

Judge pushes to improve school for at-risk kids

"I know now," Judge Howard Manning said Friday, that teachers "know how to teach" at-risk children – and yet many don't.

"Superintendents and principals who know what they're doing don't have problems" getting at-

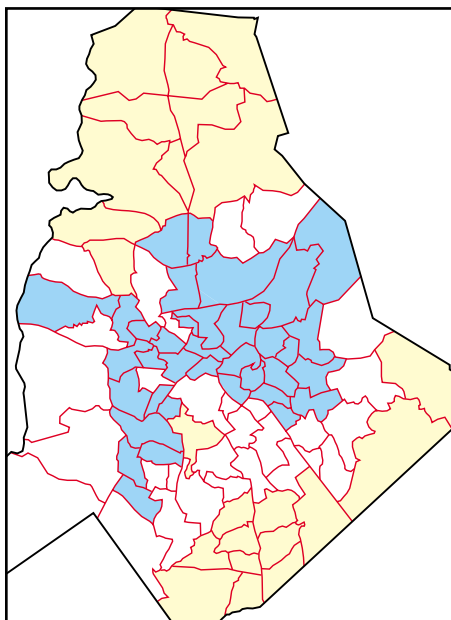
risk children on grade level.

"Human resources," he said, "are the No. 1 preventative in fighting against this disease."

Manning presides over the latest phase of the Leandro case, which could fundamentally alter

the way North Carolina finances public education. But to Manning, the case has become a search for why, when so much is spent on schooling, the kids most needing education often get so little.

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Racial isolation: Elementaries in blue (or darker gray) to be 70% or more minority; in yellow (lighter gray), less than 30% minority, under choice assignment plan.

Covering all the bases

Choice assignments, vows to meet growth, equity needs: Will initiatives build broader public support for schools?

CMS appears ready to push for continued public support by selling choice, growth and equity as a package deal – a wobbly three-legged stool that could test the ingenuity of marketers and the patience of voters.

Only small pieces of the full strategy were available at the weekend. But the outlines were clear as a bond issue proposal and the details of parents' choices for assignment headed for the school board at its meeting Tuesday.

Unfettered choice, or at least the perception of it, is one wobbly leg of the stool. Choice is going to

leave classrooms empty in some parts of town. Such a waste of public investment may seem unconscionable to some – and clearly a liability at a time when the community will be asked for additional money to build schools. Not long ago an advisory committee offered the board a way to avoid the waste; the board and the community went another way.

The second leg of the stool is an appeal to those who want the community to grow. School planners believe Charlotte-Mecklenburg's population will

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National report critiques demanding AP, IB programs

A study of America's toughest high school academic programs thinks the curriculums don't cut the mustard anymore.

Course content in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs hasn't kept up with developments in the sciences and math, the study says. Nobody sets criteria for acceptance of teachers into the programs. Training is amiss. Tests are too predictable. The pro-

grams aren't based on new understandings of how students learn.

And "inclusion of too much accelerated content can prevent students from achieving the primary goal of deep conceptual understanding," according to two-year study prepared for the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education.

Some of the criticism may strike teachers and students as off-base

(story, page 5). Both programs have raised the expectations – and performance – of thousands of students. But a chart on page 6 makes clear that IB, for all its importance as the leading-edge of academic expectations, is for an elite. The median percentage of students enrolled at Carolinas schools is about 3%, based on data from the International Baccalaureate Organization.

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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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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.

Ask the children how to teach reading – a recollection

In an article entitled "Small Classes, Small Schools: The Time is Now," Patricia Wasley tells a story about some children and what they discovered about reading:

"As Dean of Bank Street College of Education in New York City several years ago, I team-taught 5th and 6th graders in the College's School for Children. We were looking for a course of study that would engage the students in making some contribution to the local community while simultaneously building their reading, computer, writing, and observation skills.

"After long deliberation and engagement in a number of exploratory activities, our 5th- and 6th-graders decided that they would tutor younger students in a neighborhood public school. One of the students cried, 'How are we supposed to teach reading? We're only kids. We just learned to read ourselves a few years ago!'

A heated discussion ensued, during which one of the girls ran up to the chalkboard and said, 'I know. Let's map how each of us learned to read.'

"The students made a chart of how old they were, where they were (home or school), with whom they were engaged in a reading activity, and what activity they were engaged in at the precise moment that they understood that they could read. Seventeen

students in the classroom generated 14 different approaches to learning to read.

"I suggested that the students pick several of the most commonly used approaches and organize a seminar on each approach so that they could learn several methods for working with their reading buddies. They looked at me as if either I had lost my mind or I hadn't been listening. 'We can't learn just three approaches, or we'll never learn to help all these kids learn to read! If we needed a bunch of different approaches to learn to read, why wouldn't they?'

"This experience reinforced my belief that different students learn differently and that teachers need to build a repertoire of instructional strategies to reach individual students.

"Small class size is integral to this individualization: Teachers should be responsible for a smaller number of students so that they can get to know each student and his or her learning preferences.

"It takes time to get to know one's students and to individualize the learning experience, and doing so requires concentration. In a classroom with a large number of students, such attention simply isn't an option."

– From *"Educational Leadership," February 2002, at www.ased.org*

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Assignments given; bonds outlined

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continue to grow, and create a 160,000-student system by decade's end, up from 108,000.

To prepare for the growth, the schools want another \$85 million to make additions at 16 schools and to do design work on two new elementaries and a high school. Money to construct those schools would have to come from yet another bond issue later.

An appeal to supporters of equity to keep the ball rolling toward equity is the third leg of the stool.

