

## Hundreds lobby for their schools

County to set budget by June 19

People filled the Government Center meeting hall, and scores spoke up Thursday night to advise county commissioners about the budget they will be adopting in the next few weeks. The bulk of the comments were about money for the schools, and whether residents would tolerate a tax increase to pay for new school programs.

Commissioners will meet twice this week and twice next week in budget workshops. (Contact information is on page 2.) The budget is to be set by June 19.

There were scores of speeches during the five-hour hearing Thursday. Below are two.

### 'All of them; each of them'

*Steve Shoemaker is senior minister of Myers Park Baptist Church.*

I speak as a minister, as the spouse of a 4th grade teacher at Selwyn Elementary, as a graduate of Charlotte public schools and as a tax-paying citizen.

Archeologists of the ancient Near East tell us that the great Hebrew prophets arose at a time of economic prosperity but at a



**Bright Beginnings preschoolers had a hand in Thursday's public hearing on the county budget. Charlotte Chamber officials handed out lapel tags (above) made by the children. The hearing was dominated by speeches in favor of funding school needs.**

great and growing disparity between the rich and the poor. The prophets spoke the will of God to God's people: that the heads of the poor not be trampled into the dust, that those who had the least social protection and support be given special help: the poor, the widow, the orphan, the immigrant. Leaders were charged by God "to judge with equity for the poor of the earth." I sense that this is the moral imperative with which you do your work.

If these things were an easy

## Judge takes over decisions on how to redirect funds to basic education

The N.C. judge who first said he'd trust the politicians and bureaucrats to settle how to give every student a sound, basic education has had second thoughts.

Judge Howard Manning said last week that he would himself hold hearings, then decide what the state must do.

"It's really quite remarkable," said Luke Largess, attorney representing black parents in the local Swann case. "I was amazed that the Court of Appeals refused to stay his order pending appeal."

Gov. Mike Easley had asked for a stay of Manning's first orders, with his Education Board chairman saying "it's a separation-of-powers issue." The Court of Appeals on May 24 turned Easley away, but Manning appears to have taken the governor's appeal as an indication that the state would drag its feet some more in a case begun in 1994.

Manning said his court would "get about its task of answering critical questions as to whether or not the failure of at-risk children to obtain a sound, basic education is based on lack of funding or lack of implementation of ... successful, cost-effective programs."

Earlier rulings have found that at-risk kids can learn; that money alone is not the reason they are not learning; and that the state's school financing mechanisms are constitutional. All that appears to be at issue is the state's will to assure every student a "sound basic education," the mandate of the N.C. Constitution.

Continued on Page 2

## Hundreds turn out to advise on budget

Continued from Page 1

thing we would be living in paradise, not earth – and have no need for ministers or politicians.

But we live on earth. Let us then in the words of the poet, Rilke, “learn to love the difficult.”

Our community needs the school budget proposed by Dr. Eric Smith. The programs in the balance have been proven to be efficacious.

How can we as a community not fund expansion for Bright Beginnings, provide adequate pay for our teachers, give incentive to those who work with our most challenged students, expand ESL for our burgeoning international population, and provide for an equitable distribution of educational resources?

William Buckley once quipped that the difference between a politician and an economist is that the politician asks, ‘What do you want?’ and an economist asks, ‘What do you want most?’ We have to wear the hats of economists as we prepare our budgets. The pie can be cut into only so many pieces.

But a community of good will and concern for all its children will support a tax-increase if that tax-increase is for the sake of our children and public schools. For their sakes, I and we will support you if you make the pie a little bigger. If you will forgive the pun, just add dough!

A community’s soul consists of how much it is concerned for the whole, for every part, not just my part. I ask you to challenge our city to show its soul by funding Dr. Smith’s budget.

In the gospels, little children were trying to get to Jesus. The disciples shooed them away.

## How to contact county commissioners

### At-large

Parks Helms, Chairman  
1500 Two First Union Center  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
704-372-4884  
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### At-large

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### District 1

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### District 4

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### District 5

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Jesus said: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, let the little children come, for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God.”

If so, they deserve our best efforts to provide adequate educational resources. All of them; each of them.

## Minds to waste?

*Annelle Houk is a longtime community observer, commentator and activist.*

A month ago I asked you to consider that time is mind, and that mind-building is the purpose of schools.

I want to try tonight to make sure that – as you consider the budget request of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools this year – you see the county’s contribution as an investment in the time to build the minds of our young citizens. I don’t want you to be able to whittle one dime from that request without picturing some real live student from whose mind you are deliberately shaving experience – whose future you are fully aware that you are diminishing.

