

N.C. teachers' reasons for quitting

A little creative re-ordering of the reasons given for teacher turnover reveals that dissatisfaction with the job is not a primary factor in creating turnover. Neither are indicators of failing at the job. Story, page 2.

I LOVE MY JOB (39.5%): Resigned to teach elsewhere, 18.64%; retired, 16.19%; moved to nonteaching position in education, 4.69%.

JUST MOVING ON (25.1%): Family relocation, 13.81%; family responsibility, 6.02% resigned to continue education or sabbatical, 2.78%; health/disability, 1.8%; deceased, 0.42%; reduction in force, 0.34%.

IT'S THE JOB (19.9%): Dissatisfied with teaching, 5.72%; not rehired, 5.2%; didn't maintain license, 4.15%; contract not renewed, 2.43%; dismissed or resigned in lieu of dismissal, 1.69%.

OTHER OR UNKNOWN (16.1%): Other reasons, 11.1%; unknown, 5.0%.

Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

What odds of having a choice?

'Option' to let kids stay put next fall is available to some parents, not others

There are many choices in next year's student assignment plan. In Educate!'s continuing series on the plan, we focus this week on one of the small but vital ones – the "option" to ask that your child remain next year at the school being attended this year.

This option may be of particular interest to two groups: One is parents who live near one school but have been reassigned to another as neighborhoods were carved up this summer to create new attendance areas. Most of these parents live closer to the county line than to the center of town. And many won't think there's any advantage to staying put, compared with moving to the newly assigned school.

The other group of parents mostly live in inner-city "satellite" areas that have been bused to suburban schools for purposes of desegregation. In almost all instances, these parents face reassignment to high-poverty schools that also have the potential to be among the system's lowest-performing. Choosing to stay put offers these parents a real alternative.

The key issue here is that the "option" to stay put will be honored only if there are seats available.

The key issue here is that the "option" to stay put will be honored only if there are seats available.

Staff eases restrictions on overnight trips; N.C. requires less-rigorous graduation track

Supt. Eric Smith announced to the school board Tuesday that he had adjusted the policy that, after the World Trade Center attacks, had limited student field trips.

He said requests for overnight trips by high school students would be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. Trips will be limited to the continental U.S. and be for competitions and system-approved major conferences. Rules will be released soon, he said.

The ban on overnight trips by elementary and middle school students remains in force, he said.

CMS Thursday said staff "will continue to review and adjust these guidelines as needed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our students in response to national and world events."

Suburban Ed Center?

A county update on Government Center overhaul showed three possible sites for a new Education Center. And one of them was a 50-acre site away from uptown – and it sounded very much like a parcel on Wilkinson Boulevard.

There appears to be strong feeling on the board that the school system's offices need to remain with other government entities uptown. CMS owns the Second Ward land under the current Ed Center.

John Lassiter and Bob Simmons were detailed to investigate the options and report back in 30 days.

The last time this issue came up, parents had to beat back a plan to move Metro School from its Second Ward site. Their victory is apparently still intact.

Graduation requirements

The system's graduation requirements were back before the board Tuesday, and will be discussed in greater detail Nov. 13. State action

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Assignment
2002

5th in a series

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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: 2,603.

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.

Teacher turnover rate up last year

Teachers take to the letters-to-the-editor columns to say that paperwork is driving staff away.

Mecklenburg endures the embarrassment of having one of the highest teacher turnover rates in the state.

And yet, and yet.

Consider this list of large urban school systems:

Mecklenburg 21.77%
Durham 18.12%
Asheville 16.58%
New Hanover 11.68%
Guilford 9.77%
Wake 9.20%

If paperwork is the answer, why are other large N.C. school systems not having the same turnover problems?

Clearly there is no one answer.

One of the answers that consistently appears near the top of the list is retirements. And with wholesale changes at CMS schools next fall, it seems probable that there will be a spike in retirements over the summer.

One of the board's key long-term quality initiatives last spring got cut on the budget-room floor. It was a \$984,000 proposal to give first- and second-year teachers the training, advice and support that has been proven effective in cutting teacher turnover. At the time, the system cited successes

in other districts that "have resulted in a 94% retention rate of new teachers."

