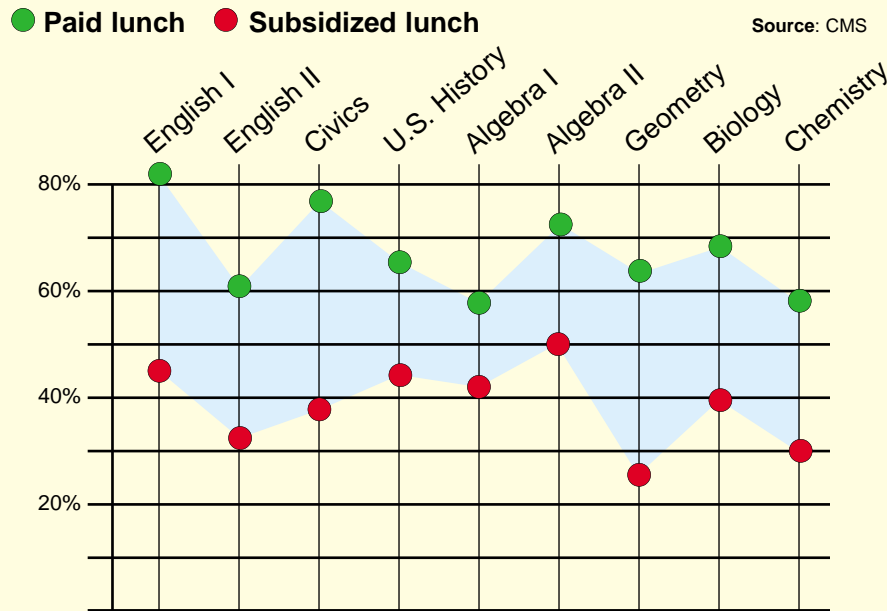


## Achievement gaps, East Mecklenburg High

East Mecklenburg Principal Ron Thompson and West Mecklenburg's Gary Evans reviewed strategies in use to help all students achieve. (See story at right.) Thompson said the strategies were helping East Meck close achievement gaps. Below: percentages of East students at or above grade level on end-of-course tests last year, by course, for two groups: teens on subsidized lunch, and those on paid lunch.



## High schools intervene to cut failures

### Strategies vary by school, but goal is to review work until everybody 'gets' it

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is putting extra work into being sure high school students don't fail, and don't drop out.

Two principals last week highlighted approaches being used at area high schools. The focus is on 10th graders.

Gary Evans, principal at West Mecklenburg, said remedial sessions are held each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at his school, and that an adult mentoring program is being set up. Small learning communities will be used.

Ron Thompson, principal at East Mecklenburg, said students in difficulty after a semester of, say, algebra enter an "academic re-looping program," taking algebra five days a week for longer periods.

"As we all know, some students need extra time," he said. The time is found by delaying elective classes to afterschool hours.

Re-looping, Thompson said, will be used in all classes subject to end-of-course testing.

"I am convinced that that's the reason why we have a reduction in the achievement gap," he said.

"Also, it has restored hope for a lot of students, and that's the most important thing."

Clark said state money is being used to pay for the initiatives.

"Fundings for this program are

## Schools OK teen health initiative at Eastway Middle, Garinger High

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board Tuesday agreed to launch a partnership with an area health-care provider to meet children's health needs at two schools.

The foundation-financed program will operate at Eastway Middle School and Garinger High, two schools near the headquarters of Teen Health Connection, a unit of Carolinas Medical Center.

Adults in the children's families will be directly involved in the program.

Assistant Superintendent Barbara Pellin said one goal of

the program is to help "parents take responsibility for their children's health needs," as well as to increase daily attendance by assuring that children are well.

The program will pay for additional nurse practitioners at the two schools, ensure that contacts are made with parents, and offer referrals as appropriate to other medical facilities for treatment.

School board member Molly Griffin praised the proposal. "To me it does say that we mean it when we say that our equity schools will begin to have services

Continued on Page 3

Continued on Page 5

To new readers of

## **Educate!**

a 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.