Education is the only means that we have discovered in the United States – perhaps in the world – by which we enable our citizens to develop their unique capacities and to learn the skills necessary to make a productive

Continued on Page 3

“The Recommended 2001-2002 Budget: An in-depth look at what the budget means” reviews school budget needs. Download at:  
<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/inside/news/budget01/propbudget.pdf>

## Hundreds turn out to advise on budget

Continued from Page 2

contribution to society and to participate fully in our political process.

Nevertheless, here in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, for many years we have knowingly neglected the students who have the fewest resources to succeed without a strong public education.

Furthermore, over time, we have deliberately concentrated more and more of those students where we do not provide equal access to a top quality education.

In the last few years, we finally have said that we want affirmatively to address that neglect by assigning them more competent teachers, more effective educational programs, smaller class sizes, compensatory materials and equipment, and the other things we know they need if they are to develop minds competent for the 21st century. All of those things require the application of money to equity in addition to growth.

If all of the increase you fund for CMS is for growth, you will say to the students whom we have neglected for so many years and now elect to neglect for another year: "A mind's not really such a terrible thing to waste."

### BUDGET WORKSHOPS

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

JUNE 13, 14

Government Center  
600 E. 4th St., Charlotte

Call 704-336-2559 for details of commissioners' public meetings on setting the budget.

## Why don't we talk about teachers?

*Excerpts from an article in Education Week by Sam Minner, head of the division of education at Truman State University in Missouri.*

"The fact that teacher quality is so often off the radar screen becomes even more curious, given the significant amount of research evidence suggesting that this variable is the most powerful predictor of student success.

"In the landmark Tennessee studies of teacher efficacy, William Sanders and his associates clearly demonstrated the power of teachers. Top teachers increased the scores of low-achieving students by an average of 39 points above the scores of comparable students taught by poor teachers.

"Moreover, students who performed equally well in the second grade displayed a significant achievement gap three years later, depending on whether they had been taught by good teachers or by poor teachers....

### A commentary

"If children are not achieving at high levels, and if the quality of teachers is the principal factor predicting those levels of achievement, then we can reasonably argue that the people doing the teaching are not of high quality. Needless to say, this is a tricky argument for someone working as a teacher to make.

"And legislators and policymakers have their own reasons for paying scant attention to teacher quality. Supporting legislation that will somehow quickly and inexpensively get more people into teaching is an easier sell than championing efforts to improve teacher quality. The latter are difficult and cost money.

"Whatever the reasons for our infrequent attention to teacher quality, however, it remains our best hope to make schools better."  
www.edweek.com

### Sound off! for quality education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Where the boys are: Not, it seems, headed to college

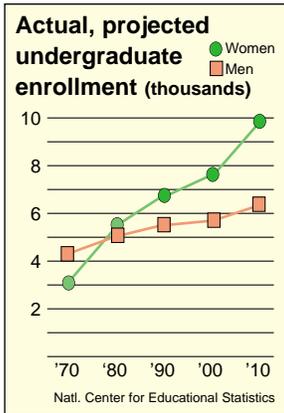
College admissions officers seeing the face of their freshmen classes changing: Fewer men are applying, and fewer are being admitted to colleges and universities.

While some scurry to review whether recruiting materials are too female-dominated, others assert fewer boys are leaving high schools prepared, and that the reason for that has to do with culture.

"It's cool to be a jock, it's cool to be a ladies' man, it's even cool to get in a fight here and there, but it's not cool to be a student," high school counselor Carey Jenkins told the Christian Science Monitor.

The Monitor pointed to some school concerns: that classrooms reward those who sit still, who are neat, who follow directions, who talk. Boys develop these skills later than girls, experts say.

But neither these traits, nor the way schools operate and what they reward, have changed much recently. "The differences have



## Waiting on the judges

Lawyers, school administrators and many residents are waiting on Richmond these days. A ruling from the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in the Swann vs. Mecklenburg case could be released any day.

The ruling, when it comes, will have an impact on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' plans for student assignment. The retooled choice plan, most recently promised by early June, could well be affected by the holdings of the court in this long-running challenge to how CMS has handled desegregation issues.

When courts rule in such

cases, the first people to know generally are the lawyers involved in the case. That stirs the news media, and quickly the word gets out.

With the 4th Circuit, new rulings are posted each day at about 3:30 p.m. on the court's Web site.

So if you want to read the decision for yourself, here's how:

Go to the Web site illustrated above. It is at:

<http://pacer.ca4.uscourts.gov/opinions/opinion.php>

The screen will allow you to enter a case number in the box to the left of the arrow in the illustration above. The Swann case number is 99-2389. Insert that number in the box, then click on Submit Query.

That will deliver to you a list of opinions in the case. As of this weekend, two items are listed, preliminary rulings from May 2000 and January 2001. When a ruling in the case is released, it should be the third item listed.



always been there, yet the achievement gap is a recent problem," New York City's Collegiate School Principal Diane Hulse told the Monitor.