After the schools outlined a \$215 million bond plan, spokeswoman Nora Carr noted that "the biggest chunk of it is for equity."

Equity projects would represent \$103.5 million of the \$215 million. She said full details may not be ready for the school board by Tuesday, but all projects are already in the capital facilities improvement plan. And when those and all other projects are complete, nearly two-thirds of CMS campuses still will not be up to standard.

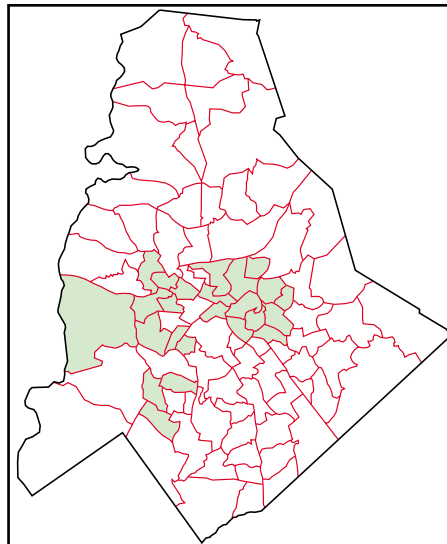
The bond issue would include \$103.6 million for equity projects, \$84 million to accommodate growth, and \$27.4 million mostly for replacements: two stadiums, running tracks, replacement mobile units, plumbing, roofing and ventilation projects and technology equipment.

Oh, yes: And replacement tennis courts and new lights for them at Myers Park High, listed in the new Capital Needs Assessment under the category of "Paving/Site Work."

Carr acknowledged complaints to the effect that the community can't afford to make all schools equitable. "That's an expected political issue that will have to be dealt with," she said.

Lottery winners, losers

Friday, school officials released a small batch of information about



Economic isolation: Elementary schools 70% or more poor, based on subsidized lunch program.

the choice assignments.

They proclaimed the good news, and it was mostly about making good on parents' choices: 86% of first-choice requests will be honored. About 93% of students got either their first or second choice.

They claimed there were fewer schools with a 50% or more minority population. Only Chairperson Arthur Griffin seemed concerned that there are actually more schools that will enroll 70% or more poor children.

These are the schools that are costliest to run, where teacher experience levels have traditionally been lowest, where real estate agents may not show homes to clients with any other choice – leaving entire communities economically depressed.

Because some preliminary data had suggested that some schools might be so underutilized they might close, Supt. Eric Smith made a special point to say no schools would close. But that was only a dodge: Amay James is on a list for "alternate use" as its students move next door to Reid Park. Bruns Avenue will have room to host Oaklawn during Oaklawn's renovation. Chantilly will have room to host Billingsville during its renovation.

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Fall enrollment

Under choice plan results announced Friday, here are the projected percentages by school for children on subsidized lunch, and for minorities. The minorities category includes all nonwhites.

	FRL	Min.
ELEMENTARIES		
New Greenville	90	98
Highland Renaissance	88	90
Thomasboro	87	96
Bruns Avenue	87	99
Shamrock Gardens	86	89
Druid Hills	86	97
Hidden Valley	86	98
Ashley Park	85	96
Reid Park	84	98
Westerly Hills	83	96
Chantilly	82	92
Sedgefield	80	85
Devonshire	80	98
Merry Oaks	79	87
Briarwood	78	99
Allenbrook	77	85
Winterfield	76	89
Berryhill	75	68
First Ward	74	95
Nations Ford	73	85
Sterling	72	87
Montclair	71	81
Windsor Park	71	82
Pinewood	68	72
Irwin Avenue	68	88
Lincoln Heights	67	90
Idlewild	66	90
Statesville Road	64	77
Pawtucket	63	75
Albemarle Road	62	86
Collinswood	60	85
Tuckaseegee	56	66
Oakdale	56	67
Dilworth	53	64
University Meadows	53	77
Oakhurst	51	62
J.H. Gunn	51	66
University Park	51	67
Highland Montessori	50	82
Cotswold	48	58
Newell	47	71
Winding Springs	46	76
Piney Grove	45	64

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And Bruns Avenue/Oaklawn, Druid Hills, New Greenville, New Grier Road, Reid Park and Winding Springs will be at 55% or less of capacity.

Some of the underutilization that appears to be the case is false accounting, however. At high-poverty schools, the system has committed to having lower class sizes. That program now operates at more than 40 schools. Class size varies by grade level, but is as low as 16 students to a classroom in the lower primary grades. Yet the capacity and utilization numbers CMS releases continue to be premised on about 24 students to a classroom.

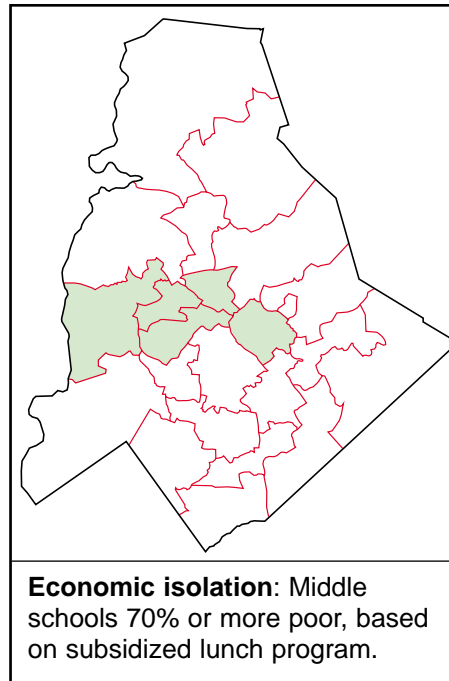
So Smith had to explain Friday that the system goal for capacity at the high-poverty or low-achievement schools is 72% at the elementary level, 80% at the middle school level. That information is not marked on the lottery result sheets CMS posted on its Web site over the weekend.

