segregated settings

Statewide and in several large districts, many fewer African-American children are on grade level at the schools with 80% or higher minority enrollment than at those with more integrated populations.



Data is from the N&O and is based on spring 2000 achievement scores in reading and math for children in grades 3 through 8.

**Continued from Page 4**

– lag behind those of whites regardless of family income and parent education.

The passing rate for middle-class black students in all schools, for example, trails that of their white peers by more than 20 percentage points. Poor white students outscore poor black children by a similar margin.

State officials are well aware that resegregation complicates the task of closing the achievement gap, but they have no appetite for getting involved in local student assignment issues. ...

Today's resegregation is not the result of a deliberate policy or a set goal. Instead, it is the sum of many decisions, most of them incremental.

While federal courts have opened the door, voucher programs, neighborhood schools and the emergence of segregated charter schools have helped speed the process.

It is not that educators expect integrated schools to disappear. The unanswered question is how far the pendulum will swing.

The N&O's analysis linking test scores with family income and race shows that middle-class black students – that is, students who do not qualify for subsidized lunches – are the ones hurt most by resegregation.

In district after district, these students score significantly worse in segregated schools than in an

integrated setting.

In Charlotte, for example, the passing rate for black students from middle-class families is nearly 16 percentage points higher in integrated schools – schools where the racial mix is close to that of the overall district – than in schools that are more than 80 percent minority. In Durham County, the difference is 11 points. In Wayne County in Eastern North Carolina, the passing rates differ by 22 percentage points.

Many teachers attribute the differences to lower expectations from the community, from parents and at times from other teachers. Their instincts are confirmed by a growing body of research about the link between expectations and achievement.

"Give a child enough hints that he's not expected to succeed, and it won't be long until he tells you he's not smart enough to understand," said Shawn Watlington, who teaches U.S. history at Greensboro's Dudley High School, where 96 percent of the students are black. "I see it every day in this school."

Once a child believes he can't succeed, convincing him otherwise is a difficult task. Trying to motivate 15 or 20 such children in every classroom requires a teacher with exceptional skills and commitment. But those teachers are in high demand and often are the first to leave largely segregated schools. This creates a

turnover that forces principals to hire a large percentage of raw recruits.

Throughout the state, predominantly black schools consistently employ many more inexperienced teachers than do integrated schools. They also hire more teachers without full credentials, often from a general application pool at the school district level. Principals in mostly white schools, meanwhile, typically choose new teachers from a waiting list that they keep in their own personnel files.

The turnover and transfer of a district's best teachers create a cycle that is hard to break as savvy parents – generally those from middle-class homes – seek out schools with good teachers.

Almost two-thirds of the Hispanic, American Indian and black students in North Carolina come from poor families, compared with only 20 percent of white students. That is why most resegregated schools must simultaneously fight the challenges of poverty and the stereotypes of race.

In schools where minority enrollment exceeds 80 percent, it's a good year if three out of five children can read, write and solve math questions at grade level. Passing rates of less than 50 percent – and sometimes less than 40 percent – are more common. Sometimes even extraordinary

**Continued from Page 5**

efforts cannot compensate for the concentrations of poverty that resegregation has created.

Diggs Elementary School in Winston-Salem illustrates the challenge. Bordered by a steel mill, a highway and a public housing complex known as Happy Hill Gardens, Diggs is among the poorest schools in the state. All of its 230 children live in Happy Hill. There is no stigma attached to the subsidized-lunch program because more than 95 percent of the students qualify.

The school, which serves children in grades kindergarten through five, is housed in an old building that was closed during the years of integration and then reopened in 1995 when Forsyth County allowed parents to choose schools.

The poverty is so severe that one of the faculty's first capital requests when Diggs reopened was for a washer, dryer and shower to make sure the children would at least begin the school day clean. Principal Bobby Robinson lowers her voice just a bit when she gets to that part of the school's recent history.

School officials expected Diggs to become a mostly black school. Even so, they were unprepared for the magnitude of the challenge. After the first year, 60 percent of the teachers left. Those who stayed quickly realized they had to convince their students that they were indeed smart enough to learn.

"We had smart parades, smart contests and just about every other smart idea we could think of to convince them they could succeed," Robinson said.