CMS staffer Barbara Jenkins reported to the board Tuesday night that the scaled-back program, funded with redirected state money and a grant, involves 120 teachers with eight mentors.

Another grant for next year will provide four mentors to assist teachers drawn from other occupations, she said.

Board member Vilma Leake suggested expanding the program by asking retirees to help out. And Louise Woods suggested using part-timers who could be hired for less money.

A recent report from the Southern Regional Education Board entitled, "Reduce Your Losses: Help New Teachers Become Veteran Teachers," reported that:

"Nationally, about 65 percent of teachers with less than three years of experience participate in induction programs. Studies show that teachers with less than five years of experience who have not participated in induction programs are nearly twice as likely to leave teaching." The SREB study is available online at www.sreb.org

CMS rates

'96-'97:	16.06%
'97-'98:	15.25%
'98-'99:	19.18%
'99-'00:	19.44%
'00-'01:	21.77%

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.

What are the odds of having a choice?

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Seats will first be filled by students in the school's attendance area. Then students wishing to remain will be seated. CMS has estimated how full it expects each school to be. The estimates in the charts at right are from August; the numbers will no doubt change – both before the assignments are made next spring and before school opens next fall. That said, the data shows that some parents might be successful with this “option,” while others pretty clearly will not.

To illustrate how the information at right works, look for Long Creek under the “Are eligible to return to” column. Long Creek loses its satellite area under the new attendance area plan. And what was once a single attendance area bused to Long Creek has now been split among five attendance areas: Druid Hills, Lincoln Heights, Oaklawn, Oakdale and Thomasboro. These new assignments will put these children in high-poverty schools, ranging from 66% to 95% of students on free- or reduced-price lunch. Long Creek, meanwhile, drops from about 37% to 11% on subsidized lunch.

The school board wanted to give such parents a choice. The new plan allows them to request that their children remain at Long Creek – if there is space.

But the schools' enrollment projections show Long Creek at 100% of capacity. If those estimates prove accurate, no parents who apply to remain at Long Creek will be successful.

The “choice” offered parents in the current satellite areas for Tuckaseegee, Lansdowne, Lebanon Road, Paw Creek and Piney Grove is just as empty. We'll leave it to parents to decide at what estimated percentage of full there is reason to apply to exercise this “option.”

But not all choices are empty. Residents of the eastside satellites bused to Crown Point have an

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A choice to stay where you are

The following tables are based on maps prepared for the July 31 adoption of the 2002 student assignment plan, and on August 2001 projections for each school of 2002 utilization rates and percentage of students on free- or reduced-price lunch. The first list, “Satellite areas,” addresses neighborhood attendance areas separated from the base attendance area in which the school is located. The second list on page 4 details “Contiguous areas” that are part of today's base area but are re-assigned to a new school for 2002.

Parents of children in all these areas may apply to remain at their current school. Schools listed in the “Eligible to return to” column are listed in descending order of projected utilization, because schools already full will not have space and parents applying to those schools will likely be unsuccessful.

Satellite Areas

Some children assigned to:	% ...Are eligible to return to:		Full	FRL	
	Full	FRL			
Ashley Park	74	93	Tuckaseegee	103	44
Bruns Ave.	61	93	Tuckaseegee	103	44
Thomasboro	97	90	Tuckaseegee	103	44
New Greenville	63	93	Greenway Park	101	33
Eastover	67	29	Lansdowne	101	33
First Ward	92	88	Lansdowne	101	33
Irwin Avenue	82	65	Lansdowne	101	33
New Greenville	63	93	Lebanon Road	100	29
First Ward	92	88	Lebanon Road	100	29
New Grier Road	57	50	Lebanon Road	100	29
Briarwood	86	78	Lebanon Road	100	29
Druid Hills	78	91	Long Creek	100	11
Lincoln Heights	74	79	Long Creek	100	11
Oaklawn	55	89	Long Creek	100	11
Oakdale	73	66	Long Creek	100	11
Thomasboro	97	90	Long Creek	100	11
Ashley Park	74	93	Paw Creek	100	36
Bruns Ave.	61	93	Paw Creek	100	36
Irwin Ave.	82	65	Paw Creek	100	36
Westerly Hills	44	87	Paw Creek	100	36
Druid Hills	78	91	Piney Grove	100	39
Lincoln Heights	74	79	Piney Grove	100	39
A.James/Reid Park	70	90	Beverly Woods	99	2
Ashley Park	74	93	Beverly Woods	99	2
Barringer	101	48	Beverly Woods	99	2
Devonshire	79	83	Clear Creek	97	18
New Grier Rd.	57	50	J.H. Gunn	97	43
Hickory Grove	99	45	J.H. Gunn	97	43
Reedy Creek	97	21	J.H. Gunn	97	43
Ashley Park	74	93	Pawtucket	96	55
Oaklawn	55	89	Pawtucket	96	55
Westerly Hills	44	87	Pawtucket	96	55
First Ward	92	88	Rama Road	85	40
Highland Academy	68	89	Statesville Road	79	57
Shamrock Gardens	66	78	Statesville Road	79	57
New Greenville	63	93	Druid Hills	78	91
New Greenville	63	93	Nathaniel Alexander	78	51
Oaklawn	55	89	Nathaniel Alexander	78	51
Allenbrook	72	75	Lincoln Heights	74	79

