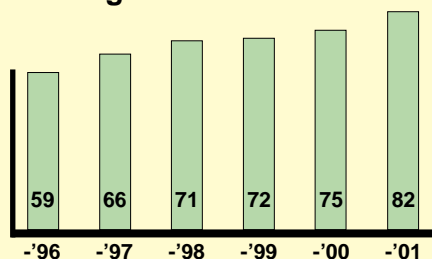


On grade level: All groups gaining

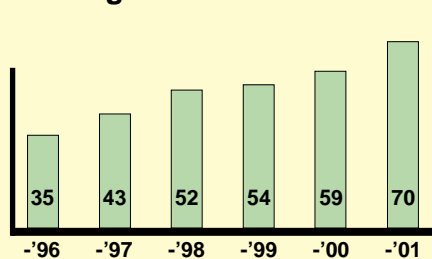
(All figures in percent)

Grade 5

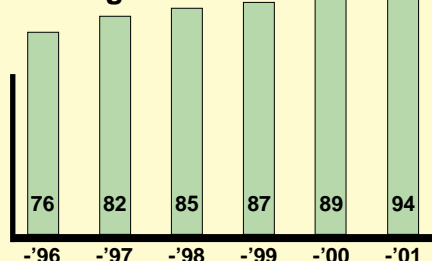
Reading: All students



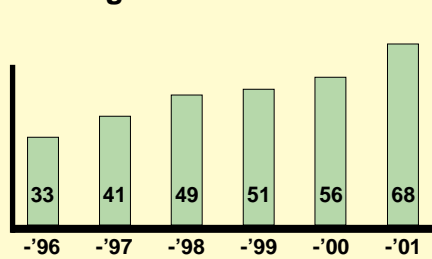
Reading: African-Americans



Reading: Whites



Reading: Free/reduced lunch



A Rising Tide

Superintendent stands on his statistics, is determined to tell schools' success story

Students are learning more in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Supt. Eric Smith said Tuesday.

Determined to get his message about progress out to parents and community leaders, Smith offered up a sideboard of data to those attending the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum.

Smith read out to the crowd the end-of-grade scores recorded during his first full year in CMS, and how much those scores have risen through last year.

He pointed out that the gains made by black students – rising from 35% of students on grade level to 70% – have not come at the expense of any other group: White students' scores have also risen every year, for example.

Rising achievement levels go to the heart of what's occurring in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The fifth-grade scores reproduced at the left (and similar 3rd- and 8th-grade data charted on pages 3 and 4) tell that story. Other evidence of academic gains came last week in SAT scores (pages 5-9) and Advanced Placement results (page 10).

But other changes are convulsing CMS, and as Smith and board chairman Arthur Griffin spoke with parents and community leaders, a number of them came up.

One of the key themes: To improve achievement, to manage growth, to achieve equity across a 106,000-student school system, it has become necessary to centralize more and more.

"We took a trip down decentralization lane" during the early

'90s, Smith told the group. "We're now consistently pulling it back in."

Smith said he found when he arrived in 1995 that numerous similar jobs had no common job description. Policies on everything from academic work to student discipline were being made at the school level – causing families fits as they transferred from one school to another.

There weren't even assistant principals at schoolhouses who could be focusing on instruction. ("Where did they go?" piped up retired school principal Bob Davis) Cost-cutting, Smith said, had stripped the schools and the central office of personpower.

By October, Smith told the group, the system will put in place job descriptions and training opportunities for assistant principals for instruction – a key post to keep academic improvements on track.

But Smith and Griffin appealed to the group to help them produce another sea change necessary to raise student achievement: encouraging parents to have higher expectations.

"Parents have got to expect more of their kids," Smith said. "It is NOT OK to leave your kids alone at home. It is NOT OK for your kids to be at the mall every Friday night. It is NOT OK for your kids to do no homework the first week of school."

Among the issues that Smith, Griffin or the audience raised:

To new readers of *Educate!*

a free community journal
on public education in
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Welcome to this week's edition. Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen interested in the welfare of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. To be removed from our mailing list, send a "Remove" message to SwannFello@aol.com

Educate! is published by The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204. Voice: 704-342-4330 Fax: 704-342-4550. E-mail: SwannFello@aol.com Lucy Bush, president; B.B. DeLaine, vice president. Published since September 2000. Six-week average circulation through last issue: 2,243.

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

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

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

From Readers

Brief didn't do justice to Greensboro situation

Just FYI, the Greensboro school you referred to Aug. 26 to which neighbors are objecting is being designed by Gantt Huberman and Harvey Gantt has been deeply

involved from the very planning stages. The situation is much more complex than it appears on the surface.