But Robinson knew it would take more than encouragement to produce success. Diggs soon became something called an Equity Plus school. That meant the central office would funnel more money to Robinson and her staff to reduce class sizes to 15 students or fewer, provide one-on-one tutoring for children below grade level and help recruit volun-

## Goldsboro High: 'They feel so sorry for me'

... [Principal] Patricia Burden came to Goldsboro High School in July with a mandate to lead. Specifically, Burden was brought in to improve test scores.... At Goldsboro High, only 30 percent of the students were considered proficient last year....

Burden doesn't believe that black children need to sit next to white children to learn. But she says it might help if they were at least in the same building.

"We could use a little of that positive attention from community leaders and key people in the school district that seems to come with integration," Burden said. "We don't get much of that now."

Like many schools in Eastern North Carolina, Goldsboro High never fully embraced the integration movement in the 1970s. It crowned separate homecoming queens – one black, one white – until the early 1990s.

In 1992, the city school system of Goldsboro forced a school merger with the Wayne County system, joining a small wave of consolidations throughout the state. The leaders of the merged district adopted lenient transfer policies in an effort to retain community support.

The remaining white enrollment in the former city schools – already in a steep decline –

quickly dropped below 5 percent. Most of the white children at Goldsboro High transferred to Eastern Wayne and other surrounding high schools.

Today in Goldsboro, as in other districts throughout the state, it is possible for a black child to spend 13 years in school and never have more than a single white classmate.

To Ida Adams, who has taught at Goldsboro High for 16 years, that is not healthy.

"Students have a misconception about the world," Adams said. "They think the world is predominantly African-American because their world is predominantly African-American. After school, that's who they hang around with. During school, that's who they hang around with. I am talking about good students who believe this."...

The good students also know what others in the community think of the school – opinions that might motivate them to learn out of anger but hardly out of pride.

"When people ask me what school I go to, and I tell them Goldsboro, they start apologizing to me. They say they feel so sorry for me," senior Jay'na Johnson said.

"Now how is that supposed to make us feel?"

teers and business partners. More money is spent on the children at Diggs than almost anywhere else in the district of 65 schools.

Test scores at Diggs have improved significantly, but only 39 percent of the children passed both their state reading and math tests last year – the same as the district average for low-income black children. Robinson fears this might be as good as it gets for the children from Happy Hill.

"We are doing everything we can think of," Robinson said.

"Consistency is a big problem for us."

A big enemy of consistency at Diggs is the high rate of student turnover, much of it directly linked to poverty. Parents routinely move across town to live with a different relative or take a different low-paying job. If there are debts to pay, a change of address can buy some time. More than one-third of Robinson's students leave and are replaced in any given year. Some children have

**Continued on Page 7**

**Continued from Page 6**

left, returned and left again inside of two years.

The staff also is showing signs of strain. When Robinson told her teachers last year that she planned to retire this June, some left immediately and others made plans to transfer out this summer.

"You just can't do this forever and not get burned out," Robinson said of her teachers. "I wish they would stay, but it's to be expected, I guess."...

The racket from the 30 students in Dallas Allen's classroom would make most adults cringe.

As loud and as fast as they can, the sixth-graders chant while pounding on their desks.

"Who are we? We're the best! What do we do? We do our best! Who are we? We're superstarrrrrrrs!"

Thirty seconds later, the students have their books open on their desks, and Allen plunges headlong into an animated, high-energy English lesson.

His class is taking place at Gaston Middle School, a worn-out building in a crossroads community 80 miles northeast of Raleigh. The 375 children at the Northampton County school are mostly poor, mostly black – and mostly high-achieving.

If there is a magic to their success, state educators would like to bottle the formula and spread it among the poor and minority schools found throughout North Carolina.

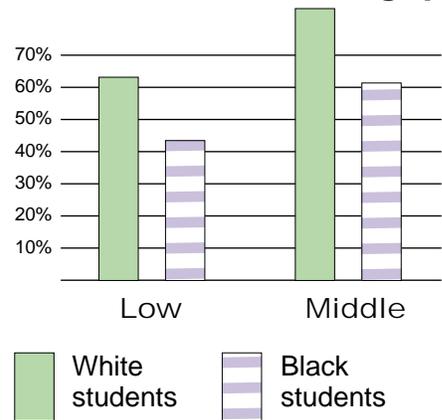
The task is daunting. North Carolina is home to more than 125 schools in which both black enrollment and poverty rates exceed 80 percent – a number that is expected to rise as schools continue to resegregate along lines of race and class.