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**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: 2,308.

**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.

## 2 CMS principals honored for their work

Two CMS principals were honored last week for their work.

Lloyd Wimberly, principal at Myers Park High, was recognized as CMS Wachovia principal of the year Tuesday. He told the school board Tuesday that "the principalship is truly a remarkable position because you're put in the center of the most amazing things, that take place with the most amazing people...."



Wimberly

"And I go every day looking for these things to take place, as I know all the other principals do. And when you see it happen, your heart soars like an eagle...."

Emily Stephenson Green, now

principal at Oakdale, was honored for her decade of work at Irwin Avenue Open Elementary integrating homeless children into the school's classrooms.

"She convinced teachers and parents that folding these children into their school could work," said Debbie McKone, executive director of A Child's Place, which operates the program serving homeless children. "She had teachers go out and see where our children were living...."

"Even among the many myths that still prevail about homeless children and their parents, Emily welcomed each child, and reminded her peers of the potential of every single student, and our obligation to embrace and teach them."

## *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 Charlotte World:** By e-mail: 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; 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.

**Educate!:** By e-mail: swannfello@aol.com; by fax: 704-342-4550; by mail: 1510 E. 7th St. Charlotte, NC 28204-2410.

## Northwest may use Spirit Square rooms idle during the day

A report Tuesday offered a vision of using Spirit Square classroom and performance spaces that sit idle during the school day as expansion space for Northwest School of the Arts' 11th- and 12th-graders.

Judith Allen, president of the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center which operates Spirit Square, called Northwest "one of the most overutilized" schools in CMS.

Said Assistant Supt. Ann Clark, "There is an opportunity to keep our students here, instead of going to the School of the Arts in Winston-Salem."

Supt. Eric Smith said staff was working on details, including "a very reasonable lease fee that, from a business standpoint, makes real good sense for us to pursue."

Those details will come back to the board for a decision.

Principal Charles LaBorde said the proposal was not designed to create a "lower school" on Beatties Ford Road and an "upper school" downtown. Teachers and students using the downtown facilities would also teach and study at Northwest.

Students may well drive downtown, as they do when attending functions at CPCC, but bus transportation will be provided, LaBorde said.

Classroom instruction to be affected by the proposed downtown facilities include upper level honors drama, musical theatre, ballet, dance repertory, modern dance, jazz dance, pointe (ballet), ceramics, fibers and AP art studio and art history.

Allen and school officials also said students would benefit from proximity to other cultural sites.

Existing Spirit Square tenants would not be affected, according to the announced plans.

## Teen health initiative OK'd for 2 schools

Continued from Page 1

that our other schools won't have."

Dr. John Johnston, medical director of Teen Health Connection, told the board that the program will serve "those kids that have no medical home."

Board member John Lassiter, who had been involved in negotiations to set up the program, told the board that "there is great concern among large segments of our community about establishing health centers in large scale in our public schools, the difficulty of monitoring the resources involved, and the appropriateness of that, recognizing that there are other agencies and organizations that may be more appropriate to deliver those serv-



Johnston

ices.

"But we are at a point in our community where certain partnerships are critical. There are in fact children and families who do not receive adequate medical care. And we present a portal, where we in fact perhaps identify a need, and get those children and families to the correct place to have their medical needs attended to."

But he noted that while "we have identified a real need, within a population that is underserved, it's not in my opinion a model we simply want to go and replicate throughout the system. There may be other situations where it would in fact be appropriate. But we need apply the same kind of analysis that we've applied to this one."

Teen Health Connection, which grew out of an initiative of the county medical society, is now a unit of Carolinas HealthCare System. Its offices are on Eastway Drive near North Tryon Street. It is a member agency of the United Way.

## Board thanks citizens committee for its work on assignment, school equity

In recognizing the Student Assignment Oversight Committee, which ended its two-year run in December, Chairperson Arthur Griffin Tuesday thanked the committee for pushing for last February's equity status report.