What are the odds of having a choice?

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option. There are other examples listed.

As for the second list marked "Contiguous Areas," most choices are already ruled out because the schools are so close to capacity. Others do not appear to offer parents a substantial alternative, though personal reasons, or ties to school, or afterschool arrangements might produce some requests.

But some of the "Contiguous Area" information will prove interesting to affected low-income parents. Consider those facing a move from Eastover to Billingsville or Chantilly. Eastover, projected to be only 67% occupied and dropping to 29% on subsidized lunch, may be attractive to parents who face moves to schools with 93% and 83% low-income students.

Will there be a bus?

Educate! was unable to determine whether none, some or all the parents who succeed in an application to stay at their old school will receive bus transportation to school.

The board's resolutions and the staff's published materials do not appear specifically to address transportation issues for this particular choice option.

Said board chairperson Arthur Griffin, "It was certainly the intention of the board for kids to be able to attend those schools. If we don't provide transportation, that would be a hollow promise."

"We are just now turning our attention to all these details of implementing choice, and there are many, many of them," Griffin added. "Some people aren't going to like the results – you know, choice is an extraordinarily expensive proposition if you do it right."

These lists are based on CMS maps. They may not cover every household with an "option" to stay. Some of the lines may refer

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A choice to stay (continued)

Some children assigned to:	% Full	% FRL	...Are eligible to return to:	% Full	% FRL
Ashley Park	74	93	Berryhill	72	69
Chantilly	97	83	Crown Point	61	18
Merry Oaks	71	73	Crown Point	61	18
Allenbrook	72	75	Oaklawn	55	89

Contiguous Areas

Some children assigned to:	% Full	% FRL	...Are eligible to return to:	% Full	% FRL
J.H. Gunn	97	43	Albemarle Road	114	59
Piney Grove	100	39	Albemarle Road	114	59
New Grier Road	57	50	Newell	111	54
University Meadows	100	29	Newell	111	54
Greenway Park	101	33	Lansdowne	101	33
Olde Providence	99	8	Lansdowne	101	33
Huntersville	121	11	Blythe	100	23
Olde Providence	98	8	Elizabeth Lane	100	3
Crown Point	61	18	Lebanon Road	100	29
New Plank Road	64	26	Paw Creek	100	36
Pawtucket	96	55	Paw Creek	100	36
Idlewild	98	30	Piney Grove	100	39
Hidden Valley	81	82	University Meadows	100	29
Newell	111	54	University Meadows	100	29
New Providence Rd.	84	1	McKee	99	2
A.James/Reid Park	70	90	Steele Creek	99	40
Berryhill	72	69	Steele Creek	99	40
Lake Wylie	98	12	Steele Creek	99	40
Pinewood	87	59	Steele Creek	99	40
Billingsville	71	93	Cotswold	98	39
Eastover	67	29	Cotswold	98	39
Lansdowne	101	33	Cotswold	98	39
Sharon	100	17	Cotswold	98	39
Greenway Park	101	33	Idlewild	98	30
Oakhurst	97	36	Idlewild	98	30
Piney Grive	100	39	Idlewild	98	30
Rama Road	85	40	Idlewild	98	30
Winterfield	75	64	Idlewild	98	30
Cornelius	124	11	Davidson	98	11
Blythe	100	23	Davidson	98	11
Nations Ford	73	79	Lake Wylie	98	12
Steele Creek	99	40	Lake Wylie	98	12
Lebanon Road	100	29	Clear Creek	97	18
Hickory Grove	99	45	J.H. Gunn	97	43
Reedy Creek	97	21	J.H. Gunn	97	43
Cotswold	98	39	Oakhurst	97	36
Briarwood	88	78	Reedy Creek	97	21
Clear Creek	97	18	Reedy Creek	97	21
J.H. Gunn	97	43	Reedy Creek	97	21
New Grier Road	57	50	Reedy Creek	97	21
Allenbrook	72	75	Thomasboro	97	90
Oakdale	73	66	Thomasboro	97	90