Another part of the assignment story was discussed at Friday's news conference, but the numbers were not released:

Fewer schools are 50% or more minority, Smith said, "not by bureaucratic action but by parent action." He applauded parents' choice for diversity, saying "the valuing of racial diversity has not been held just by this board." Learning to live in a diverse world "is a very significant component of growing up today. Parents did what "we were unable to do."

No numbers released thus far explain Smith's observation. But he gave a hint: After the first priority given to choices for the home school, the board gave next priority in the lottery to parents who chose to stay where they were.

For magnet parents, that meant they could stay in programs created in the past to form diverse student bodies. And most of those



programs remain reasonably balanced racially.

But if schools are more diverse than expected, it may be because black parents voted in large numbers against the high-minority, high-poverty neighborhood schools the choice plan created in their neighborhoods. Mostly minority parents in neighborhoods where children currently are bused to schools in white neighborhoods had a choice, if only for a year or two, to stay on the bus.

This is the only apparent explanation for why Bruns Avenue and Oaklawn, which in October were expected to have 730 students between them, will now be combined on the Bruns campus with 366 students.

Instead of what planning director Eric Becoats Friday called "outstanding results," some black parents may have been voting with their children against resegregation.

But as written, the choice plan will make it more and more difficult for parents to choose diverse schools.

As the parents who decided to stay put face the move to middle school, for example, they will face a new choice. If the elementary their children attended is not in

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Enrollment (continued)

	FRL	Min.
ELEMENTARIES		
Morehead	45	78
Hornets Nest	45	78
Huntingtowne Farms	44	62
New Grier Road	43	86
Hickory Grove	42	75
Rama Road	41	54
Greenway Park	41	57
Barringer	41	63
Lebanon Road	39	47
Crown Point	38	52
Nathaniel Alexander	38	80
Smithfield	37	50
Steele Creek	36	63
Paw Creek	35	52
Pineville	34	44
Park Road	32	60
Lansdowne	29	43
Elizabeth (Old Druid)	29	51
Reedy Creek	29	52
Myers Park Traditional	28	47
Clear Creek	23	24
Beverly Woods	23	31
Eastover	22	32
Lake Wylie	22	39
Villa Heights	22	57
Long Creek	21	29
Sharon	21	32
David Cox Road	20	41
Mallard Creek	19	48
Blythe	18	23
Selwyn	17	21
New Plank Road	17	24
Matthews	14	17
Bain	09	10
Cornelius	09	12
Davidson	08	12
Huntersville	08	14
Olde Providence	08	19
McAlpine	08	20
New Providence	03	09
McKee Road	03	14
Hawk Ridge	03	17
Elizabeth Lane	02	1
	FRL	Min.
MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
Spaugh	81	89
Marie G. Davis	81	93
J.T. Williams	76	96
Wilson	75	79

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their choice zone and they cannot provide their child daily transportation, they will be forced to enroll at their “home” middle school or apply to a magnet.

Smith remarked Friday that all enrollment numbers will be changing for a number of years as the grandfathering works its way out of the system. “Some of the underenrollment will work its way out” and “will go down some in a year.” On the west side, that may well mean more resegregation on the way. Smith said he might have numbers on the impact of the grandfathering in a month.

Capacity will be increased at overcrowded schools by moving

mobile classrooms during the summer. Planning for that process is not complete, Smith said, but by mid-April parents will see footers being poured where mobile units will be placed for the fall.

The costs of implementing the choice plan were not discussed Friday.

Nor was the open question of whether Charlotte-Mecklenburg voters would be willing, over time, to finance all schools equitably once resegregation by race or socioeconomic status has run its course.

John Kramer, who co-chaired the “Committee of 33” on student assignment, remembers talking in the late ’90s about how, when times were good, it was easy to commit to equity – but that when the economy cooled it would be difficult to maintain the consensus. “At the time, nobody paid attention,” Kramer said Thursday.

His research persuaded him that combining choice with rules balancing enrollments by race or socioeconomic status would “allow the free market to pinpoint the schools that need help.” His committee proposed a system of automatically redirecting “resources to schools that fell at the bottom.”

The committee’s mantra became known as SPUD, which stood for its key goals: stability of assignment, proximity of assigned school, utilization of all school seats, and diversity.

Stability of assignment and proximity of assignment for those who choose it are what the new choice assignment plan will implement. Diversity was taken off the table by the school board last year. Utilization has been sacrificed for what Smith asserts will be a short period.

Pitch for new bonds

The timing could not be worse: At the same time that there is concern about empty school seats, CMS plans to ask the county commissioners to boost their bonding authority by another \$215 million.

The reasons are entirely sensible: There is work yet to be done; contractors are already here who

Enrollment (continued)

	FRL	Min.
MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
Eastway	73	83
Cochrane	68	90
Sedgefield	61	75
Ranson	58	82
Martin	54	80
Piedmont	51	65
Albemarle Road	49	71
Coulwood	48	55
Randolph	47	60
Northridge	47	76
Quail Hollow	42	49
Kennedy	41	61
McClintock	40	53
Smith	34	47
Carmel	30	40
Northeast	28	29
Graham (AG)	28	31
Alexander	19	36
Crestdale	14	22
Bradley	13	24
South Charlotte	08	16
New Cato	07	16
Davidson I.B.	05	17
	FRL	Min.
HIGH SCHOOLS		
Berry Tech	58	82
West Charlotte	56	93
Garinger	48	85
Northwest	43	57
West Meck	40	71
E.E. Waddell	39	72
Harding	32	7
Independence	28	57
Vance	26	66
Olympic	26	59
East Meck	25	49
Myers Park	20	35
Butler	17	28
North Meck	16	34
South Meck	15	3
Hopewell	11	31
Providence	06	18

Source: CMS

What is it that parents most value?