In the report, staff inventoried instructional materials and supplies at all schools. The work created a record of materials at each schoolhouse. It also graphically illustrated how the schools have been inequitably provisioned, with few of the schools meeting the stated standard for library books, equipment, supplies, etc.

"We're still going to follow up with an equity status report," Griffin said, "but it was the first time a large urban school district

that I'm aware of in America has even attempted to tackle such an issue in trying to make sure that all youngsters are served and served fairly."

A fair number of the members of the committee became inactive during its two-year run. Those who remained were determined to keep pressure on the school board to spend the dollars needed to bring all schoolhouses up to baseline standards.

The old committee was created with a sunset provision ending its work Dec. 31. But last fall the school board approved the creation of a new equity committee. Persons interested in serving on this new committee should contact a school board member for more information.

# Repairs may be paired with larger overhaul

As expected, the school board Tuesday approved holding up on design work for “critical needs” renovations at some schools in hopes that bond financing that may be on November’s ballot would allow even more thorough repairs and additions at the schools.

The board vote directed that if new bond money is not on the ballot or is not approved in November, the original projects will go ahead as planned.

Since the board’s discussion of this plan a week earlier, staff had been able to calculate the effect of delays now in design on the ultimate completion of the projects.

School board member Lee Kindberg told the public Tuesday night that “for most schools, the delays being proposed means that if the bonds don’t pass we can still deliver the critical needs projects on schedule.... If the bonds do pass, then we can take this money and combine it with additional funds to bring these schools all the way up to full standards.”

Molly Griffin called the proposal

“the only responsible way to be stewards of the community’s tax dollars.”

Member John Lassiter received assurances that the 1997 bond money would not be diverted in the meantime to other projects. “We are playing with the faith of the community,” he said.

Member Larry Gauvreau opposed the decision, saying he wanted to make “sure the educational outcome that we desire from our students is tied to that classroom and maybe not necessarily some of the glitz in the schoolhouse.”

Earlier, Kindberg had described the projects. In some cases, she noted, the work “means hooking up to a sewer line instead of being on a well and septic tank.”

All but one of the schools initially on the tail end of the schools’ systemwide building program were affected by the decision.

The one exception is Derita, where work will proceed on renovations of the closed elementary school for use as a pre-kindergarten site beginning this fall.

Building Services director Guy Chamberlain said the renovations would not only re-do plumbing for the smaller children, but would bring at least part of the building up to day-care standards so the schools could qualify for state subsidies for afterschool care to be provided at the site.

As listed in an October CMS construction report, here are the schools affected, with the size of each project in dollars. All are elementaries except as noted:

Huntingtowne Farms	\$1,023,000
Berryhill	2,032,000
Clear Creek	2,014,000
Cotswold	1,915,000
Derita	2,674,000
Dilworth	1,697,000
Hickory Grove	2,771,000
Northeast Middle	3,650,000
Pinewood	1,795,000
Quail Hollow Middle	4,311,000
Randolph Middle	5,932,000
Reedy Creek	660,000
Sharon	2,635,000
Tuckaseegee	3,009,000
Windsor Park	1,588,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$37,706,000</b>

## Public education advocate Tom Bradbury to leave for Atlanta

Arthur Griffin got to break some news from the school board podium Tuesday night as he bid farewell to a longtime advocate of public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

“Tom Bradbury is like a fixture in the education arena of Charlotte-Mecklenburg,” the board chair said.

“He was a reporter, an editorial writer. He has been around a long time with respect to education issues in Mecklenburg County. He has followed education issues, and been extraordinarily supportive of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in terms of his writings and making sure that we stay on track and have the community support.

“We certainly appreciate his contribution to public education here over the last 30-plus years here in Mecklenburg County. We’ll miss him.”

Bradbury attended virtually all school board meetings for decades. Quipped vice chair Wilhelmenia Rembert, “Should we give him a certificate of attendance?”

Bradbury is leaving Charlotte for a job at the Southern Regional Education Board, where he will work for SREB President Mark Musick. SREB is a compact of 10 Southern states formed after World War II. Its studies and advocacy for educational improvements have been widely credited with spurring state reforms.

