

Budget hearing time

Even as school board continues budget sessions, public gets its say Tuesday on spending proposals

Scores of pleas will be heard Tuesday night as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board holds its only public hearing on its 2002-2003 budget.

There will be pleas to save programs from the budget ax. Or to cut more. Or perhaps to buy more trailers. Or to keep fifth-grade band and orchestra.

It may be too early to see compromises over all the contentious issues. Or, in a tight budget year, there may be no compromising.

But in the last several months, when public protest about key elements of next fall's assignment plan was about to break out, the board took quick action, defusing public anger over, say, rising 11th-graders not getting to return to their schools.

Some of Supt. Eric Smith's budget proposals for next year have spawned similar public anger. But at the weekend it was unclear whether board members were prepared early in the meet-

ing Tuesday to rule out proposed program changes that have drawn the most public attention.

Those changes include dropping fifth-grade orchestra and band, closing the Mayfield and Covenant alternative programs for middle-schoolers, ending foreign language instruction at some elementary magnets.

Smith is wrestling with county requests to cut overall spending, while preparing for an estimated 6,500 more students in the fall. The proposal expected to go to the county commissioners, at \$275.5 million about \$9.6 million larger than last year's budget, clears about \$22 million from the current budget programs in order to finance the teachers, supplies and school essentials to serve a growing student body.

And meanwhile, school officials are working to answer questions from board members on how the budget works, why some of the

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Freshman Henrietta Attah loads barbecue for a drive-through customer at West Meck High's barbecue sale Thursday. Principal Gary Evans says the sale, which is the PTSA's only fund-raiser, is a place where youth and adults "get to learn how to work together."

Community that values civility gets wake-up call

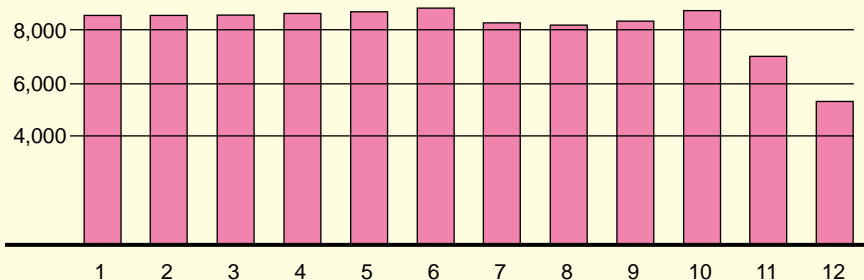
At a March 12 meeting announced on the CMS Web site and held at South Charlotte Middle School, parents of the middle school temporarily known as New Cato were discussing what to recommend as the new name. The following exchange was audible to a sizable portion of the audience of 60 or more.

One person sarcastically suggested that the school be named for school board Chairman Arthur Griffin. Another said, correctly, that current board policy allows a school to be named for a person only if the person is dead.

That can be arranged, came the reply.

Where have all the dropouts gone?

The total number of students involved in the January lottery for school choice is the latest reminder of how a major portion of students are still dropping out before completing their 12th grade at CMS.



Educate! a journal on public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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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San Francisco tries some new rules designed to promote school diversity

San Francisco's school board was faced with a 1999 ruling that forbade racially imbalanced schools, but also barred the use of race as a primary factor in assignment. The board's answer was to create a diversity index, based on six categories of information:

Socioeconomic status.

Children who have ever been on subsidized lunch, in the CalWorks program or public housing are given one point.

Academics. Students who have not attended preschool are given one point. Students below the 50th percentile on a K-1 test, or below the 30th percentile on a 2-12 test get one point.

Mother's education. Children with mothers who had no post-high school experience get one point.

Language: Students with limited or no English get one point.

Sending school: Students from schools with low state rankings get one point.

Home language: Students with a home language other than English get one point. Total points: six.

Parents can express an interest in up to five schools.

In assigning open seats for this fall, siblings get first choice; students who need special programs at a school get second choice. All other choices use the diversity index. As each seat is filled, the child who would most contribute to diversity is chosen. In a school with lots of children with high numbers, a child with a low number would get the seat. Or vice versa.

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numbers are so large – or small – and why it is so hard look at the budget documents and know what is being spent.