"Families will also have the option to remain in the school that their child currently attends."

– Supt. Smith, in Oct. 10 letter to community leaders

What are the odds of having a choice?

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to undeveloped parcels with no schoolchildren to send to school.

It should also be said that while some listings involve scores of parents, others involve only a handful.

But there are issues at work here that warrant broader public scrutiny:

Lawsuits: For all practical purposes, this "option" to stay put will be available to some but not all parents similarly situated. While many school systems nationwide offer assignment choices that are available only on a space-available basis, that doesn't mean that this method of delivering school services is immune from legal challenge.

Parent education: Will all parents be advised of their options? Will information sent home to parents not just list their option to apply to stay at their current school, but outline how their current school and assigned school differ? It is easy to imagine that principals who are dedicated to diversity in education will encourage the use of this option, while others may not.

Transportation: As Griffin suggests, failure to provide bus transportation for all children will make this option "hollow." It would also get "choice" off to a socio-economically suspect start.

A choice to stay (continued)

Some children assigned to:	% Full	% FRL	...Are eligible to return to:	% Full	% FRL
David Cox Road	119	23	Mallard Creek	94	8
Blythe	100	23	Mallard Creek	94	8
Nathaniel Alexander	78	51	Mallard Creek	94	8
A.James/Reid Park	70	90	Pinewood	87	59
Montclair	85	68	Pinewood	87	59
Nations Ford	73	79	Pinewood	87	59
Sedgefield	67	86	Pinewood	87	59
Newell	111	54	Briarwood	86	78
Highland Academy	67	89	Briarwood	86	78
Devonshire	79	83	Briarwood	86	78
Huntingtowne Farms	113	54	Montclair	85	68
Greenway Park	101	33	Rama Road	85	40
Oakhurst	97	36	Rama Road	85	40
Hawk Ridge	150	3	Pineville	85	31
Nations Ford	73	79	Pineville	85	31
Smithfield	111	30	Pineville	85	31
Sterling	72	59	Pineville	85	31
Clear Creek	97	18	Bain	83	9
Elizabeth Lane	100	3	Matthews	82	13
Briarwood	86	78	Devonshire	79	83
David Cox Road	119	23	Statesville Road	79	57
Hornets Nest	101	44	Statesville Road	79	57
Nathaniel Alexander	78	51	Statesville Road	79	57
Albemarle Road	114	59	Windsor Park	79	64
Hickory Grove	99	45	Windsor Park	79	64
David Cox Road	119	23	Nathaniel Alexander	78	51
Mallard Creek	94	8	Nathaniel Alexander	78	51
Windsor Park	79	64	Winterfield	75	64
Allenbrook	72	75	Oakdale	73	66
New Plank Road	64	26	Oakdale	73	66
Statesville Road	79	57	Oakdale	73	66
Tuckaseegee	103	44	Allenbrook	72	75
A.James/Reid Park	70	90	Berryhill	72	69
Steele Creek	99	40	Berryhill	72	69
Sharon	100	17	Selwyn	72	23
Huntingtowne Farms	113	54	Sterling	72	59
Nations Ford	73	79	Sterling	72	59
Pineville	85	31	Sterling	72	59
Smithfield	111	30	Sterling	72	59
Chantilly	97	83	Merry Oaks	71	73
Windsor Park	79	64	Merry Oaks	71	73
Billingsville	71	93	Eastover	67	29
Chantilly	97	83	Eastover	67	29
Barringer	101	48	Sedgefield	67	86
Eastover	67	29	Sedgefield	67	86
Selwyn	72	23	Sedgefield	67	86
Briarwood	86	78	Shamrock Gardens	66	78
Merry Oaks	71	73	Shamrock Gardens	66	78
Berryhill	72	69	Westerly Hills	44	87
Bruns Ave.	61	93	Westerly Hills	44	87
Thomasboro	97	90	Westerly Hills	44	87
Tuckaseegee	103	44	Westerly Hills	44	87