Leaders in the black community will be watching parents’ school choices. Have parents in at-risk neighborhoods bypassed their neighborhood school to stay put at a school to which their child is now bused, or for a magnet program?

Stoney Sellars, a black businessman who served on a number of school board committees in the last decade, said visits with parents in at-risk areas of Charlotte-Mecklenburg taught him that many wanted their children close to home. “But they didn’t care how far their kids had to go if the school met their child’s needs and it was not a disruptive environment.”

To get them close to home would be nice, he said, “but you have to have equitable resources for that to happen.”

could do the next phase of work; the call to proceed with equity is still to be heard.

Indeed, school officials may want to capitalize on the public focus on all schools right now to

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try to make the case that all schools must have equitable facilities.

Tuesday, the board will see an annual update of the Capital Needs Assessment, a 10-year document. Given the squeeze on local budgets and a possible reluctance to put a large bond issue on the ballot, this year's CNA focuses on the next three years. All the information below will be for the first three years.

The needs assessment for the first three years is broken down into three categories:

Facility operations	\$53,753,000
Equity	\$215,330,000
Growth	\$178,271,000

The dollars would make repairs at 31 schools, replace 90 mobile classrooms that are more than 35 years old; bring another 31 schools up to equity standards, and put additional space at 23 of those 31; and for growth, build two elementaries, one high school, and landbank land for four future schools.

The bond issue won't fund all this wish list – only 43% of the repairs, 48% of the equity and expansion projects; 47% of the new-schools plan. Imagine the marketing: "This bond issue will meet less than half documented short-term needs of a growing school system."

In the late '90s, as the schools created a long-term capital projects plan, a number of schools were scheduled to receive only work on "critical needs." In December, the board agreed to delay the early planning for those projects, in hopes that a new bond issue would allow each school to be brought up to full standard. The \$215 million proposal includes money for those projects. If the bonds are not approved, the "critical needs" projects funded in earlier bond issues will be completed, mostly on time as prom-

Proposed \$215 million school bond package

The school board will receive a proposal Tuesday that the schools ask county commissioners to put on the November ballot a bond issue for \$215 million in bond authority. One of the arguments will be that the current school construction projects have brought to Charlotte-Mecklenburg a lot of qualified contractors, who will leave if the community does not maintain the pace of its school renovation project.

The projects have been picked from the Capital Needs Assessment elsewhere on this page. The entries in that list that are proposed to be funded by this \$215 million bond package are preceded by a + or a -. The summary of the proposal:

Facility operational needs	\$23,378,000
Equity needs	103,572,000
Growth needs	84,050,000

Source: CMS

ised.

Below are the needs.

Equity Projects

Capital need, 3 yrs.: \$215,330,000
Bond proposal: \$103,572,000

Projects included in the bond proposal that also would add expansion space for growth are marked with a plus (+). Others in the bond program that would not include such space are marked with a dash (-). Some are funded for design only, not construction.

- + Alex. Graham McClintock
- + Alexndr. Mid. Myers Park Hi
- Berryhill - North Meck
- + Carmel + Northeast
- Clear Creek + Oakdale
- + Cochrane + Pinewood
- + Cotswold + Quail Hollow
- + Davidson IB + Randolph
- + Dilworth + Reedy Creek
- East Meck + Sedgef'ld Mid.
- Garinger + Sharon
- Harding Starmount
- + Hickory Grove + Tuckaseegee
- + Hunt. Farms + Windsor Park
- Independence + Winterfield
- Long Creek

Growth Projects

Capital need, 3 yrs.: \$178,271,000
Bond proposal: \$84,050,000

- 2 elementaries (Both in bond proposal, but only money for design)
- 1 new high school (Design only)
- Land acquisition for 4 schools

Building Operations

Capital need, 3 yrs.: \$53,753,000
Bond proposal: \$27,378,000

Computer Wiring

- Chantilly - Newell
- Hawthorne - Olympic
- Kennedy - Park Road
- Lake Wylie - Pineville
- Lansdowne - Plaza Road
- Lebanon Road - Providence Hi
- Matthews - South Meck
- Myers Park - Steele Creek

Paving

- Albe. Elem. Coulwood

Plumbing

- Bain Pawtucket
- Briarwood Shamrock
- Chantilly Statesville Rd.
- Double Oaks Univ. Park
- Hawthorne - Villa Heights
- Hidden Valley West Meck
- Park Road

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Roofs

- Briarwood – Matthews
- Collinswood – Olde Provid.
- Hawthorne Park Road
- Mallard Creek

Stadium Renovations

- North Meck – South Meck
- Olympic West Meck

Tennis Courts & Lights

- Myers Park Hi

Tracks - Asphalt

- Albe. Elem – Hidden Valley
- Greenway Pk. – Lake Wylie

Track Resurfacing

- Alexander – Olympic
- Garinger – West Meck
- Harding – Smith
- Independence – Spaugh
- North Meck – J.T. Williams
- Northeast

Ventilation

- Bruns Ave. McAlpine
- Chantilly McKee
- Coulwood Montclair
- Graham Ctr. Park Road
- Hawthorne Pineville
- Hidden Valley – Staff Dev. Ctr.
- Lebanon Road – Steele Creek

Other replacements

- 146 mobile classrooms (90 in bond package)
- Asbestos removal
- Disabilities Act renovations (unspecified)
- Security systems at all middle schools
- Fire alarm system at Ed Center
- Structural evaluation & repair at Devonshire

Popularity of some first choices, by race

Information released Friday allows calculation of some “popularity” measures. If whites and blacks responded to choices in exact proportion to their share of the CMS population, all numbers below would be zeros. In reality, whites were, for example, far more likely to make their home school their top choice than were blacks.