Beth Walters

Charter school addresses needs, creates diversity

I welcome any Swann Fellowship members to come visit our one-year-old public charter school, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy. It is located near University Place here in Charlotte, but is serving approximately 100 students from at least four counties.

I am proud of our school because (1) it truly addresses the needs of educationally-gifted children (CMS tries, but with all the other "messes" they have to deal with, the brighter kids often get "put on the back burner," and (2) it is the ideal microcosm of a truly diverse society!

As everyone knows, smart kids are various ages, colors, shapes,

and sizes; they represent all races, religions, family backgrounds, cultural experiences, and socioeconomic levels. Our school, MRSA, is living proof!

If you would like a personal tour of MRSA, I can certainly arrange it. We have a wonderful new principal/director from Sevierville, Tenn., Dr. Marie Peine, and I'm sure she would enjoy having you see what our school has put together for a very special group of exceptional learners in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and its surrounding counties.

Contact me at ncmroz@bell-south.net or call me at 704-948-9993.

Marci Mroz

Sound off! for quality education

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

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

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

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

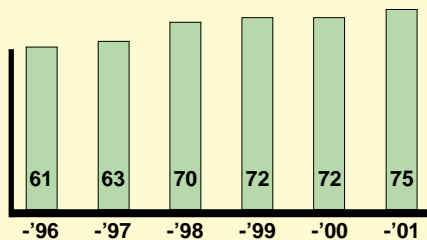
Creative Loafing: By e-mail: charlotte@creativeloafing.com; by fax: 704-522-8088; by mail: P.O. Box 241988 Charlotte, NC 28224-1988.

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

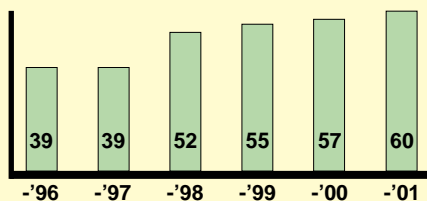
On grade level: More results

Grade 3

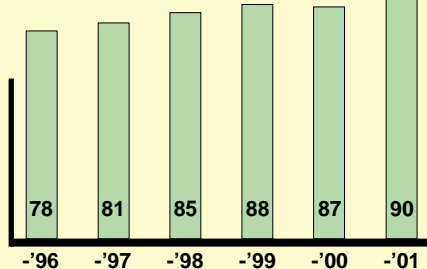
Reading: All students



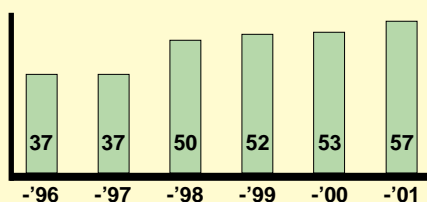
Reading: African-Americans



Reading: Whites



Reading: Free/reduced lunch



Source: CMS. All end-of-grade testing information for 2000-2001, and some comparative historical information, is posted on CMS's Web site, www.cms.k12.nc.us

Smith determined to tell success story

Continued from Page 1

Schools of Excellence

Smith said he planned to alter local use of the state's recognition categories for schools that do well on end-of-grade tests. The results will be released in a couple of months.

The change, to be implemented this fall, is in response to criticism that so-called Schools of Excellence can do very well with some students while leaving others behind. Because the state's scoring used only a schoolwide average, schools' failures to educate all children were covered up.

Smith said he will recognize only schools that achieve excellent results with all groups of students – all races, both genders, rich and poor alike.

"If you can't serve all children," he argued to the group, "you deserve no recognition."

Wilson Middle

Smith said the west Charlotte school had deserved its bad reputation in the past, but that improvements are being made.

He credited a new school leadership team and the A+ Program, now in use at 40 schools, that focuses on testing and then immediately reteaching material not learned.

Another key to curriculum success, he told the group, is for parents to be involved. "I would have parents have lesson plans – hard copies," he said.

Summer school

Fifth-graders last spring who were not on grade level faced the prospect of not being promoted. Preliminary estimates suggested that up to 2,000 kids might be held back.

"We had good success" with

summer school, Smith told the group.

At Tuesday's school board meeting, Smith and his staff reported that instead of 2,000, only 98 students were held back.

After the first test, 82% of fifth-graders scored the passing grade of level 3 or better. Those that failed had a second test before school let out. Those who failed the second test went to summer school and received a third testing. After those two additional tests, the number passing had risen to 86%.

The state's rules for promotion take other issues into account, so CMS ended with 93% of its fifth-graders certified to be promoted.