CMS Demographics: Student enrollment on 20th day of 2001-2002

Source: CMS

	A3	A4	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Sp.	TOT.	Pct.
White	12	450	3,605	3,651	3,720	3,691	3,750	3,632	3,607	3,608	3,559	4,140	2,744	3,178	2,886	666	47,899	43.7
Black	15	1,925	3,285	3,397	3,413	3,681	3,685	3,856	3,695	3,661	3,403	4,311	3,012	2,071	1,720	1,925	47,055	43.0
Hispanic	1	476	829	723	723	651	603	650	520	506	498	553	394	254	168	86	7,739	7.0
Indian		49	62	62	56	60	58	31	44	29	36	49	26	18	12	16	608	0.5
Asian		156	371	355	366	343	354	356	360	365	356	423	382	315	282	32	4,816	4.4
Multi		145	213	175	176	127	113	75	46	47	45	44	509	17	10	11	1,294	1.1
TOTAL	28	3,201	8,365	8,467	8,454	8,553	8,563	8,600	8,272	8,216	7,897	9,520	7,608	5,853	5,078	2,736	109,411	

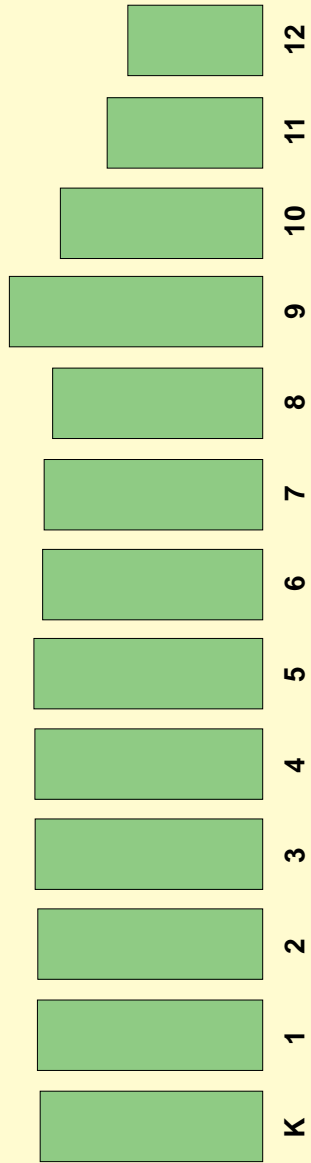
Smaller classes after grade 9 are chiefly because of dropouts, Education Foundation director of research Tom Bradbury says. "CMS lost 2,133 dropouts 7-12 in 1990-00, of whom 1,981 were in grades 9-12."

Dropouts also explain fewer African-Americans in classes after grade 9: "The CMS district profile shows that African-

Americans are almost twice as likely to drop out as whites."

The larger grade 9 may be more complex, Bradbury suggests. Some students exit private middle schools for public high schools.