	Whites	Blacks
I want my home school	+ 26%	– 28%
I prefer a magnet	– 44%	+ 50%
Another choice zone school	– 26%	+ 28%
Keep me at this year’s school	0	+ 7%

Questions remain

A week that brought new assignments for 110,000 children and proposals for multimillion-dollar school construction projects carried enough numbers and details to numb most minds.

Yet at week’s end school board members and parents still had many unanswered questions.

Among them:

- What would the enrollment be of every school and program if every first choice were honored? Officials Friday pointed to their belief that 86% got their first choice.

But where are the 14%, and why did they not get their first choice?

Were they advantaged parents seeking magnets that were full? Were they disadvantaged parents seeking an alternative to their low-wealth, low-performance neighborhood school?

- Where do parents in magnets come from? What is to learned

about schoolhouse quality from these choices? (No data on the magnet programs were released Friday; and why was that?)

- For each magnet, how many parents chose to stay with the program; how many chose their home school?

- For each satellite area in a black neighborhood where children have been bused, what were the parents’ first, second and third choices? What can be learned about schools from their choices?

- At each school now reshaped by choice, what percentage of various groups of children will enter school in the fall on grade level?

Answers to these and other questions should be forthcoming as the administration releases data withheld on Friday.

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CMS posted school-by-school data on choice assignments in PDF files on its Web site, www.cms.k12.nc.us.

Judge seeks solution for at-risk children

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“If you can’t get children at grade level reading by ninth grade, we know where they’re going. I saw about 30 of them in orange suits in criminal court in Oxford this week.”

Manning praised Wake County’s system for willingness to give principals latitude with staffing, curriculum and scheduling – so long as results were satisfactory. But if student learning lags, the judge says, the principal’s out of the job and the superintendent imposes a rigid curriculum that has proven effective at other schools.

“Who’s responsible?” Manning asked lawyers for the State Department of Public Instruction, to intervene when at-risk kids aren’t getting access to the “sound basic education” the N.C. Constitution requires. “What’s the state’s obligation? You can’t push it all off on the school board if you know students aren’t learning.”

Lawyers for a group of low-wealth counties, as well as those for higher-wealth counties like Wake and Mecklenburg who have joined the suit, argued for new resources. They said they cannot attract quality teachers to rural areas of the state, or to high-poverty schools, without higher salaries and more training dollars.

Their arguments prompted strong words from the bench.

“If you’ve got a teacher who’s not qualified, there’s no point in throwing \$2,000 at them because they won’t get the job done,” the judge said.

He saved his harshest criticism for the N.C. Association of Educators, which filed a brief that the judge summarized as saying that teachers “somehow have been doing it wrong and now they have to be retrained to teach children. The teachers colleges haven’t been doing the job either.

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Educate!

A newsletter on education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

April 8, 2001

Mecklenburg has resources
 Hoke may never enjoy. Relatively
 fewer poor children more local
 resources for each child local
 teacher pay and dollars going
 into the classroom. Yet despite
 vast differences in spending, black
 kids are below grade level at similar
 rates in 3rd grade 4th grade
 and 7th grade, in physical
 science and algebra II.

A judge is now asking why.

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The front page from Educate!’s April 8, 2000 edition.

That’s an astounding admission to put in print.

“I read it six times and I simply can’t get around it.... When you’re certified you’re supposed to know how to teach.”

Lawyers for the state argued that the testing programs and accountability standards are reshaping achievement and satisfy the constitution’s mandate.

UNC law professor Jack Boger said the testing program merely “lets us count the number of kids going to the corner.”

Boger urged the judge to order the parties in the case to sit down, identify the needs first,

then the solutions, then the money, then bring an education plan back to court. But the judge wasn’t buying, partly because he doesn’t think courts should meddle in legislative business and the courts can’t run the schools, possibly because he’s convinced the parties would just come back echoing last week’s briefs – that the answer is money.

“I know now that there are many programs that are cost-effective.... There has got to be focused intervention,” Manning said. “Some people think everybody’s got to have 15 in their

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Judge seeks solution for at-risk children

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classroom. That's just not necessary."

Money might be necessary, but something else is even more necessary: a culture change.

What Manning seems to be looking for is determination by educators that not only can all children learn, but that they WILL learn. How can North Carolina spark such a culture change? Manning seemed to be pleading.

He cautioned that the schools need time with at-risk kids to achieve the desired gains. All parties to the case, he observed, agree that at-risk children need more time to learn.

"If a child is harder to teach," he said, they may not be at grade level in third grade. But "as long as they make progress" and are at grade level by eighth grade, the constitutional requirement will be met, he said.

He also suggested that it is not all children labeled by the state as at-risk of failure who are not getting an education. He asserted, in fact, that it was chiefly African-American children who the schools were leaving behind.

"It just scares me to death that a teacher needs to be retrained if they see 10 black kids in a classroom – they have to be retrained to look at those children as children who can succeed."