The 1996 national assessment tests of 17-year-olds found boys leading girls by 5 points in math

and 8 points in science, but lagging girls by 14 points in reading and 17 points in writing.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, 33.4% of boys in the Class of 2000 dropped out before graduating. The rate for girls was 23%.

[www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)

### **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: 2,224.

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**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.

## Briefs

**California spending:** The legislature continues to pump money into schools, but per-pupil spending lags the nation, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Per-pupil spending was reported as:  
 \$10,500-\$11,000: AK (as in Alaska)  
 \$10,000-\$10,500: NJ  
 \$9,500-\$10,000: NY  
 \$9,000-\$9,500: CT  
 \$8,000-\$8,500: RI, DE, DC  
 \$7,500-\$8,000: VT, MI, MA, PA  
 \$7,000-\$7,500: OR, WI, MD, ME, MN, WV  
 \$6,500-\$7,000: U.S. average, IN, WY, NH, VA, KY  
 \$6,000-\$6,500: OH, MT, HI, IL, WA, KS, GA, NE, TX, FL  
 \$5,500-\$6,000: NC, AR, NM, IA, SC, NY, MO, TN, AL, CO, CA  
 \$5,000-\$5,500: OK, SD, ID  
 \$4,500-\$5,000: AZ, AL, MS  
 \$4,000-\$4,500: ND, UT  
[www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com)

**Full spectrum:** Reading scores out of Chicago are putting pressure on the superintendent to resign. All but one high school in the system saw scores of 9th and 10th-graders fall. But the spread on the tests reported by the Chicato Tribune is eye-catching: Northside had 97.1% of its students at grade level. Collins had 4.9% on grade level.  
[www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

**Dropout cure:** Texas charter school provider Texans Can! finds itself dealing with students two to three years below grade level, the Dallas News reports. President Grant East says the public schools have "got to change. If the kids can't get along with the school system, then the school system's got to figure out a way to get along with the kids." About 28% of Dallas 9th-graders don't graduate.  
[www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com)

**Paid in flexibility:** About a fifth of Boston's schools have been

successful enough on testing programs that they will be rewarded with — fewer rules. The Boston Globe reported that details were lacking, but these "effective practice schools" might be allowed to change grading methods, and move money to lower class size or increase teacher training.  
[www.bostonglobe.com](http://www.bostonglobe.com)

**Data bank:** Standard & Poor's has launched a business unit to put on the Internet all the data that test-driven school systems are now churning out. State education departments pay for the service, then use of the data is free to those who look at it. Michigan's initial data went up recently; it is paying \$10 million over four years for the service, the L.A. Times reported. The site is at [www.ses.standardandpoors.com](http://www.ses.standardandpoors.com). The company quickly learned, however, that basic information is hard to find. The Times said Michigan did not keep records of attendance, "and lacks good information about teachers and the

condition of buildings."

[www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com)

**Court on race:** The latest indication of U.S. Supreme Court thinking was a non-ruling: The justices rejected a challenge to the use of race in university admissions. The case, brought on behalf of three white students denied admission to the University of Washington law school, challenged admissions procedures consistent with the 1978 Bakke decision, which allowed universities to use race as a factor in creating a diverse student body.  
[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

**Florida report card:** No schools failed the state's report card this year; 41% got A's and B's up from 21%; 46% got C's, 12% D's; , the St. Petersburg Times reported. The results are a blow to parents wanting state vouchers: Vouchers go only to kids at schools that flunked twice in four years.  
[www.sptimes.com](http://www.sptimes.com)

## Graduation Calendar

### Tuesday

Metro School	Metro School Multipurpose Room	7:00 p.m.
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### Wednesday

Midwood	Dana Auditorium, Queens College	7:00 p.m.
Northwest	Ovens Auditorium	7:00 p.m.

### Thursday

West Charlotte	Charlotte Coliseum	8:30 a.m.
South Meck	Charlotte Coliseum	11:30 a.m.
Olympic	Charlotte Coliseum	2:30 p.m.
Harding	Charlotte Coliseum	5:30 p.m.
West Meck	Charlotte Coliseum	8:30 p.m.
Butler	Cricket Arena	8:30 a.m.
Providence	Cricket Arena	11:30 a.m.
Garinger	Cricket Arena	2:30 p.m.
Vance	Cricket Arena	5:30 p.m.

### Friday

Independence	Cricket Arena	8:30 a.m.
Myers Park	Cricket Arena	11:30 a.m.
East Meck	Cricket Arena	2:30 p.m.

# Send your friends an invitation to an *Educate!* ion

If you have friends or associates you think would get something out of reading this free e-mail newsletter on education, please send us their e-mail addresses and we'll be sure they get a copy. Message [SwannFello@aol.com](mailto:SwannFello@aol.com)