Bradbury, a reporter and editorial writer first at the Charlotte News and later at the Charlotte Observer, had spent the last several years as president and then director of research and publications at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation.

The foundation, with close ties both to school officials and Charlotte’s business community, sponsors teacher recognition programs, community surveys and other programs.

Under his direction, the foundation published a wealth of data on school finances and student performance.

Bradbury, 58, grew up in the Atlanta area.

# Grant to finance social studies teacher training

A Teaching American History grant from the U.S. Department of Education will provide summer training program for high school teachers.

The grant, worth \$994,525, is one of 63 awarded nationwide.

CMS will use the grant to finance two-week programs for the next three years. Curriculum specialist Becky Finger told the school board Tuesday that UNCC professors will "guide us through those content areas that have proved to be problematic for our students. Data will drive the selection of topics.

"Data has proven that this kind of intense professional development does result in creating a community of teachers who share a common vision and work together for the benefit of all students."

Finger said changes under way this year are helping teachers cope with the variety of skill levels often present in middle-school classrooms.

But the big changes, she said, will come as the state adopts a new social studies curriculum for 2003-2004. Draft curriculums will be shared with teachers this spring, textbooks will be selected next fall, courses will be changed in fall 2003 and new end-of-course tests will be in place for 2004-2005.

Courses, Finger said, will add "global issues" as the state pushes all school systems to prepare students to "more effectively communicate in a global setting." The courses, as now defined, by grade:

- K – Self and Family/ Families around the world.
- 1 – Neighborhoods and communities around the world.
- 2 – Regional studies: Local, state, U.S. and world.
- 3 – Citizenship: People making a difference (a biography-based curriculum tied in with the reading program).
- 4 – North Carolina geography and history.

## The curiosity factor

Science curriculum specialist Donna Brearley reported on the schools' ongoing science curriculum, last overhauled for fall 2000. "The goal for this program," Brearley told the school board, "is to maintain students' curiosity at the elementary level, and to include the hands-on, inquiry-based training that teachers need so badly." Here are the science themes at the elementary grades:

- K- His & her world.
- 1 - Investigating animals, investigating properties, investigating earth materials, investigating position and motion.
- 2 - Changes, investigating plants and animals, investigating sound, investigating weather.
- 3 - Soils and plants, heat and light, objects in the sky.
- 4 - Animals, machines, magnetism and electricity, rocks, minerals.
- 5 - Investigating ecosystems, investigating weather, landforms, energy.

- 5 – U.S. history, Canada, Mexico and Central America.
- 6 – South America, Europe, Russia
- 7 – Africa, Asia, Australia.
- 8 – North Carolina: Creation and development of the state.
- 9 – World history.
- 10 – Civics and economics.
- 11 – Electives on African-American studies; American Indian studies; religions; contemporary issues in N.C. history; Latin American studies; economics; current affairs; geography; government; international relations; law and justice; psychology; sociology.
- 12 – Advanced Placement courses in U.S. history, European history, economics; American government; human geography; psychology, comparative government and world history; no changes planned for International Baccalaureate.

And what, asked board member Mollie Griffin, is "human geography"? Finger said the AP course, first offered in some school districts this year, combines sociology, geography, psychology and political science, to show how demographic changes have impacted the world. The subject, she said, holds "lots of possibilities for careers and college study."

# High schools push to prevent failures

Continued from Page 1

from our summer school program, our remediation state dollars that are being used second semester so that we don't wait until the end of the year for large numbers of failures or students that are in jeopardy of failing.

"We intervene in the middle of the year."

Supt. Eric Smith said staff at high schools "are working to transform what high school is all about.

"When I was in high school, high school was about delivering a curriculum. If you were there, you got it. If you didn't get it, you didn't get it.

"The expectation now is that the kids that attend our high schools will be good, capable learners. The variables we've got to work with is focus, focus, focus, and issues of time." He said the administration would continue to support re-looping and other efforts that focus directly on the students that need extra help.