History of case

The Leandro case was filed in May 1994 by children and parents in Cumberland, Halifax, Hoke, Robeson and Vance counties, five of the poorest N.C. counties. Five months later, they were joined by six wealthier districts: Asheville City, Buncombe, CMS, Durham City, Wake and Winston-Salem/Forsyth, who argued that they carried a disproportionate burden in educating at-risk kids.

In 1996, a panel of the N.C. Appeals Court ruled that the con-

Supreme Court defined 'sound basic education'

From the text of the N.C. Supreme Court's 1997 Leandro ruling:

"...We conclude that Article I, Section 16 and Article IX, Section 2 of the North Carolina Constitution combine to guarantee every child of this state an opportunity to receive a sound basic education in our public schools. For purposes of our Constitution, a 'sound basic education' is one that will provide the student with at least: (1) sufficient ability to read, write and speak the English language and a sufficient knowledge of fundamental mathematics and physical science to enable the student to function in a complex and rapidly changing society; (2) sufficient fundamental knowledge of geography, history and basic economic and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices with regard to issues that affect the student personally or affect the student's community, state and nation; (3) sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to successfully engage in post-secondary education and training; and (4) sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to compete on an equal basis with others in formal education or gainful employment in contemporary society...."

stitution's guarantee to education covered only access to whatever schools the state is operating at any given time in any given place.

In 1997, the N.C. Supreme Court disagreed, saying all children had a right to "a sound basic education," defined as "preparing students to participate and compete in the society in which they live and work" and as further detailed in the box on this page.

In October 2000, Manning reviewed North Carolina's education system and found it sound, including its system of dividing available resources among the state's school districts.

Later that month he issued a ruling that concluded that to fulfill the Leandro mandate, all school systems must provide at-risk children an education program to prepare them for kindergarten. Gov. Mike Easley's "More at Four" program is a start on fulfilling that mandate.

For most of its history, North Carolina has been a desperately poor state. Every facet of its public life, from roads to legislative halls to teacher pay to transit, reflects a constant juggling of insufficient resources to meet the most crying need. The wealth visible in Mecklenburg today is a very new phenomenon. The city-county

school merger of 1960 that created CMS, for example, was in large part inspired by the county's inability to finance the rebuilding of its dilapidated schools.

And outside of Mecklenburg and a few other urban counties, North Carolina remains a relatively poor state.

Studies suggest that children not at risk learn just as well in large classes as in small ones. There's even some indication that it is first-graders, not second- or third-graders, who benefit most from small classes.

The judge's efforts to help at-risk children may strike some taxpayers as discrimination against children not at risk – children who work hard and do well and have every "right" to as many resources as the next student.

Not so, Judge Manning might reply. In North Carolina, the only constitutional mandate is to have every student achieving on grade level. "No more, no less."

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The full text of Educate!'s earlier coverage can be found in the April 8, 2000 edition archived at www.educateclt.org. Readers who can point to where earlier rulings in this case are now posted on the Internet should message Educate! at sjohnston@educateclt.org.

High court will take Charlotte appeal, lawyer argues

A lawyer involved in a new appeal of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's school desegregation case to the U.S. Supreme Court says he expects a decision "maybe in 60 days, the middle of May at the latest" on whether the justices will hear the appeal.

"I predict that they will take the case," Luke Largess of the Ferguson Stein law firm told the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum. Initial requests for an appeal were due Jan. 22. Lawyers have until March 3 to respond to each other's filings. It is unlikely that any hearing on the appeal would occur before CMS's family choice assignment plan is scheduled to go into effect in August.

Largess said justices might want to wrestle with several issues in the current phase of the long-running case. One is attorney fees for the Grant intervenors, who joined the suit to oppose the use of race in school assignment. Those lawyers have appealed an Appeals Court decision not to award fees. Among the other issues before the justices, Largess said, is the question of whether the school board, having admitted it failed to pursue desegregation relief ordered by lower courts, should now be held responsible for doing so.

Largess summarized one element of a 1999 District Court decision in the case: Even though schools were built in the wrong place, and the school board declined to implement court-imposed solutions, and the board failed to monitor racial balance as students transferred, "because the board did not intend to discriminate, it didn't matter. The

A vision of training needs in 2005

The Charlotte Chamber recently distributed "Jumping into the Charlotte Job Market," a brochure prepared by its Advantage Carolina Workforce Development Continuum initiative. The brochure reported on expectations of training needs, based on a year 2000 survey of employers. The employers were asked for their training needs in 2000, and

also what they expect-	1	English language skills	19.2
ed would be their	2	Reading	15.5
training needs in	3	Understanding graphs/charts	11.9
2005. More than 330	4	Working with diverse cultures	11.2
employers participated	5	Decision-making	9.0
in the survey. Today,	6	Acquiring/using info	8.2
and also in five years,	7	Physical appearance	7.9
these companies think	8	Learning new skills	7.7
"teamwork ability" will	9	Computer literacy	7.0
be their greatest need	10	Problem-solving	6.5

for training. But in terms of percentage point growth of their expectations of the need for training, "English language skills" rises to the top. "Reading" is right behind, and "working with diverse cultures" comes in 4th. Businesses appear well aware of the need to bring workers across cultural and language divides to achieve a productive work environment. But the community at large, as its school board revised student assignment patterns over the past year, did not put equal emphasis on the issue. One of the key questions to be asked about parents' choices for fall 2002 assignments is whether by free choice they have created environments for children that will allow them, day to day, to learn the lessons these businesses appear to want them to learn before they arrive at the workplace.

Supreme Court might be interested in looking at that issue."