Equity initiative

At a Thursday night budget work session, for example, board vice chair Wilhelmenia Rembert noted that the budget makes clear the costs associated with growth, but not the money to be spent on equity – the multi-year effort to bring all schools up to baseline standards.

“If we we find that we are not able to get a substantial portion [of requested revenue] from the county, how can we be sure we’re not sacrificing our equity requests?” she asked.

Smith replied that all equity formulas are still being applied, but that equity costs are scattered throughout the budget.

Budget book confusion

The published budget document has left even veteran board members scratching their heads. In departmental or program budgets, costs go up or down from year to year without explanation. Some of the explanations offered Thursday:

- There’s an entry for salary and benefits for CMS staffers working elsewhere in North Carolina as members of state assistance teams. The state will reimburse CMS for those expenses, but since the reimbursement hasn’t arrived, there’s no money yet offsetting it in the budget.

- The ratio of the cost of personnel benefits to salary seems to vary from department to department in the budget. One example of why: Incentive money to Equity Plus II teachers shows up in the salary line, but benefits are not paid on those incentives.

- Ongoing programs paid from

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Ah, so many bottom lines

I wish I had a magic wand -- or a pot of gold -- to put the schools' budget aright. I wish you would convince county commissioners that keeping schools whole is worth several dollars a month out of your pocket.

But failing those, the schools will trim their sails a bit next fiscal year. Some observations on some likely effects.

Time on the bus. The Bright Beginnings program for pre-kindergartners seems headed for fewer sites, not more sites. That suggests that our youngest students will face longer bus rides, not shorter ones. The parents of these children don't even know now where they will go to school. Can't we all speak up on behalf of our babies?

Age span on bus: This spring, the state took back \$2.9 million, some of which might have helped buy new buses to put this choice plan on wheels. Without additional buses, there's a greater likelihood that routes will be consolidated, and 4-year-olds through 13-year-olds will be riding together. Is this the way we want to go?

Early warning: The Mayfield-Covenant alternative programs for struggling middle-schoolers are in jeopardy because, according to one view of the test scores, the kids aren't learning enough. Perhaps we'd all be more comfortable with this test-score "proof" if school officials provided comparisons of Mayfield-Covenant chil-



Commentary

Steve Johnston

dren's scores with the scores of children who applied to those programs but didn't get in.

If that comparison shows the programs don't work, then we really have a problem: Mayfield and Covenant seem to focus on small class size, heavy investment in staff help, mentoring by volunteers, access to technology, a changed culture for learning -- all the tools that educators claim will raise achievement levels. If these strategies don't work in classrooms of 10 students, will they work better in classrooms of 19?

Teaching teachers: For me, the most glaring problem with the budget is that we're not ramping up -- yes, expanding -- a proven, albeit expensive, program that really helps new staff learn how to be effective teachers. The schools are being killed by turnover. The constant churn is probably Enemy No. 1 in terms of achievement. Recruiting new teachers is expensive. And at a recent budget meeting, Supt. Eric Smith said more teacher mentoring is essential to improving achievement at the high schools. The existing program reaches only a portion of the teachers who need it. Can this "afford" to wait?

Quotable

“Neither conventional in-service training, with its intermittent after-school sessions dealing with such generic issues as student services or assessment policies, nor the periodic visits of the school district's curriculum coordinators or academic coaches to new teachers' classrooms are enough to meet teachers' ongoing needs....”

– Susan Moore Johnson and Susan M. Kardos in “Keeping New Teachers in Mind,” an article in *Educational Leadership*, www.ascd.org/readingroom

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outside sources appear to be disappearing for next year, but they actually aren't. "We don't ledger in grant dollars until they are actually received," Smith explained.

The Raleigh 2-step

But perhaps the best example of why the school budget is, at best, an unusual animal had to do with furniture.

Suppose CMS tells state officials that it will buy 10 teacher desks for Bain Elementary in the upcoming year. At the end of the year, if CMS hasn't bought the desks, it is highly likely that it will have to return the money for the desks to Raleigh.

And if, during the year, it becomes clear that there is a greater need for the 10 desks at Hawk Ridge than at Bain, it's nearly impossible to redirect the money.