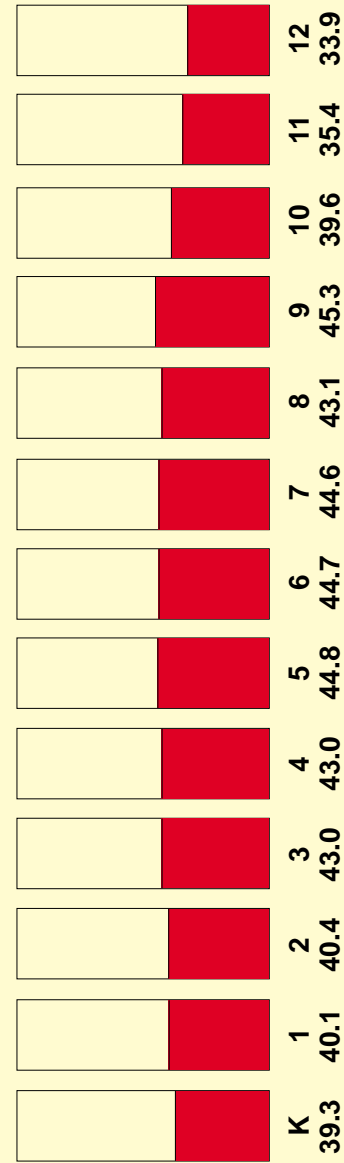
Relative size of classes



Perhaps more 9th-graders move here. Perhaps there were more births in that year. But "a lot of people fail grade 9 - 10 times as many as fail grade 8 here, according to the state's Statistical Profile," he says.

"What if the boost in grade 9 enrollment is a sign of failure in school as well as of the drawing power of public high schools?" he asks. "A CMS study of actual students would be very interesting. Who are we attracting back for high school (football players, IB/AP students, general students, etc.)? ... What percentage of the 9th-grade retainees just drop out? And how will this be affected by the arrival of the no-social-promotion (sort of) gateway for the 8th grade this year?"

African-Americans as a percentage of total class size



Board notes

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has forced the board to resurrect the “career preparation” track of coursework, which it had dropped last April. And while Junior ROTC may be taken by any student, the JROTC credits fulfill the career/technical graduation requirements only in the “career prep” course of study, not the “college tech” or “occupational” categories.

“One of the major ways that students reach the (military) academies is through ROTC in very rigorous, demanding coursework. If you overload some of these kids too much with too many requirements, it makes it very difficult to get to the academy,” Smith said.

Overall, however, “we’re definitely raising the bar in Mecklenburg County.”

Helping 2nd tier

Louise Woods again sought to have additional staff and services for schools in the middle of the pack – the ones with lots of low-achieving or low-income children, but not enough of them to qualify for the smaller classes and extra support already present at Equity Plus II schools.

“If we don’t have clearly stated the resources that will go into those schools,” Woods said, “my fear is that people may flee those schools, which will create more high-poverty schools, and make it more difficult to resource all schools.”

Supt. Eric Smith said he could create paperwork, but additional resources could not be moved into the second-tier schools. “We’re not going to get all this resolved in the next two weeks. This is and has been a journey.”

Added Griffin, “There is not an unlimited pot of money. You’re going to have those real tough choices.”

Equal Lunch

Vilma Leake asked for a report on how to give all children at alternative schools a respectable lunch

Many principals take new assignments

The following schools are among those that will have new principals next fall.

The changes were announced at last week’s school board meeting. Unless noted, persons are already principals, and schools are elementaries.

Amay James/Reid Park – Mary Byers-Hall, from Hawthorne Middle.

Barringer – Mark Robertson, from Lebanon Road.

Billingsville – Hugh Talbert, from assistant principal of Bain.

Bruns Avenue – Janice Lewis, from Derita.

Marie G. Davis Middle – Terry Cline, from Smith Middle.

Dilworth Elementary – Cynthia King, from assistant principal at Crestdale Middle.

Hornets Nest – Millie Snyder, from Dilworth.

Lebanon Road – Kathy Smith, from Wilson Middle.

McKee Road – Sharon Barfoot, from Park Road.

New Cato Middle – Maureen Furr, from South Charlotte

Middle.

New Greenville – Susie Johnson, from Rama Road.

New Plank Road – Carol Owen, from Hornets Nest.

New Providence Road – Diane Adams, from McKee Road.

Park Road – Linda Kiser moves with the Montessori program from Amay James.

Quail Hollow Middle – Kay Tawney, from Windsor Park.

Rama Road Elementary – Jennifer Jenkins, from assistant principal at Steele Creek.

Smith K-8 International

Language Academy – Ynez Olshausen moves with language immersion program from Bruns Avenue.

South Charlotte Middle – Christine Waggoner, from Marie G. Davis Middle.

Starmount Pre-Kindergarten – Edith Graham, from assistant principal at Albemarle Road.

Wilson Middle – Dekota

McCullough, from Reid Park.

Windsor Park – Mary Burnett, from Starmount Pre-Kindergarten.

and a good place to eat it. Her example was an inadequate barbeque sandwich at Covenant Academy, but she said her concern extended to several other sites where children head to the nearest shopping center on lunch break.