That left 7% – 544 students.

Smith said 98 were retained in fifth grade and remained at their elementary schools.

Of the remaining 446, roughly half were given a clear promotion, after factoring in their work in class and other issues.

The other half, or more than 200 students, were promoted with an Individual Education Plan (or IEP) designed, as Smith told the breakfast group, "to get them back up with their peers."

This spring, third-graders and eighth-graders will face similar state-imposed "gateway" standards.

Smith said he originally had "grave concerns" about the state's retention program, but now supports it because of "the focus it brings."

"Being promoted without the skills is a cruel joke," he told the group.

Small AP classes

State rules normally require high schools to cancel classes with low enrollment. A parent asked if West Charlotte's Advanced Placement classes with small groups of students faced that fate. The answer was no.

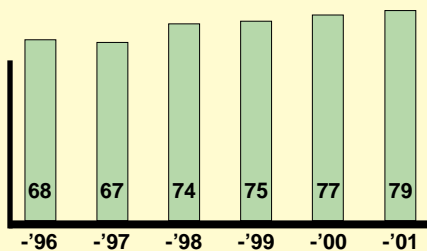
"That is a good investment," Smith said of the classes. "We are

Continued on Page 4

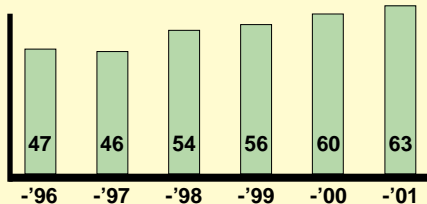
On grade level: More results

Grade 8

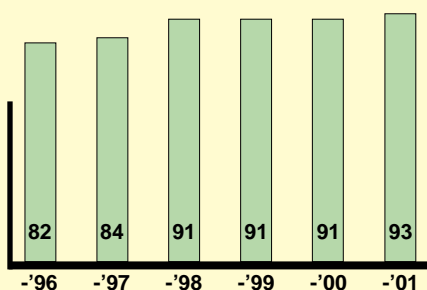
Reading: All students



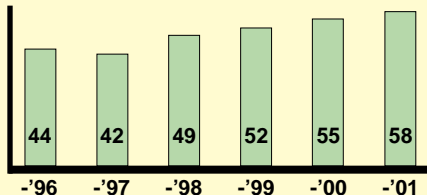
Reading: African-Americans



Reading: Whites



Reading: Free/reduced lunch



Source: CMS. All end-of-grade testing information for 2000-2001, and some comparative historical information, is posted on CMS's Web site, www.cms.k12.nc.us

Smith determined to tell success story

Continued from Page 1

a rich place. We can figure that out.”

Gangs

Smith recalled being told in 1995 when he arrived that Charlotte-Mecklenburg had no gangs. Smiling, he said, “I was new. I didn’t know.” The audience chuckled.

“What has to be heard is a message of intolerance” of gang behavior, of the “agents of evil” – “people who would make a buck off our children, who intimidate, coerce and kill.”

“It’s coming at us big-time,” Smith said of gang activity.

Suspensions

Adults in the breakfast group expressed concern about the level of suspensions.

Griffin said suspensions would be reduced as teachers improve their instruction. Smith agreed: “The quality of instruction is tied” to levels of suspension.

CMS is involved in a pilot program to allow students suspended for less than 10 days to attend alternative school. The aim is to keep students working on the curriculum even if they are pulled from their regular setting.

Smith said legislators this session need both to extend funding for the pilot, and broaden the program to all school districts.

Vocational High

The school, sought after in the African American community since the early 1960s, is now rising on Alleghany Street off Freedom Drive in west Charlotte.

The school’s planned curriculum is heavily focused on professions and high-tech occupations, a change from the original concept in the ‘60s that led officials to drop the word “vocational” from the school’s name.

Tuesday night, the school board accepted a committee’s recommendation to name the facility Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology.

Berry, the first African American elected to the school board (in 1972), also served as a state senator. He died in 1984.

Griffin reassured the group that despite the high-tech focus and the regular classes required of any high school, building trades will also be taught. He said he hoped that so many teens would apply for entry next fall that the board would be forced to build a second such school.

Lockout

Lockout means that when the bell rings after class change, doors are locked and students still in the halls must go to detention for the period. The effect (or perhaps the student’s goal) is to be removed from class.

In response to a question, Smith called lockout “a site-based decision,” and “an effort to get control of kids’ punctuality.” In a morning in which his opinions were very much on display, Smith expressed no opinion about the policy.