"Reversion (of dollars to Raleigh) is a big number for us," board member John Lassiter commented. "The goal is to keep it to an absolute minimum. The more specific you make the budget, the more risk you take that the money would go back to the General Assembly."

CMS works around the rigid state accounting system by putting all the desk money in one pot centrally, then spending it where it is most needed. That works well for the administration, but for board members it makes it nearly impossible to see how spending compares to the budget set at the beginning of the year. Smith called the practice one of the "monumental gyrations we go through to get the money where we want it.

"We are very tight with money for supplies. Our need to control at the central level is critical for us."

Textbook costs detailed

'A quiet equity issue'

Parent Carol Sawyer says her child is in "a private school within the public schools" – the Horizons program, which operates at Barringer Elementary and Randolph Middle for children who are working two, three or even more years ahead. Those schools and others, she said – those that have parents with resources and kids who won't have problems with test scores – are places where field trips, visits from adults in the community and other off-curriculum activities give children a well-rounded education.

"You won't see that happening at the Equity Plus schools," she said, referring to schools, now numbering more than 40 in CMS, that serve high-poverty or low-performing student populations. Sawyer thinks there are two reasons: Teachers must stick closely to the basic curriculum for fear of being tripped up by test scores. And those "outside experts" that visit at wealthier schools are almost invariably parents, and parents at Equity Plus schools may be less able to take time off from work and may feel they have less to give.

"In the long run you are hurting the kids" who need the most help, Sawyer says. "You're just reinforcing an underclass. That's a quiet equity issue."

On Tuesday, officials detailed the system's textbook needs after questions were raised about the expenditure. The schools want \$3.6 million in local money for next fiscal year. The rest of the \$9.3 million to be spent on textbooks comes from the state.

Last year at this time, a number of people, including county commissioners who provide local funds to support the schools, were under the impression that an \$8 million request was a one-time event.

Supt. Eric Smith listed the following items in the textbook request:

\$1,260,556 for new "adoptions," which is what the state calls the mandates that schools statewide buy a new book for a new or existing course.

\$181,963 for texts for courses to be taught for the first time next fall.

\$6,376,445 for two items: replacement of workbooks and other consumables for the Open Court reading program in the elementary grades; and to buy textbooks throughout the system for new students.

\$957,824 to buy texts for new schools opening this fall.

\$532,857 in "other" textbook spending includes texts for Junior Achievement courses and math.

\$9,309,645 is the total of those requests.

The state is expected to pay \$5.7 million of the total, leaving \$3,609,645 to be paid from local funds, according to Smith's presentation.

At earlier budget sessions, the textbook request has been described as \$4.4 million "less" than what was requested last year. The math works this way: Last year's local funding for textbooks was, Smith said, \$8,053,945. Since the administration wants only \$3,609,645 this year, the remainder – \$4,444,300 – was counted as part of what Smith said was \$22.6 million in budget cuts and redirections.

The \$1.2 million for new "adoptions" is only part of the cost of meeting state requirements for those new textbooks, Smith told the board. The purchases, he said, will be spread over two or three years.

Public information

Board member Larry Gauvreau had questioned the \$2 million

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public information budget. Smith Thursday called that budget smaller than Mecklenburg County's equivalent budget. CMS has a "volume of local and national inquiries that need to be managed by someone. We cannot just depend on what we read in the paper."

Board member Lee Kindberg said she had learned that many items nestled in the public affairs budget are not strictly public relations. Examples include Channel 21 and volunteer services. She asked for a breakdown of the public affairs budget.

Personnel cuts

As the remaining elementary foreign language programs and the fifth-grade band and orchestra programs end, "we will do our very best not to be forced to deal with a RIF (reduction in force)," Smith said.

There are 11 band and 11 orchestra teachers involved in those programs, which meet twice

a week for 45 minutes. Parents should not have contracted yet for rental instruments, and the schools will save about \$9,500 by moving CMS-owned equipment to the 6th-grade programs.

And more cuts may be in store, Smith warned. "I would caution... the rumor is still very strong out of Raleigh that there may a state reduction of funds" for the upcoming budget year. That almost inevitably would mean further cuts.

Foreign language

Board member Lee Kindberg noted that parents had chosen schools based on promises of languages at some elementary magnet schools. "We need to live up to those promises," she said.