Success is elusive in these schools, often requiring extraordinary effort. Far more often, the schools post some of the worst test scores in the state.

State educators recently proposed a rescue plan for failing schools, but it would provide help only to those that fail to make

## Income doesn't erase racial achievement gap

Grouped by family income, average test scores of black students statewide are consistently lower than those of white students in the same general income level. Data is from the N&O and is the percent of students in grades 3 through 8 at grade level in spring 2000 on achievement scores in reading and math.



reasonable academic progress two years out of three.

Just seven schools have met that standard in the past three years. More than 100 other high-poverty schools made just enough progress to stay off the list, but still didn't push even half of their students up to grade level....

Schools that beat the odds are most often found in rural counties or small towns – places where teachers have some of the best-paying and most stable jobs in the area, and little choice about where else they might work if they want to keep teaching.

"It's not as though we can drive across town to a school where the rich families live," said Tammi Sutton, who teaches eighth grade at Gaston Middle. "All the schools are pretty much in the same boat here."

But success at these schools is often fragile.

Staff turnover is still a problem. Some teachers will trade their daily drive down a country road for a 75-mile commute to the Triangle, where a similar job might pay 15 percent more. The departure of a strong principal can trigger a staff exodus....

But even when children succeed, their progress can be difficult to sustain. The teachers at Gaston Middle School, for example, want to know why so many of their students tail off academically in high school. Even though most of the

students at Northampton High-West come directly from Gaston Middle School, less than 40 percent of the high school's students scored at grade level on the state's high school exams last year.

Beyond the ingredients of leadership and focus, the formula for bringing success to a poor, high-minority school varies widely.

In Halifax County, where the entire district is predominantly poor and African-American, classroom instruction is driven by the state's mandated exams. Students are tested at least every six weeks, the results are constantly analyzed and every child understands that good scores do indeed matter. At four of the district's 16 schools, more than 70 percent of the children are performing at or above grade level, a dramatic improvement in a district that was once among the state's worst.

In some schools, principals achieve success by demanding long hours of their teachers. Others insist it does no good to let their staff be consumed by the job.

At Winstead Elementary School in Wilson, the rule is to use time efficiently.

Every Winstead teacher has a role to play. Those who miss their cue risk the silent scorn of others.

"I wouldn't say we would ostracize someone who didn't carry her weight, but when we get new people, we impress our work ethic on

**Continued from Page 7**

them," said Christi Athas, a third-grade teacher. "We don't have meetings here just for the sake of getting together."

Principal Robert Pope emphasizes teamwork. A former coach and athletics director during his 26 years in the county, he still uses sports analogies when describing his staff.

When a recent departure left him without an expert in technology, he blamed himself.

"I didn't pay enough attention to my depth chart on that one," he said....

Principals who run mostly black schools prefer to hire plenty of minority teachers, but Pope says he doesn't have that luxury. His assistant principal is black, but he has only one African-American teacher.

Almost 80 percent of his black students, however, scored at or above grade level this past spring on the state's reading and math tests.

The teachers at Winstead learn quickly that parents won't be lining up at their doors when the call goes out for volunteers. But most of the parents seem genuinely interested in helping their children succeed when the teachers call directly. If parents need a little prodding, Pope's assistant principal, Beverly Lane, has made a name for herself by running down parents at home and work to let them know they are wanted.

Within the first few weeks of school, all the teachers at Winstead have visited or talked with almost every child's parent. Inside the classrooms, they rely on individual instruction to reach every child from the strongest to the weakest....

Failure was not only acceptable when Edwards arrived at Gaston Middle in 1993, it was expected.

A junior high made up of only seventh- and eighth-graders, the school had many teachers left over from its former days as a high school.

"The teachers never talked with each other about what they were

## The 2 Greensboros: Northwest and Dudley

To see the effects of resegregation, Anne Murr and Ken Thompson need only show up for work.

Murr is principal at Northwest Guilford High School, a high-achieving suburban school where 92 percent of the students are white.

Thompson is principal at Dudley High School, an academically struggling school near downtown Greensboro that is 96 percent African-American.

... Northwest today serves children from hundreds of homes tucked between golf courses and along cul-de-sacs....

Northwest students pester the teachers about grades. They want to know when projects will be returned, when interim results for the grading period will be ready and when the next test is scheduled.