Choice details

– CMS staffer Catherine Munn reported that 18 more schools had adopted themes for use in marketing their offerings to parents. “We want this choice process to be the hardest choice that a parent could make,” she said.

– But parental choice requires information, and it quickly became apparent Tuesday that board members are being asked key questions about the plan that they cannot answer. George Dunlap, for example, asked that

the board set policy on athletic eligibility rules before parents must choose assignments. He said parents are uncertain if exercising a choice reassignment will make their children ineligible to play on sports teams.

– The board’s 2-hour “retreat” to go over details of how parents will make their choices was delayed from the day before the Nov. 6 election until after the election, so that newly elected board members can participate.

– Vilma Leake asked for a budget for the Showcase for Schools, a Dec. 1 repeat of the school choice marketing event canceled last year after a court decision convinced the majority that it might be illegal to proceed. Leake sought it so “people will not continue to say that this board wasted funds.”

Briefs

SAT reassessed: The University of California could drop a requirement for SAT I scores because the SAT II achievement tests are better predictors of college success, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. UC President Richard Atkinson is looking for a replacement achievement test that would be more closely linked to college-prep coursework.

www.sfgate.com

Scope of fund-raising: A Dallas Morning News story about a superintendent who is weaning his schools off door-to-door fundraisers outlined the scope of the problem. Up to 1,600 companies compete to provide the goods, take half or more of total sales, and have created a \$4 billion industry. But sales funnel \$1.5 billion into schools or academic programs, equipment and supplies that school boards don't pay for. Many schools have curtailed fund-raising by children since the 1997 death of a New Jersey boy who was offering candy door-to-door.

www.dallasnews.com

Choice enrollment: Milwaukee's choice program showed 11% growth this fall from a year ago. Enrollment rose to 10,739 in state-assisted seats at private, mostly religious schools. Milwaukee Public Schools enrollment is 103,500. The Journal Sentinel reported that the increase was the smallest since 1998, when the program expanded to cover religious schools.

www.jsonline.com

Raising the bar: A California task force report focusing on having fully qualified teachers in all classrooms within five years reported last week. Among its proposals: Allow administrators to assign teachers to work sites, to

Balancing goals and needs

This month's release of ABC scores showed Charlotte-Mecklenburg high schools with a ways to go toward achieving excellence. In fact, for those who went to school when 90% to 100% meant getting an A, CMS had one high school with a C, seven with D's, six with F's.

Supt. Eric Smith's goals for 2005, announced at a sold-out Convention Center event in September, set goals for high-achieving high school students, but mostly skirt the academic challenges at the high schools. Here are the academic achievement goals:

- 95% of all students in grades 3, 5 and 8 will perform on grade level (Level 3 or 4) in reading and mathematics.

- 50% of students in grades 3, 5 and 8 will perform at Level 4 in reading and mathematics.

- 95% of all students in grades 4, 7 and 10 will perform on grade level in writing.

- 60% of students leaving the eighth grade will earn at least a Level 3 on the Algebra I End-of-Course test.

- 50% of all graduates will complete at least one Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course, and 75% of those students will perform at the level required for college credit (a level 3 or above for AP exams and a level 4 or above on IB exams).

- Disparity based on race, ethnicity and socio-economic status will be no greater than 10 percentage points on all academic measures.

- Average SAT scores will meet or exceed the national average.

- 40 percent of students with disabilities will earn a regular high school diploma.

High School Results

School	Pct. on grade level	Change from '00
Providence	77.2	– 1.0
Myers Park	66.8	0.9
South Meck	65.3	3.3
East	64.7	1.8
North	64.6	2.3
Harding	64.5	4.0
Northwest Arts	62.6	– 0.2
Butler	60.5	1.4
Independence	59.8	– 1.3
Vance	57.7	– 0.1
West Meck	47.2	– 4.3
Olympic	41.6	3.3
Garinger	34.0	– 0.2
West Charlotte	26.9	0.1

Source: N.C. Board of Education

end the growing trend of dumping teachers with emergency teaching permits, now numbering 38,000, in low-performing schools.