Truancy

Smith did not hold back on his endorsement of the system’s truancy policies. Case managers have been added in recent years at many middle and high schools to check up on students not in school.

“These people go out to the home ... and wake them up,” Smith said.

Teacher dress code

A number of parents commented that schools are in a poor position to impose a dress code on students when faculty come to school shabbily dressed. Smith forcefully agreed.



Last week’s Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum was held at the Carole Hoefener Community Services Center in First Ward. It returns to McDonald’s Cafeteria on Tuesday.

SAT scores improve, with some exceptions

CMS last week celebrated an 8-point increase in its overall SAT scores. Scores at three schools – Myers Park, Providence and East Meck – were higher than the national average. But the system has a ways to go before it can claim rights to Lake Wobegon’s “above average” moniker.

Parents may be most interested in their own children’s schools, so the data on these pages has been organized that way. For each school, this past year’s data is followed by scores from the previous three years for comparison. In small boxes on the following pages is data on other interesting questions. State data is on page 8. Where spaces in charts are blank, data was unavailable.

Readers will find, in the numbers, some reasons to cheer – and possibly some reasons to raise questions of teachers and principals at their schools. That’s good: The primary value in the state and its school systems publishing the data is to cast a spotlight on places where improvements can be made.

Perhaps the most pressing issue is to look at black scores, which fell an average of 8 points from last year. As the chart to the right shows, the schools’ experience varied widely, from up 59 points at Myers Park to down 110 at North Meck. At Tuesday’s school

board meeting, Supt. Eric Smith promised a report shortly on the full range of efforts under way to raise the scores at all schools. “My expectation,” he said, “is probably by the end of this current year you’re going to see some movement....”

A note to readers: SAT scores that shape these averages are for the senior class graduating during the year listed. Classes can vary in their accomplishments. It may or may not be a reflection on the school if one class does slightly better or slightly worse than the preceding class.

The goal for the school system should be improvement over time.

Black SAT scores '00-'01 point change

Myers Park	+ 59
Independence	+ 36
West Meck	+ 34
East Meck	+ 29
Garinger	+ 24
South Meck	+ 16
Olympic	+ 11
N.C.	0
U.S.	- 1
Systemwide	- 8
West Charlotte	- 21
Butler	- 23
Vance	- 27
Providence	- 33
Northwest Arts	- 44
Harding	- 52
North Meck	- 110

Source: CMS

Butler	Total taking: 256		
	V	M	T
All students			
'01	478	489	967
'00	476	480	956
'99	490	487	977
'98	570	580	1,150
White			
'01	513	518	1,031
'00	496	496	991
'99	513	513	1,026
'98			
Black			
'01	407	423	830
'00	421	432	853
'99	449	431	880
'98			
Male			
'01	480	503	983
'00	462	492	954
'99	498	502	1,000
'98	570	580	1,150
Female			
'01	477	477	954
'00	487	471	957
'99	483	474	957
'98			

East Meck	Total taking: 267		
	V	M	T
All Students			
'01	511	520	1,031
'00	504	511	1,014
'99	475	486	961
'98	486	493	979
White			
'01	536	544	1,080
'00	524	537	1,062
'99	503	512	1,015
'98	508	516	1,024
Black			
'01	433	433	866
'00	425	411	837
'99	405	409	814
'98	421	430	851
Male			
'01	516	536	1,052
'00	504	522	1,026
'99	482	506	988
'98	464	491	955
Female			
'01	507	507	1,014
'00	504	501	1,004
'99	469	468	937
'98	502	496	998

Garinger	Total taking: 135		
	V	M	T
All students			
'01	438	423	861
'00	436	420	856
'99	427	421	848
'98	441	445	886
White			
'01	489	485	974
'00	520	487	1,007
'99	483	467	950
'98	494	497	991
Black			
'01	418	398	816
'00	408	384	792
'99	397	387	784
'98	420	418	838
Male			
'01	437	437	874
'00	454	449	903
'99	421	429	850
'98	429	452	881
Female			
'01	439	417	856
'00	426	405	831
'99	430	417	847
'98	449	441	890

Harding Total taking: 228

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	495	502	997
'00	494	515	1,009
'99	496	514	1,010
'98	493	521	1,014
White			
'01	545	549	1,094
'00	524	544	1,068
'99	535	553	1,088
'98	540	572	1,112
Black			
'01	428	433	861
'00	448	465	913
'99	432	443	875
'98	436	448	884
Male			
'01	507	526	1,033
'00	505	539	1,044
'99	507	540	1,047
'98	500	547	1,047
Female			
'01	482	473	955
'00	484	492	977
'99	485	487	972
'98	487	498	985