So preoccupied are they with grades that teachers say it's tough to get them to work in groups.

[History teacher Ray] Parrish graduated from Northwest when the surrounding area was relatively rural. He is still surprised sometimes at how the school has changed, but he welcomes the motivation of his students.

"They're a dream to work with," he said. "You just get them started and guide the process. These kids are your self-starters."

It's the kind of focus that Thompson would like to instill at Dudley High School. An educator for 30 years, Thompson came to Dudley two years ago

hoping to rekindle the pride of a place that was once considered a premier black high school. It's going to take some work.

Dudley is one of a dozen black high schools in otherwise diverse school districts throughout the state. All score near the bottom of the state's academic rankings....

Teachers ... complain that many children in the regular classes have been socially promoted for years and still are passed along today by some of their colleagues.

"If you make them do the work, most of them will eventually step up and do the job," said James Abell, an algebra teacher hired at Dudley three years ago. "But I don't think many of them have ever been forced before."...

The Dudley students offer a variety of reasons why they don't do as well in the classroom as the kids from Northwest. They talk about teacher turnover. They talk about stereotypes. They talk about the extra help and the high expectations that are part of life in wealthier homes.

Eventually they get around to assessing themselves, and freshman Rosalyn Baker doesn't mince words as she looks around her classroom.

"That little bit of money they have up there doesn't make any difference at all," Baker said of Northwest. "I think our kids just don't try as hard. I can understand why, but look, you can't expect to succeed if you aren't trying."

doing," Edwards said. "They didn't care to make their lessons work together. Most of them lectured all day right out of the textbooks."

Edwards started making changes at the top. She successfully lobbied the school board to make Gaston a true middle school by adding a sixth grade so the

staff could work with the students for least three consecutive years.

Then, she told the teachers they would start working in teams. She told them to stop lecturing all day. Finally, she told the students they would no longer be promoted unless they passed their tests.

**Continued on Page 9**

**Continued from Page 8**

Her edicts left failing students in tears that first year and a teaching staff depleted by transfers and resignations.

She turned to a group known as Teach for America to help replenish the staff. The national program provides raw recruits out of college willing to work in rural areas and inner-city schools.

"I was willing to gamble that they would have the skill," Edwards said, "because the thing I needed most was their enthusiasm."

After several years, Edwards built a team that expected to succeed. When someone left, she worked the phones and tapped her contacts to replace them.

In 1997, test scores began to turn around. The year 1998 was a breakthrough one for math with 79 percent of the students at grade level – almost double the percentage from two years earlier. Reading scores followed suit in 1999.

The teachers at Gaston, especially the younger ones, exaggerate only a little when they say they live at the school.

They are there in the morning before 7:30, and they work with dozens of students in after-school tutoring sessions. More than 12 hours after the day begins, some teacher is almost certain to give a child a ride home from a basketball practice or a game....

Wake County stands alone. It is the one urban school district in North Carolina still trying hard to keep a diverse mix of children in every school. And with each passing year, the depth of that commitment is tested as never before. Unrelenting suburban growth, eroding support among black families and increasing skepticism about the value of crosstown busing make it ever harder to keep Wake's schools integrated.

But the district's biggest challenge can be found in the classroom. Put bluntly, low-income black students aren't benefiting academically from integration.

Only 42 percent of Wake

## Tale of the big cities: 'We have fallen well short'

"We have fallen well short of the vision," said Wake County Commissioner Vernon Malone, who also was the county's first black school board chairman in 1976.

Resegregation has advanced the furthest in the school districts serving Greensboro and Winston-Salem, where nearly half the schools are either 80 percent white or 80 percent minority. But other districts, urban and rural, have moved in the same direction.

In Charlotte, which has long claimed to be "the city that made busing work," schools slip a bit every year from the district's integration goals. Fewer than 60 percent of the schools there now meet the standard definition of "diverse" – meaning that their racial mix is within 15 points of the district average – down from 85 percent in the 1980s. A pending court case in Charlotte [heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals last Tuesday] threatens to sharply accelerate the resegregation process.

The Triangle's two largest districts are feeling the pressure as well. Durham, after committing itself to integration in 1995, has decided to stress school choice instead.

Even leaders in Wake County – among the nation's staunchest advocates of integration – are having a difficult time maintaining support for cross-town busing and inner-city magnet schools.