Mayfield-Covenant

Smith said ending the two alternative programs for middle schoolers would save \$298,000 in leases and \$70,000 in materials. But the bulk of the money, \$1.8 million, is in staffing.

"They were there for a need, and that need ought still be met. I don't think we're going to do that," said school board member George Dunlap.

Molly Griffin, noting the access the children have to gym and other facilities, called the Covenant program "a bargain I hate to walk away from."

Smith said the two programs were established "well before this administration" at a time when "the vast resources now committed to deal with this exact population" were not in place at the regular schools.

Ancient budget tools

Smith says budgeting for the \$800 million school system is done entirely on an Excel spreadsheet. For comparison, parents buying computers for their children may find on the machines software with more sophisticated budgeting capabilities.

Thursday night, Smith held up a fistful of the paper sheets used to construct the 1996-'97 budget when he arrived at CMS.

"Our progress is incredible," he said. But he acknowledged it has been an "exhausting journey" and said "we are about to 1960s vintage" budgeting right now.

Budgeting will improve, Smith said. "The challenge is to keep the plane flying and make these changes at the same time."

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Judging budget: The schoolhouse view

When schools went to choice, they committed to a 'template' of standards; list gives parents the tools to check that budget is meeting all schools' needs

Judge for yourself if the school budget is getting to your school all that your child needs. Take along the CMS "instructional template."

The template is the latest way CMS wants to judge itself against its goal of assuring that all schools have the staff, materials and programs needed to give every child access to an excellent education.

The template was called for in the school board's July 31, 2001 resolution adopting the "family choice plan" now being implemented. The superintendent was given until Oct. 1 to complete the template. The material below is

from a version of that document dated Oct. 1, 2001.

The template covers staffing, supplies and educational programs. It sets higher standards for the elementary, middle and high schools that are designated "Equity Plus II" schools. And it gives priority to those schools for money to meet the standards. The list of Equity Plus schools is on page 9 of this issue. Equity Plus schools are so designated because of the greater educational needs. In practice, they tend to have large populations of high-poverty or low-performing students.

Thirteen more schools enter

that list next fall. Of the eight leaving the list, two are closing, four are becoming full or partial magnets, and one is becoming a pre-kindergarten.

Standards are organized by general category. At the left are six columns, three for Equity Plus schools, three for regular schools. Where a column is left blank, the standard does not apply. How it applies may be listed in that column. References to formula (F) or standard may be explained by school staff, or in appendices of the documents. Lists of instructional materials and supplies are also listed in an appendix.

Staffing

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 principal, 1 assistant principal; more assistants based on enrollment
16			23			K-3 elementary classroom teachers, number of students per class noted at left
19			26			4-5 elementary classroom teachers, number of students per class noted at left
23			23			Teacher assistants for kindergarten classes (ratio may change next year to 25 after changes in budget)
25.5			25.5			Teacher assistants for 1st-3rd grades (ratio may change next year to 28 after changes in budget)
	18			20.5		Middle school classroom teachers, number of students per class noted at left
	1			1		Middle school teacher, additional person for schools operating two programs
		✓			✓	Teacher formula: (enrollment- EC students) X 7 – (workforce devt. staff X 50) / 150
		1			1	In-school suspension teacher (pending budget proposal will downgrade this position to nonteaching staff)
		2				Additional teachers for schools with 30% or more students on subsidized lunch
		✓				4 to 6 additional teaching positions, based on enrollment
1	1	1	1	1	1	Support staff: Literary (elementary), academic (middle) or instructional accountability (high school) facilitator
1	1	1	1	1	1	Media specialist; additional specialists based on enrollment
1/2	1	1	1/2	1	1	Media assistant; additional assistants based on enrollment (proposed budget cuts category some)
1			1			Student services specialist, additional SSSs based on enrollment
	1	1		1	1	Counselor; additional counselors based on enrollment
1			F			Family advocate
	1	1		F	F	Communities in Schools site coordinator
1	1	1	F	F	F	Social worker; additional social workers based on enrollment
1	1	1	F	F	F	School nurse
1			F			Talent development teacher, with additional teachers based on formula
	1			1		Career development coordinator
	1	F		1	F	Psychologist, with additional positions based on formula
	3	4		2	3	Campus security associates
		1			F	Think College adviser
		2			1	Dropout prevention case managers