"We have identified the kids who are falling into danger of not being on track with graduation requirements, are not on track with EOG and EOC requirements, and we are confident that our numbers are going to look very good at the end of this year and the following years."

All high schools will monitor 9th- and 10th-graders in any of the following categories: lack two or more credits; did not pass required competency tests; are already on a high-risk list; are two years older than grade level peers, or have 18 or more absences or 10 or more suspension days during the previous year.

Those students will be assigned an adult monitor, whose job it will be "to assure that needed interventions are in place for that student." A form tracking those interventions will go to the principal each quarter.

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## Briefs

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**Segregated:** A Detroit News study observed that 70% of metro Detroit students are in schools with 90% or more of the students of their race. The paper quoted experts as saying all students pay a price for segregation. "That not only reinforces stereotypes, but years later... these are the people who may be eyeing each other suspiciously across the office," said Michigan State University professor Christopher Dunbar. [www.detnews.com](http://www.detnews.com)

**White flight:** During the 1990s, whites in Boston moved to private schools, dropping from 24% of the system to 13.6% and leaving the city's public elementaries 14% white, 48% black, 30% Latino and 8% Asian, the Boston Globe reported. Local NAACP official Leonard Alkins told the Globe that "white students are not attending schools in the public system because of the quality of the schools. They turn to other types of schools because they can afford to."

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

**Special ed funding:** President Bush pledged an additional \$2 billion to special education programs and the nation's poorest schools, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. Speaking two days before Martin Luther King Day, Bush said, "Our challenge is to make sure that every child has a fair chance to succeed in life. That is why education is the great civil rights issue of our time."

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

**Mixed results:** A British study of efforts to help teachers better organize lessons and speed up the work of 11- to 14-year-olds showed teaching had generally improved at 64 schools piloting the program. The study found "disappointing" results with efforts to help low-achieving students catch up.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

**Latchkey kids:** A study found 20% of Massachusetts children return from school to empty houses, increasing the potential for risky behavior, the Boston Globe reported. Promoters of afterschool programs said the survey showed widespread support for such programs, but that few children have access to them statewide. The lack of access crosses economic lines.

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

**Principal shortage:** Colorado will have 740 openings for principals over the next 5 years, the Denver Post reported. Experts said few states are recruiting for a post that few educators really want because of its complexity and constant demands. And it takes a special kind of person to be a successful principal, Cherry Creek Supt. Monte Moses said. "There's this stereotype that a good leader commands everything. That would not work in a school setting. You need staff, stu-

dents and parents to be involved as well."

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

**No dropouts:** Kentucky's Walton-Verona High has had no dropouts in three years, the Cincinnati Enquirer reported. The school – 473 students in grades 7-12, 22% on subsidized lunch – credits an anti-truancy program. Kids absent more than two days are visited by a volunteer – who happens to be a deputy sheriff. <http://enquirer.com>

**GED achieved:** And now let us celebrate a milestone for Cecil Smith of Thousand Oaks, Calif. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that Smith has been awarded his GED. Smith had to leave school after both his parents died. But after many years working as an upholsterer, he went back and didn't let poor vision, hearing problems or even an artificial hip deter him. Smith, new GED graduate, is 94.

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

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## Calendar

**31** School Board Retreat begins, 4 p.m.-9 p.m., Leadership Academy, continuing Feb. 1 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

### February

**2** District 6 meeting, Matthews Presbyterian Hospital community room.

**11** Board lunch for its citizen appointees, noon, Board Room.

**12** School Board, 6 p.m., Board Room.

**13** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, 11th floor conference room.

**14** Curriculum Committee, 9:30 a.m., board conference room.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation annual meeting, 7:30 a.m., Adams Mark. Speaking: Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust. Details and reservations: CMEF at 704-335-0100 or [ldufour@cmeff.org](mailto:ldufour@cmeff.org).

**19** Schools in session for snow make-up day.

Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services.

Personnel Policy Committee, 3 p.m., board conference room.