Meanwhile, few school boards are making the effort needed to help teachers contend with the growing concentrations of poor and minority children.

"It's hard to keep the better teachers here," said Kimberly McArthur, a teacher at Goldsboro High School, where 97 percent of the students are black. "We don't get anything extra for being here, and the community perception is that you must be some type of awful teacher or you would leave. So if you want to work in a school like this, you are pretty much on your own."

County's poor, black students are doing grade-level work – a figure lower than the state average for that group. Middle-class black students are not thriving either. About 60 percent pass the state's reading and math tests, compared with 90 percent of white students with similar family incomes.

"There is a seething frustration among African-American parents about the academic progress of their children – a terrible frustration," said Vernon Malone, who in 1976 became the Wake County school board's first black chairman and who currently is a current county commissioner.

"When I was on the Board of Education I thought integration was the salvation of minority kids. But what we started to correct 25 years ago we still haven't fixed. You have to question whether this

is as good as it's going to get."

Other indicators confirm that Wake's schools are leaving many minority children behind. Minorities are more likely to drop out, more likely to be suspended and less likely to enroll in advanced courses than white students.

But until recently, it was almost impossible to directly compare different groups of children beyond those measures. Today, North Carolina's mandatory testing programs make comparison not only possible, but inevitable.

Wake schools Superintendent Bill McNeal knows exactly what the comparisons will mean to those who have doubts about diversity.

"People will look at that and think integration is a failed exper-

**Continued on Page 10**

**Continued from Page 9**  
iment," McNeal said. "They'll turn it into a whipping boy. But the decisions we made in the past have also helped to produce this region's prosperity. You can't ignore that. You can't separate the two."...

The county's housing patterns, however, are still rooted in the past. African-American families remain concentrated in Raleigh's eastern and southeastern neighborhoods, even as the school district has grown to comprise more than 97,000 students in 122 schools.

To maintain racial balance in every school, the busing challenge gets tougher every year. Each new subdivision and remote suburban school means longer bus rides for many black children – and the calls from black parents for neighborhood schools intensify.

"The question is, how many times can you divide the pie?" Malone asked. "How many different places can you send the African-American children of Southeast Raleigh in the name of integration?"...

Today, black leaders say, a growing number of African-American parents no longer believe integration can deliver on its promise of equality. Instead, they support integration out of fear that resegregation would be worse.

"If I could find a political model that would guarantee equal distribution, then I would not romanticize about integration for one moment," said David Forbes, pastor of Christian Faith Baptist Church in Raleigh. "But I don't know what that model would be."...

Like Forbes, Superintendent McNeal was educated in segregated schools, and his years in public education have made him keenly aware of the frustrations that Forbes describes.

But to McNeal, integration is entangled in the larger issues of poverty, class, expectations and stereotypes. Integration is a necessary step in a much longer journey. He believes this deeply. He

## 'Race is such a powerful force...'

"Once race determines the image of a school, I don't know how you can ever attract those white students back," said Debbie Blanton-Warren, the principal at Atkins Middle School in Winston-Salem. "Race is such a powerful force in the community."

More than 400 white students and some middle-class black children left Atkins in the summer of 1998. Of the 500 children who are now enrolled, more than 20 percent are in special education classes. Of the rest, only 40 percent can both read and calculate at grade level.

"At first, it was sort of like a grieving process for many of us," Blanton-Warren said. "But I've accepted the new reality."

needs others to trust he is right.

"Who is connected to IBM and Nortel and Cisco Systems?" McNeal asks rhetorically. "Who can provide tutors – including themselves? Who has the time for that? When you start answering all of those questions ..., it leads you to the middle class. It does answer the question of who needs to be in the high-flying schools. You won't find all those people in every neighborhood."

This does not mean that all children will succeed just because a school has middle-class support. If that were so, integration would have led to improved achievement long ago. But McNeal sees no reason why the shortcomings of integration should signal a need to give up.

He believes schools resegregate for a fairly obvious reason.

"The community starts to quit. That's all."...

An aggressive push to improve student achievement combined with rapid school resegregation has caught North Carolina's edu-

cation leaders in a political Catch-22.

With access to detailed test data, they know that minorities in largely segregated schools usually score lower than similar children in integrated schools. They also know that additional money and teachers can greatly improve most struggling schools regardless of racial balance.