CMS performance over time

Year	Tested	Percent tested	CMS	Total SAT score N.C.	U.S.
1990	2,999	60.0	968	949	1,001
1991	2,676	61.8	966	952	999
1992	2,638	64.8	981	961	1,001
1993	2,648	64.1	991	966	1,003
1994	2,541	63.7	990	967	1,003
1995	2,718	67.0	994	970	1,010
1996	2,768	69.7	991	976	1,013
1997	2,915	64.7	991	978	1,016
1998	3,058	69.6	994	982	1,017
1999	3,444	71.2	985	986	1,016
2000	3,569	71.9	989	988	1,019
2001	3,532	72.3	997	992	1,020

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation

Independence Total: 280

	V	M	T
All Students			
'01	495	505	1,000
'00	485	498	983
'99	497	498	995
'98	497	506	1,003
White			
'01	522	534	1,056
'00	525	535	1,060
'99	529	522	1,051
'98	524	526	1,050
Black			
'01	464	446	910
'00	438	436	874
'99	463	455	918
'98	443	465	908
Male			
'01	495	531	1,026
'00	486	520	1,005
'99	493	508	1,001
'98	488	515	1,003
Female			
'01	494	482	976
'00	484	482	966
'99	500	490	990
'98	505	499	1,004

Myers Park Total taking: 374

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	557	554	1,111
'00	529	531	1,059
'99	540	545	1,085
'98	535	540	1,075
White			
'01	586	582	1,168
'00	556	556	1,112
'99	569	570	1,139
'98	569	566	1,135
Black			
'01	460	437	897
'00	425	412	838
'99	425	415	840
'98	436	411	847
Male			
'01	557	568	1,125
'00	531	540	1,071
'99	552	566	1,118
'98	540	565	1,105
Female			
'01	557	540	1,097
'00	529	526	1,054
'99	528	524	1,052
'98	530	520	1,050

North Meck Total: 296

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	504	508	1,012
'00	507	518	1,026
'99	498	499	997
'98	496	505	1,001
White			
'01	524	525	1,049
'00	520	529	1,050
'99	511	510	1,021
'98	518	524	1,042
Black			
'01	392	403	795
'00	451	454	905
'99	447	450	897
'98	419	432	851
Male			
'01	501	524	1,025
'00	510	542	1,057
'99	503	520	1,023
'98	503	526	1,029
Female			
'01	508	493	1,001
'00	502	501	1,003
'99	494	480	974
'98	490	487	977

Your Observations?

Share with *Educate!* readers what you know that explains score

changes at your school. Message: SwannFello@aol.com

Northwest Arts Total: 101

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	506	479	985
'00	521	494	1,015
'99	552	494	1,046
'98	526	500	1,026
White			
'01	545	520	1,065
'00	558	531	1,089
'99	573	515	1,088
'98	546	528	1,074
Black			
'01	412	382	794
'00	430	408	838
'99	437	374	811
'98	461	416	877
Male			
'01	506	467	973
'00	537	517	1,053
'99	547	503	1,050
'98	519	507	1,026
Female			
'01	506	482	988
'00	514	483	997
'99	555	490	1,045
'98	531	496	1,027

White students				Black students			
Year	CMS	N.C.	U.S.	Year	CMS	N.C.	U.S.
2001	1,070	1,041	1,060	2001	835	835	859
2000	1,060	1,035	1,058	2000	843	835	860
1999	1,050	1,031	1,055	1999	842	837	856
1998	1,060	1,026	1,054	1998	851	839	860
1997	1,043	1,023	1,052	1997	850	834	857
1996	1,041	1,018	1,049	1996	857	840	856
1995	1,043	1,014	1,043	1995	860	836	854
1994	1,040	1,011	1,041	1994	854	831	850

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation

Olympic Total taking: 132

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	424	429	853
'00	438	442	880
'99	435	438	873
'98	451	458	909
White			
'01	500	498	998
'00	473	477	950
'99	479	475	954
'98	499	511	1,010
Black			
'01	420	408	828
'00	410	407	817
'99	411	396	807
'98	411	403	814
Male			
'01	438	452	890
'00	451	464	915
'99	453	471	924
'98	456	482	938
Female			
'01	414	412	826
'00	427	423	849
'99	421	413	834
'98	447	441	888