Teachers unions objected. CMS administrators have so far preferred to offer carrots to teachers to teach at the system's low-performing and high-poverty schools.

www.cctimes.com

Closing the gap: Missouri Assessment Program test scores were recently released, and black scores rose, but still lagged white and Asian scores by 20 or more points, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. Scores rose on 11 of 12 tests, held steady on one. But a St. Louis Black Leadership

Roundtable official told the paper that better teachers and more teachers represented "completely nondebatable strategies that would dramatically close the gap" but "nobody has acted like it's a crisis that deserves emergency action."

www.post-dispatch.com

Point of testing: With parents increasingly shopping for schools based in part on their test scores, Virginia Gov. James Gilmore set a refreshing tone recently as his Standards of Learning scores were released. "The whole reason you go to some measurable standards is so you can actually tell

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Briefs

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who needs help,” Gilmore told the Washington Post. The SOL results found 60% of Virginia’s schools below the state’s benchmarks, but that’s improved from 77% last year. All schools are pushing to meet accreditation goals, which take effect in 2007.

www.washingtonpost.com

Fair warning: Wake County school officials prepared board members for a large dose of reassignment coming in January, both to address overcrowding and to reduce the number of low-income children at some schools. The News & Observer reported that school officials would release details beginning in November to allow parents more time to assess the plans. Wake assigns children in part on socio-economics, with no school supposed to have more than 40% of its students on subsidized lunch. Officials say this dispersal of low-income children is a key to the schools’ academic success with these children.

www.newsobserver.com

Offer diluted: On its way to balancing the state budget, legislators cut a promised \$100 to all teachers for school supplies. Gov. Mike Easley had proposed \$200 per year. The final budget will support less than \$40, the News & Observer reported.

www.newsobserver.com

“Error in judgment”: San Diego school board president Sue Braun resigned over an e-mail in which she suggested that the only way she could think of to control two board members during meetings “is to shoot the both of them.” The San Diego Union-Tribune reported that Braun apologized, and called the message “a terrible error in judgment.”

www.uniontrib.com

Chicken or egg?: A story in the Philadelphia Inquirer profiles the

Calendar

November

- 8** Curriculum Committee, Board conference room, Education Center, 9:30 a..m.
- 13** School board meeting, Education Center, 6 p.m.

work of academies in high schools, where with corporate donations and volunteer time, students get an exposure to work life in various fields. Student Don Bottomstone landed a summer job with a computer-services firm. “I always had an interest in computers, but when I got into the information-technology academy, it basically opened up a bigger door,” the student said – suggesting that the experience nurtured a pre-existing intention and motivation. That may raise questions about the schools’ statistics that academy students have better attendance and promotion rates.

Perhaps they would have anyway.
www.philly.com

Louisiana stew: A battle between state educators and legislators continues over how to raise pay in districts whose small property tax bases leave teachers with low salaries. The Times-Picayune says state education board president Paul Pastorek vows to block more cross-the-board raises. But the legislature this year blocked the board’s plan to give larger raises in poorer districts. The paper quoted a legislator as calling equity just “a trendy new word.”

www.timespicayune.com

Reading first: Rosemary Taylor, writing in the fall issue of Journal of Staff Development, says an Orange County, Fla., literacy program got its start in the realization that 100% of the middle school children suspended for 30 days or more had reading comprehension scores below the 25th percentile. The three-year pro-

gram put together to address these children’s needs has taken kids with an average grade point average of 0.13 to an average of 2.8, higher than the district average of 2.0. The program even survived a new superintendent’s defunding effort, as teachers volunteered to attend the training sessions. Taylor said one of the keys to success was to introduce program elements to teachers and students throughout the year so nobody would get overwhelmed. Her article is at www.nscd.org/library/jsd/taylor244.html

Development schools: CMS has committed to building at Garinger and West Charlotte Highs something called “professional development schools.” Writing for the George Lucas Education Foundation, Linda Darling-Hammond writes, “We’re now at a place where we realize we can’t just say, ‘I taught it and the students didn’t learn it.’ ... We are aware now that looking at what works for different students – and there will be different things that work for different students – is part of learning to teach.... Ideally, you’re in a setting where lots of beginning teachers are being trained together and where veteran teachers are engaged in a lot of professional development and peer coaching and continual learning themselves. And that’s one of the goals of professional development schools – that the whole environment is organized around teacher learning as much as it’s organized around student learning.”

www.glef.org