But if the drive to improve test scores means extra money gets funneled to segregated schools, the state runs the risk of inadvertently encouraging the very resegregation it is trying to avoid.

"There is no easy answer," said state schools Superintendent Mike Ward. "But it's clear we cannot let children languish in schools where we know they are at a disadvantage. We have to reach children where the local schools have assigned them and also continue to promote diversity. Sometimes those goals will conflict."

The need is urgent: The number of North Carolina schools with minority enrollments of 80 percent or more has doubled in the past seven years to 226 out of roughly 2,100 schools. Most of the children in these schools are poor. More than half routinely perform below grade-level. Moreover, the concentration of low-performing children has made it difficult for principals to attract and keep the experienced teachers they need.

The challenges come at a difficult time for those seeking swift solutions.

A projected state budget shortfall of about \$800 million means lawmakers cannot afford another expensive school-reform program. At the same time, resegregation is expected to increase. The federal courts have severely limited the ability of districts to integrate schools through busing programs, parents are demanding more neighborhood schools and leaders at the national level continue to push for school choice programs regardless of racial diversity.

And the racial balance has shifted measurably in 302 other

**Continued from Page 10**

schools throughout the state, producing enrollments that are 60 percent to 80 percent minority – ratios that often trigger white flight among parents.

The new segregation is certain to be debated in the coming months, given the intense focus on improving schools for all children and the public commitment by North Carolina lawmakers to close the racial achievement gap in the state's classrooms.

Equally certain is that every conversation will be driven by a relatively simple question: Where do we go from here?

Various groups – from those already working to close the racial achievement gap to old-guard supporters of traditional integration programs – are expected to offer remedies for resegregation. But by virtue of their power and presence, the state Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education will dominate much of the discussion.

Ward, the DPI's chief administrator and main liaison to the state board, offered a glimpse of the path he wants to follow in announcing a plan last month that would help a small number of the state's worst schools.

Under that plan, schools deemed low-performing for any two years out of three would be given money to reduce class sizes, retain and attract better teachers and provide specific instructional programs based on children's needs.

If the state board endorses the plan this spring and the legislature follows, lawmakers would still need to find a way to pay for it. The estimated cost: \$5 million to \$7 million.

"We have limited leverage when it comes to actual student assignments, but one of the things we can do is apply resources in ways that provide incentives to get and keep high-flying professionals in the schools that have academic difficulty," Ward said. "We can also target limited amounts of money to reduce class sizes where

## School system 'wasn't frightening' to whites

Wake County has enjoyed a fundamental advantage in making integration palatable to white parents: Its black enrollment has never exceeded 28 percent, compared with a minority enrollment of two-thirds in Durham. Less than a quarter of all students qualify for the subsidized lunch program in Wake. In Durham the figure is 40 percent.

That means school leaders in Wake have been able to promise equal opportunities without threatening white families who might otherwise leave.

"Integration allowed us to build a quality school system that wasn't frightening to anyone," former schools Superintendent Bob Bridges said.

But if the school system wasn't frightening, it also wasn't working for many minority students.

we know it will do the most good and extend the school year where research tells us more time would be helpful."

Ward concedes that one drawback of his plan is its scope. Only seven schools would receive such help if the plan were in place today. Eight more could become eligible at year's end depending on their progress during the remainder of this academic year.

But minority enrollments and subsidized lunch counts exceeded 80 percent in more than 125 schools statewide last year. Looking at the figures in a slightly different fashion, passing rates failed to reach even 50 percent in at least 250 schools where a majority of the children qualified for subsidized lunches.

Aware of those numbers, Ward doubts North Carolina can spend its way out of the academic problems related to resegregation

along lines of race and class. That's one reason he intends to use his bully pulpit as state superintendent to bring attention to the issue while also encouraging teachers and principals from throughout the state to learn from the small number of schools that are high minority, high poverty and high achieving....

Several other groups are expected to advance proposals in the current legislative session that will address ways to close the racial achievement gap found in both integrated and largely segregated schools. While many of the ideas already in the works don't tackle resegregation directly, the legislative debate will give lawmakers a chance to stake positions on the issue.

One idea that lawmakers have informally discussed would look to help as many as 40 of the state's worst-performing schools by targeting money based on poverty and achievement rates, said John Dornan, director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, a lobbying group of business leaders, educators and legislators. Much like Ward's plan, the focus would be on reducing class sizes, boosting teacher pay and lengthening the school year.