Providence Total: 454

	V	M	T
'01	533	540	1,073
'00	531	537	1,068
'99	524	536	1,060
'98	533	545	1,078
White			
'01	545	546	1,091
'00	542	545	1,086
'99	528	537	1,065
'98	538	549	1,087
Black			
'01	445	420	865
'00	441	457	898
'99	395	429	824
'98	454	436	890
Male			
'01	523	545	1,068
'00	521	540	1,062
'99	521	548	1,069
'98	532	558	1,090
Female			
'01	542	534	1,076
'00	538	534	1,072
'99	526	527	1,053
'98	534	531	1,065

South Meck Total: 342

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	506	513	1,019
'00	506	508	1,015
'99	510	517	1,027
'98	494	503	997
White			
'01	524	529	1,053
'00	526	524	1,050
'99	538	542	1,080
'98	519	522	1,041
Black			
'01	409	420	829
'00	413	400	813
'99	442	427	869
'98	453	431	884
Male			
'01	517	534	1,051
'00	504	517	1,022
'99	509	533	1,042
'98	475	504	979
Female			
'01	497	495	992
'00	509	502	1,011
'99	511	503	1,014
'98	512	502	1,014

Your Observations?

Share with *Educate!* readers what you know that explains score

changes at your school. Message: SwannFello@aol.com

Vance Total taking: 317

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	488	485	973
'00	494	497	991
'99	487	494	981
'98	605	695	1,300
White			
'01	522	522	1,044
'00	536	534	1,070
'99	506	519	1,025
'98	470	640	1,110
Black			
'01	419	410	829
'00	428	428	856
'99	429	418	847
'98			
Male			
'01	484	495	979
'00	505	527	1,032
'99	505	520	1,025
'98	605	695	1,300
Female			
'01	492	474	966
'00	486	473	960
'99	472	471	943
'98			

Top 10% of graduating classes compared

School	Verbal	Math	Total
Myers Park High	676	678	1,354
Providence High	642	661	1,303
North Mecklenburg High	630	635	1,265
East Mecklenburg High	619	623	1,242
South Mecklenburg High	611	629	1,240
Harding University High	608	624	1,232
Vance High	606	616	1,222
CMS	601	614	1,215
U.S.	588	607	1,195
Independence High	584	610	1,194
Northwest School of the Arts	606	583	1,189
N.C.	582	593	1,175
Butler High	563	606	1,169
West Mecklenburg High	538	546	1,084
Olympic High	523	546	1,069
West Charlotte High	514	546	1,060
Garinger High	514	505	1,019

West Charlotte Total: 207

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	420	423	843
'00	435	453	888
'99	440	441	881
'98	457	455	912
White			
'01	539	530	1,069
'00	524	530	1,054
'99	511	515	1,026
'98	520	514	1,034
Black			
'01	393	388	781
'00	402	400	802
'99	416	400	816
'98	419	412	831
Male			
'01	420	441	861
'00	435	466	901
'99	446	469	915
'98	458	472	930
Female			
'01	420	411	831
'00	435	443	878
'99	434	416	850
'98	456	441	897

West Meck Total taking: 125

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	443	454	897
'00	418	421	839
'99	431	435	866
'98	449	455	904
White			
'01	473	488	961
'00	469	472	941
'99	469	473	942
'98	491	503	994
Black			
'01	412	405	817
'00	392	391	783
'99	396	395	791
'98	402	404	806
Male			
'01	436	458	894
'00	412	427	839
'99	423	440	863
'98	457	479	936
Female			
'01	449	449	898
'00	422	417	839
'99	437	430	867
'98	442	436	878

Midwood Alt. Total: 16

	V	M	T
All students			
'01	499	480	979
'00	494	485	979
'99			
'98			
White			
'01	590	514	1,104
'00	495	510	1,005
'99			
'98			
Black			
'01	380	434	814
'00			
'99			
'98			
Male			
'01	578	503	1,081
'00			
'99			
'98			
Female			
'01	451	466	917
'00	491	477	968
'99			
'98			

Your Observations?

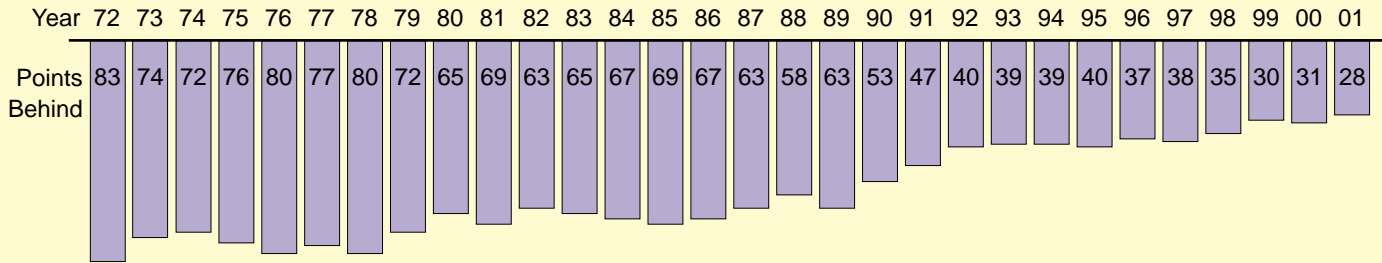
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Slow catchup: N.C.'s 30-year push to reach national average SAT score