Instructional Template (continued)

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
		1			1	Special populations manager
30	35	35	30	35	35	Exceptional children resource teacher (elementary ratio at 30-35 students per teacher)
		1			1	Exceptional children resource teacher, one additional per high school site
45	45	45	45	45	45	SLP (speech/language pathologist) allotment, one per this number of children
1	1	1	1	1	1	Teacher assistant (minimum) per self-contained class
1			1			BMT (behavior management technician) or BED (behaviorally-emotionally disturbed) psychologist per BED site
	1	1		1	1	BMT for BED self-contained sites
49	15	15	49	-20	-20	English as a Second Language student-teacher ratio
1/2	2	2	1/2	2	2	Minimum number of ESL teachers per site
39	36	41	39	36	41	Percentage of instructional staff to be holding advanced degrees
96	81	83	96	81	83	Percentage of instructional staff to have clear licensure
13	10	15	13	10	15	School's average number of years of experience for instructional staff
4	15	5	4	15	5	School's percentage of first-year teachers on staff
10	10	10	10	10	10	Minimum percentage of instructional staff to be National Board Certified
1	1	1	N.C. standard			Full-time mentor if there are 15 first- or second-year teachers on staff; elsewhere, N.C. standard allocation

Incentives

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓				Differentiated pay plan bonus is twice that available at regular schools
✓	✓	✓				Master teacher incentive at \$2,500 or \$1,500 level
✓	✓	✓				Equity Plus II school bonus of \$2,500
✓	✓	✓				Free or reduced tuition for master's degree
✓	✓	✓				Free or reduced tuition for coursework available to lateral-entry teachers

Facility capacity

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
75	85	100	95+	100+	110-115	Target for enrollment as a percentage of rated capacity

Instructional materials and supplies

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Standard list of materials and supplies for all content areas
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Standard list of materials and supplies for exceptional children classes if present
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Standard list of materials and supplies for English as a Second Language classes if present

Equipment and technology

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
8	8	8	8	8	8	Ratio of students to computers, excluding administrative office computers; moving toward 5:1 standard
1	1	1	1	1	1	Computers and printers, for each regular and exceptional children's classroom
6	6	6	6	6	6	Data lines per classroom, or similar capacity using data hub
1	1	1	1	1	1	Overhead projector per classroom
1	1	1	1	1	1	Compact disc or cassette player per classroom
1	1	1	1	1	1	27-inch close-captioned television per classroom
1	1	1	1	1	1	VCR or media retrieval system
1			1			Listening center with headphones

Instructional Template (continued)

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓			✓			In elementaries with ESL programs with 25 or more students, five computers and one printer per ESL room
	✓	✓		✓	✓	In middle and high schools, five computers and one printer per ESL classroom
1	2	2	1	2	2	Computer labs with 30 computers (elementary) or 25 computers (middle, high) and one printer
1	1	1	1	1	1	In computer lab, number of data/video projectors
	✓	✓		✓	✓	Workforce Development lab, fully cabled
6	16	20				Administrative computers: Minimum allocation
✓	✓	✓				Administrative computers: 1:1 ratio, covering administrators, secretaries, counselors, cafeteria, etc.
✓	✓	✓				Administrative computers: Data drop in each administrative area
✓	✓	✓				Administrative computers: One printer for every four computers
1+	4+	5+				Administrative computers: Number of data drops in central areas for printing
			6	16	20	Administrative computers: Number for entire administrative area; one printer to be shared
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	High-speed data line into the schools
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Connectivity to the Internet
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Cable TV in all classrooms (access limited to selected channels)
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Library automation system
		✓			✓	Closed-circuit TV system with integrated television studio

Library media centers

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓		✓	✓		10 books per student, but no more than 10,000 required
		✓			✓	10 books per student, and at least 15,000 volumes where enrollment exceeds 1,500
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Copyright standard (age of collection) , core collection standards must be met
30	30	20				Percentage more funding allocated for book purchases that at regular schools
8	15	25	8	15	25	Computers
1	2	3	1	2	3	Computer printers
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2 online/administrative library automation computers and one printer
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	One camcorder, one laser disc or DVD player
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Two overhead projectors with table; two CD/cassette players; two 27-inch closed-captioned TVs; two VCRs
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	One Data/video projector; one hot laminator; one book-binding machine; one letter-cutting machine
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	One 35mm camera, one digital camera, one typewriter, one opaque projector, one engraver
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	One small portable PA system, one large PA system, one wireless microphone, one tripod screen
		✓			✓	Media center security system