A human drama over appointments to the Supreme Court may cast a shadow over the Charlotte case. Largess recalled hearing that two of three potential presidential nominees to the court were judges who took strong positions on the issues as the Charlotte case went through the Appeals Court stage. Either of the judges, J. Harvie Wilkinson and J. Michael Luttig, could be appointed chief justice.

"Part of this case is going to be

tied up in who will be the next chief justice," Largess said. "A lot of people are weary of this case. I understand that.... But it could be entering a new sort of phase that could be very interesting."

The full text of the petition for certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court is posted at www.fergusonstein.com. A version stripped of citations and footnotes was published in Educate! on Jan. 23. That edition is available for download at www.educateclt.org

Report critiques advanced courses

Continued from Page 1

The report comes after a two-year study by a 19-member panel of the National Research Council, working on behalf of the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. Panels involved in the study included teachers in the classroom as well as academic experts. The group focused on science and math courses.

Here are snapshots of some of the panel's findings.

Too much rote: "Although the programs emphasize the importance of higher-order learning and thinking, the amount of content to be covered and assessed, particularly in the sciences, tends to encourage rote memorization rather than conceptual learning." The calculus curriculum, the panel says, "does not have enough emphasis on conceptual understanding."

Not keeping up: Curricula "do not adequately reflect" recent discoveries in the disciplines, the report claims. This, combined with teachers' lack of time for training, mean that "novel instructional possibilities ... are not yet adequately reflected in course content."

Teacher training: The groups that prepare the curricula and tests do not set standards for teachers to meet to teach in the programs. Nor do the states.

"Accepting greater responsibility for the professional development of teachers presents a daunting challenge for the College Board and the IBO, whose missions historically have been much more limited in focus. Without improved professional development, however, other efforts to improve advanced study are likely to founder."

In the Advanced Placement program run by the College Board, for example, the Board prepares a curriculum, and an end-of-course

'We had the best teachers in the school'

Chanda Craft, a senior biology major at Queens College, remembers "the most intense experience of my life" fondly. She enrolled in AP and IB programs simultaneously in Greenville, S.C. and it's changed her college experience.

"We came in with a basic knowledge of philosophy, science, math, English. We knew how to read" for real understanding, Craft says.

She thinks the panel's complaints about rote learning might be true of students who quit the program early, before the last two years when all the preparation pays off in high-level work. And she agrees with the panel that the end-of-year tests are predictable. "Our teachers designed their teaching to mimic the tests." A friend, Craft says, who went through Charlotte's program felt she didn't get an IB diploma because teachers had not prepared the students as well for those tests.

Craft's experience may also confirm another notion the panel put forward: There needs to be better coordination between high schools and colleges so students can keep building on what they've learned. Says the senior about high school: "It was more intense than college has ever been."

test, but does not specify teacher qualifications or engage in a training program. Teachers have guidance from experienced teachers. An example is this excerpt from an overview for the AP European History course, written by Paul Fitzgerald, a teacher at Miramonte High in Orinda, Calif.:

"In my experience, the very best classes include a combination of sophomores and seniors. Seniors have the sophistication for the more complex ideas of European history. They lead class discussion and are able to see the big picture. Sophomores work very hard and try to memorize as much as possible during the first semester. By the third quarter, when some seniors are beginning to suffer from senioritis, most of the sophomores matured to the point where they, too, are making serious connections and analyzing sophisticated material. Their growth keeps the seniors honest at least until the May exam. It is a good balance and has worked for me in three high schools for almost 20 years."

Vary the tests: The panel says the tests are so similar year to year that teachers have learned they can teach what the panel calls "problem types" rather than "concepts." The argument appears to be that students need to learn as much, say, about what's involved in getting a road over a river as about how to build a covered wooden bridge. The era of covered bridges might just pass, after all.

"The AP and IB examinations must find a balance between judging students' conceptual understanding by asking probing questions, and alarming teachers and students with a strange and unfamiliar test."

What do tests assess: Members of the panel worry the AP and IB tests "have a profound effect on what is taught and how," yet "exam questions do not test conceptual understanding adequately." Panelists recommend more testing research.

Another concern, on the national level, is consistency of stan-

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Report critiques advanced courses

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dards: "Both programs provide nationally recognized measures of student achievement, but states and individual schools can implement them in ways that conform to local standards and link with other curricular offerings.

Currently, neither program is predicated on state or national standards in any subject area."

The two programs are also dealing, the report says, with unintended consequences.

Parents are judging high schools based on the number of advanced courses taught.

Teachers are being judged based on test scores, without apparent regard for the students' preparation for the work.

The report says some teachers discourage some students from taking the end-of-course tests if a poor showing is expected, so the school's (and teacher's?) scores will look good. The report says this robs the students of an experience designed to help them leave the coursework with an overall picture of the subject.

Courses at the lower grades are being revised to squeeze in more material that must be covered before the advanced courses begin. In its review of calculus, for example, the report says that "sometimes students spend too little time mastering the prerequisite knowledge and skills. The performance of many calculus students is undermined by the fact that they do not learn pre-calculus thoroughly, or learn to solve problems or think mathematically. Thus, the rush to calculus may curtail their future options to pursue mathematics, science, and engineering."

And perhaps the biggest unintended consequence is that students are taking the courses to win friends in college admissions offices, rather than to learn. The panel's survey of admissions

International Baccalaureate in Carolinas

The International Baccalaureate Organization lists this data for Carolinas schools. The information is not dated by year. The "Type" column lists schools as either private, state-owned or information not available. The "Pct." column gives some indication of the size of the IB program at each school. Where the IBO did not list information, the space is left blank.