Chart shows how North Carolina's average SAT score compared with the U.S. average from 1972 to 2001. Note the progress, but also how there have been ups and downs along the way, and periods of apparent stagnation.

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction



How N.C. scores lag U.S. average, by student profile characteristics

Chart shows by how many points North Carolina's average SAT scores among various subgroups was below the U.S. average for the same U.S. subgroup. In some categories the lag is relatively even. In others, particularly family income and race/ethnicity, the lag varies widely.

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction

Category	Total N.C. Score	Below U.S. avg.	Category	Total N.C. Score	Below U.S. avg.
All Students	992	-28	Family Income (continued)		
Gender			50,000 - 60,000	991	-30
Male	1,012	-30	60,000 - 70,000	1,012	-23
Female	976	-24	70,000 - 80,000	1,026	-23
Race/Ethnicity			80,000 - 100,000	1,056	-18
American Indian	891	-69	More than 100,000	1,101	-25
Asian American	1,031	-36	High School Class Rank		
Black	835	-24	Top Tenth	1,175	-20
Hispanic	975	+59	Second Tenth	1,048	-18
White	1,041	-19	Second Fifth	964	-23
Other	1,009	-6	Third Fifth	875	-31
Parent Education Level			Fourth Fifth	811	-29
No high school diploma	837	-12	Fifth Fifth	769	-39
High school diploma	924	-24	High School Grade Point Average		
Associate's degree	950	-30	A+	1,191	-44
Bachelor's degree	1,027	-31	A	1,096	-51
Graduate degree	1,106	-20	A-	1,038	-54
Family Income			B	933	-35
Less than 10,000	817	-47	C	827	-26
10,000 - 20,000	869	-29	D or below	777	-30
20,000 - 30,000	922	-20			
30,000 - 40,000	953	-23			
40,000 - 50,000	984	-20			

Source: NC Dept. of Public Instruction

The Gender Gap

Chart shows 6 years of data on the number of points by which females lag males on the two SAT tests.

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction

	Verbal Scores		Math Scores	
	N.C. gap	U.S. gap	N.C. gap	U.S. gap
2001	7	7	29	35
2000	1	3	28	35
1999	6	7	31	36
1998	5	7	30	35
1997	2	4	31	36
1996	3	4	30	35

Board Notes

Staff transfer, assignment rules adopted

Without debate, the school board last week revised its GCKA policy that will guide how staff will be allocated and reassigned to meet the needs of all schools.

Board member Louise Woods said the change “may be the most important action the school board takes this year.”

The policy addresses a key equity issue: Teachers, who have had virtually unlimited privileges to transfer from one school to another, have often first been assigned to struggling schools, only to teach a year or two and then transfer to open positions elsewhere. The pattern has created immense turnover at some schools, and has, as a rule, allowed the system’s most experienced and effective teachers to congregate in suburban schools.

The new policy sets a goal of maintaining at all schools “a reasonable balance” of experienced staff, of those with advanced degrees, and of racial diversity.

Discussion about the policy since last spring has focused on enforcement. Supt. Eric Smith has appeared to favor carrots – verbal encouragement, financial incentives, etc. The board has not opposed such measures. But now they’ve given him a stick as well.

The approved policy says the “superintendent retains the right to transfer or reassign a member of the instructional staff at any time during his/her employment as will serve the best interests of the school system” and, presumably, the mandate of the new policy.

Advanced Placement

In 1995-’96, 2,200 students took 3,359 Advanced Placement classes. The push since then to get students

Grade 9-12 dropouts: Percent lost each year

CMS continues to chip away at its dropout problem. The latest numbers, shared last week with the school board, show general improvement over last year and major percentage gains since 1995-96. Readers should note that the percentages listed are for a given year and that they are cumulative: The Class of 2001, for example, lost students when 9% of all high school students dropped out 1997-98. The class lost more the next year, etc. But the total loss from the Class of 2001 was less than it may appear: Teens who later finish GEDs or move to other school systems after dropping out may not be reflected in the statistics.