When such an idea was floated during a recent forum meeting, Dornan said, several lawmakers quickly suggested the plan could be introduced within the current legislative session.

"For relatively little money – maybe \$20 million – you could really make a big impact on a reasonably large number of the poorest schools," Dornan said. "During a time when we know money is going to be tight, the question will involve how the state can best target that money in a way that is politically palatable."...

As lawmakers begin to stake positions on resegregation, Sen. Eric Reeves, a Democrat from Wake County, said he hopes people will consider any unintended consequences of otherwise well-meaning legislation.

**Continued on Page 12**

**Continued from Page 11**

"I represent a school district that has worked hard to desegregate its schools over the years, and I'm not sure I feel comfortable at all with targeting money toward schools that concentrate poor and minority children," Reeves said. "What kind of message does that send? If a county can receive money for segregating its students, then they might just do it. Why not? Who would blame them when money is tight?"

Ultimately, many of the questions involving resegregation in North Carolina schools won't be answered until lawmakers and educators gain a clearer understanding of why integration failed to fully achieve its aims in the first place.

With that in mind, at least one high-profile group has decided to forgo making any proposals in the coming legislative session in favor of spending its time digging deeply into questions of race and achievement.

"We've thrown everything we know to throw at these achievement problems in the past," said Bob Bridges, a former Wake County superintendent who heads a 29-member panel that is studying the racial achievement gap in all schools. "Our group wants to look at the roots of these gaps and find ways to address the hidden parts of the problem."

The commission aims to offer a report later this year that will examine how teacher preparation, parent involvement and state laws and policies affect the achievement gap. It will also try to define the characteristics of underachieving youngsters beyond such easy explanations as motivation and intelligence.

Other educators, citing strong support in the black community for neighborhood schools and charter schools, say some African-American families apparently have given up hope that the traditional model of integration will

## State to focus on staff, not students, leader says

Of the 226 schools with minority enrollments of at least 80 percent, fewer than a dozen can claim the achievement levels typically found in middle-class suburban schools. Most are in rural counties or small towns where teachers who want to stay in the profession have little choice about where to work. But more important, the schools also share the common thread of a strong principal who has assembled a hard-working and relatively stable staff of teachers.

Such distinctions are important to note because the state can provide money and resources to help shape a school staff, but it has no authority to tell local leaders where children must go to school – no matter how many schools a district might create with high concentrations of poor and minority students.

"That's why our greatest ability as a state is to capture the data and get it out there," says state schools Supt. Mike Ward. "People need to understand that what is happening in their community is part of a larger trend throughout the state and nation. There are schools that defy the odds and we need to learn from them, but in general there is nothing in the data that suggests resegregation enhances student achievement."

ever work completely.

"Without assigning blame, more and more minority parents are simply wondering if anybody even cares about their kid in an integrated school," said Henry Johnson, a deputy state school superintendent who oversees curriculum and accountability programs for North Carolina's public schools.

Increasingly, parents are deciding that the answer to that question is "no," feeding a desire to recreate the all-black schools of yesteryear.

In many ways, these parents introduce a wild card into the resegregation debate. Many will return to substandard schools if only for the caring environment, Johnson said. Having struggled in schools themselves, some parents possibly don't realize how risky it is to choose a caring but substandard school over an academically successful program, he added.

But other black parents, fully aware of the risks, think the loss of community that resulted from the end of neighborhood schools was too high a price to pay for the mixed results of integration.

"I appreciate the benefits integration brought for my daughter," said Jerome Brown of Raleigh. "But thousands of other children were lost in the process. Entire communities were lost."

As a former principal in the segregated schools of Hertford County in eastern North Carolina, Dudley Flood appreciates the sentiments of parents such as Brown. But Flood, who worked for the state helping local schools desegregate during the 1970s and 1980s, echoes the thoughts of people such as Bridges.

If the state's top leaders want to know where to go from here, he explained, they need a better understanding of how they've arrived at this crossroads.

"People need to understand what an excellent opportunity we have here," Flood said. "The expectations for our schools are high, the focus is on achievement and the public is engaged from policy-makers to parents. But people won't wait forever to discover an answer.

"If we waste this chance, I don't know that we'll get another in the public schools."