NORTH CAROLINA	Type	City	Enrollment	In IB	Pct.
Charlotte Country Day	P	Charlotte	1,590	20	1
East Mecklenburg High	S	Charlotte	1,940	29	1
Harding University High	S	Charlotte	1,380	68	5
Independence High	S	Charlotte	2,250	141	6
Myers Park High	S	Charlotte	2,414		
North Mecklenburg High	S	Charlotte	2,300	71	3
South View High	S	Cumberland	2,379	50	2
Hillside High	S	Durham	1,100		
Grimsley High	S	Greensboro	1,400	200	14
High Point Central High	S	High Point	950	36	4
W.G. Enloe High	S	Raleigh	2,385	30	1
Reidsville High	S	Reidsville			
Northern Nash Senior High	S	Rocky Mount	1,380	37	3
Rocky Mount Senior High	S	Rocky Mount	1,140	27	2
Pinecrest High	S	Southern Pines			
Beddingfield High	S	Wilson	1,005		
Hunt High	S	Wilson	1,096		
Ralph L Fike High	S	Wilson			
SOUTH CAROLINA					
Aiken High	S	Aiken			
Aynor High	S	Aynor	796		
Battery Creek High	NA	Beaufort	1,750	110	6
Beaufort High	S	Beaufort	1,527	23	2
James Island High	NA	Charleston	1,294		
A.C. Flora High	S	Columbia	1,111		
Wilson High	S	Florence	1,250		
Christ Church Episcopal	P	Greenville	270	30	11
Southside High	S	Greenville	936	210	22
Hilton Head High	S	Hilton Head	1,460	180	12
Socastee High	S	Myrtle Beach	1,751	40	2
North Augusta High	S	N. Augusta	1,415		
Fort Dorchester High	S	N. Charleston			
Orangeburg-Wilkinson High	S	Orangeburg			
Northwestern High	S	Rock Hill	2,200	68	3
Rock Hill High	S	Rock Hill	2,000	30	2
Sumter High	S	Sumter			

Source: International Baccalaureate Organization

deans found that scores are used as "an indication of students' willingness to accept academic challenges," no more. But at highly selective colleges, that's the name of the game.

According to the IBO, 89% of its IB programs in the United States are in state-supported schools. CMS is unusual in having so many high schools involved – a reflection of the school board's commitment to have its most rigorous programs widely available throughout the system, and of

local political realities.

CMS offers both programs.

The AP program offers 30 courses, and CMS claims a 153% increase in enrollment since 1995-96, enrolling more than 8,500 students. In that time there was a 24% enrollment increase among blacks, to more than 1,200.

Last year, CMS had 3,000 of its middle and high school students enrolled in IB programs. Nearly 160 graduated last year with IB diplomas, 80% of those who began in the program, according to CMS.

Briefs

Peer grading OK: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that classmates grading each other's work was not a violation of federal privacy laws. Nor, said the justices, did Congress intend to prohibit other students from seeing the happy faces put on students' work by their teachers. But the Washington Post reported that the Oklahoma case carried weightier issues: The suit was brought by a parent who said her special education student was embarrassed when his grades became known to other students.
www.washingtonpost.com

Fewer strings: Illinois Gov. George Ryan said he would like to shift \$500 million from narrow grants to general aid to school systems to cut red tape. The Chicago Tribune reported the minimum per-pupil spending would rise from \$4,560 to \$5,000, but that impact on individual school districts was unclear.
www.chicagotribune.com

Back home: Alabama schools officials attributed a 1.2% drop in statewide public school enrollment to an increase in home schooling. Big-city systems were hardest hit. But there's no way to tell the reasons, the Birmingham News reported: The state keeps records of neither private school nor home school enrollments.
www.al.com/news

Power of mentoring: British Science Minister Lord Sainsbury has launched a national mentoring program aimed at raising achievement among African-Caribbean children in British schools, the BBC reported. The achievement gap between whites and African-Caribbean children is about 13 percentage points (compared with about 30 points in the U.S.). The BBC said the program would link 8- to 14-year-olds with

Quotable

"Middle-grades students need varied classroom activities linked to challenging academic content and opportunities to use new skills and concepts in real-world applications."

- *Sondra Cooney, Barbara Moore and Gene Bottoms in "Preparing All Students for High School," in Back to Principal magazine, January 2002.*

African-Caribbean professionals in science careers for long-term mentoring relationships. Program director Dr. Elizabeth Rasekoala told the BBC she hoped to save children from the "isolation, invisibility and marginalization" she felt as a chemical engineer of color in Britain. She also said she hoped to raise children's aspirations "beyond the stereotypical

and limited confines of careers in sports and music."

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

The obvious link: A study of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program in Cincinnati shows that teachers highly rated by the program tend to have students whose achievement is above expectations, the Enquirer reported. Conversely, students lagged in classes taught by teachers rated "unsatisfactory." Cincinnati is considering tying pay to performance. The head of the local teachers union was quoted as saying, "It's gratifying to have empirical evidence to show the correlation between excellence in teaching and raising student achievement." The union has not decided whether to support or oppose linking the evaluation process to pay scales.
<http://enquirer.com>

Calendar

- 26** School Board, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 27** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, 11th floor conference room.

March

- 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 a.m., Education Center.
Board budget work session, 11 a.m., Board Room.
- 19** Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services.
Personnel Policy Committee, 3 p.m., Board Conference Room.
Board budget work session, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 26** School Board, 6 p.m., Board Room. Includes budget work session and public hearing on 2002-2003 budget.
- 27** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, 11th floor conference room.
Board budget work session, 5 p.m., Board Room.