Group	-’96	-’97	-’98	-’99	-’00	-’01
Black	13.7	12.2	12.0	11.7	10.4	9.3
White	6.8	6.0	6.7	5.7	5.0	4.2
Other	7.9	7.9	9.3	8.3	7.8	8.2
Female	8.1	7.2	8.6	6.6	6.6	5.9
Male	11.1	10.0	13.1	10.0	10.7	9.3
Free/red. lunch	14.6	12.4	12.2	11.9	10.7	9.9
Paid Lunch	8.2	7.4	8.1	7.2	6.6	5.8
CMS	9.6	8.6	9.0	8.3	7.4	6.6

Source: CMS

to take more-challenging courses has changed the numbers: Last year, 7,908 students took a total of 8,510 courses. The number of black students in such courses has risen from 371 to 1,277 in that time.

With the increase in enrollments, the percentage of students scoring high enough on an AP test to win college credit has slipped, from 41.4% two years ago to 38% last year.

Bright Beginnings results

Continued tracking of Bright Beginnings suggests graduates continue to hold on to the boost they receive in the program for 4-year-olds. The first graduates are now in third grade. As second-graders last school year, 71.1% met proficiency standards, compared with the district average of 74.9% and a 62.2% score for children who were eligible for Bright Beginnings but did not attend.

Bright Beginnings growth

Smith told the board that his next budget will not assume another

expansion of Bright Beginnings in 2002-2003.

Last spring’s budget battles allowed CMS to add 1,000 students to the program this fall.

“We can’t project on money that isn’t here,” the superintendent told the board.

Looking for savings

Smith announced Tuesday that with a new business computer operation coming online this fall, he would “aggressively go after cost savings” this year in three areas:

- Warehousing and the disposal of surplus goods, and possibly the direct delivery of goods to schools to lower warehousing costs;
- Exploring benchmarks on the financial side equivalent to the “balanced scorecard” efforts now under way on the academic side, using pointers from area companies;
- Property control, that is, keeping track of what supplies, machines and so forth are where, to prevent overpurchasing and also, presumably, to prove when losses through theft occur.

An instant cure

Tips inspired by the The Boring Institute, Maplewood, N.J., on how to avoid boredom, "the No. 1 excuse for dropping out of school."

- **Go.** Show up, do what you're asked, enter into opportunities to learn.
- **Rest.** Staying up late drains your brainpower. Fill'er up overnight, and get a good breakfast.
- **Unplug.** TV saps your brainpower - and the time you need for homework.
- **Stretch.** Your brain can learn anything. Take it for a test drive through material you've never experienced.
- **Read.** It's the key to learning. If you need help brushing up on your reading skills, ask.
- **Focus.** Pick friends excited about learning.

www.boringinstitute.com

Briefs

Sleep time: Minneapolis pushed back high school openings in 1997 from 7:15 to 8:40 a.m., the Washington Post reported. Follow-up research says teens are not just going to bed later, but are getting more sleep. Truancy is down, grades are up slightly and reports of depression are down. CMS regularized its middle school start times at 8:45 a.m. this year. www.washingtonpost.com

Report cards: There is no national standard report card, the Chicago Tribune reported. Some list up to 11 skills and offer a grade of 1, 2 or 3 for each. Some list only letter grades; others have software that allows a teacher to pick from hundreds of pre-written comments. Two suburban Chicago districts have found that parents are happiest when letter grades and evaluation of skill sets are combined in one report. www.chicagotribune.com

Graduation rates: Critics say Census data gives too rosy a picture of current graduation rates, the Los Angeles Times reported. Two factors were discussed: GED and other equivalency programs,

which some see as less demanding, are counted. And the statistics are for all persons over 25. That counts all now-elderly people, who tended to have a much lower graduation rate (*Educate!*, Feb. 25). As those people die and leave the statistics, the graduation rate tends to go up without any real current change.

www.latimes.com

Smaller classes: Most of the \$393 million available to Oregon schools this year from the state's Initiative 728 will be spent on reducing class size. The Seattle Times reported that most districts are focusing on elementary schools, cutting classes to 20 children. Initiative funds will rise to \$450 million annually in several years. Other strategies for improving education with the money are allowed, and some districts have extended the school day or hired learning specialists. www.seattletimes.nwsources.com

What standard? New York Times education columnist Richard Rothstein advised never to forget that a key to testing is the definition of achievement. What must be known to be on grade level, for example? "Passing a standardized test is less straightforward than it seems." www.nytimes.com

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