Instructional programs

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓			✓			Talent Development Catalyst Program
✓			✓			Accelerated Curriculum in Language Arts
✓	✓		✓	✓		Intensive Care Program for Reading and Math (at middle schools, just for Level One and Level Two students)
✓	✓	✓				A+ training and support for teachers (at high school, provided also for teacher experts in end-of-course testing)
	✓	✓		✓	✓	AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
	✓			✓		Talent Development Program
	✓			✓		Learn Star Multimedia Learning System
	✓			✓		Workforce Development Education computer labs for keyboarding and business computer technology
	✓			✓		Instructional Technology computer labs
	✓	✓		✓	✓	Afterschool or Saturday tutorials or support for relooping (going back over academic work not understood)
✓	✓		✓	✓		Co-curricular program in chess
✓			✓			Co-curricular program: Math Olympiad

Instructional Template (continued)

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
	✓			✓		Co-curricular programs: National Academic League, Battle of the Books
		✓			✓	Minimum of 12 Advanced Placement courses taught; APEX online support for AP students
		✓			✓	Curricular program: PLATO; co-curriculars: debate, Science Olympiad, Technology Club, Workfore Program
		✓			✓	More co-curricular programs: Band, student government, yearbook, drama
✓	✓		✓	✓		Exceptional children's sites are determined by geo coding of student addresses and grouping students to allow for clustered (not singleton) classes.
		✓			✓	The number of EC students per program within each high school will be used to determine the number of self-contained classes needed. This provides the opportunity, to the greatest extent possible, for students in EC self-contained programs to follow the same feeder patterns as non-EC students.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Wherever possible, BED and cross-categorical classes will be placed within each feeder pattern. Based on program capacity, EC self-contained students will also have options among schools containing the EC program that is in the choice zone of their home school.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All schools will have resource classes.
✓	✓	✓				A maximum of two BED and/or autistic classes will be located at any one school to the extent possible. Choice options for BED and autistic students will be available at high-achieving schools in each choice zone.
			✓	✓	✓	BED and/or autistic classes are evenly distributed across schools to the extent possible. Choice options for BED and autistic students will be available at high-achieving schools in each choice zone.
✓			✓			Preschool autistic classes will be located in schools hosting elementary autistic classes in order to provide school stability, preschool through grade 5.
1/2	2	2	1/2	2	2	English as a Second Language sites are determined by geocoding of student addresses and grouping students to allow for at least this many ESL teachers per site.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ESL students are grouped by proficiency level across grade levels for English instruction, ranging from intensive (two classes per day) to mainstream with monitoring.
	✓	✓		✓	✓	ESL students are given a pre-assessment in math and science to determine placement.
✓	✓					After School Enrichment Program
			✓	✓		After School Enrichment Program available based on parent interest.

Funding

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓				Instructional supplies funding is 30% greater than standard.
✓	✓	✓				Capital funds (including capital replacement) are higher than standard.
✓	✓	✓				Exceptional children's funding is 30% greater than standard.
✓	✓	✓				Magnet school funding is based on grant, but 70% of Magnet School Assistance Program goes to Equity Plus schools, which at 10-1-01 included one elementary, three middle schools and three high schools
✓						Title I funds: Schools with 75% or more students on subsidized lunch receive funding/services.
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Title I funding dependent on federal guidelines

Maintenance

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓				"Red Tag Express Service" addresses maintenance requests from Equity Plus II schools first.

Volunteers and partnerships

Equity			Regular			Content of standard
E	M	H	E	M	H	
✓	✓	✓				Securing partnerships: Priority is placed on Equity Plus II schools.
✓	✓	✓				One central office staff member is dedicated to securing partnerships for Equity Plus II schools.
✓	✓	✓				Volunteer services: Priority is placed on securing volunteers for Equity Plus II schools.

In achieving standards as outlined in the template, Equity Plus II schools are given priority.

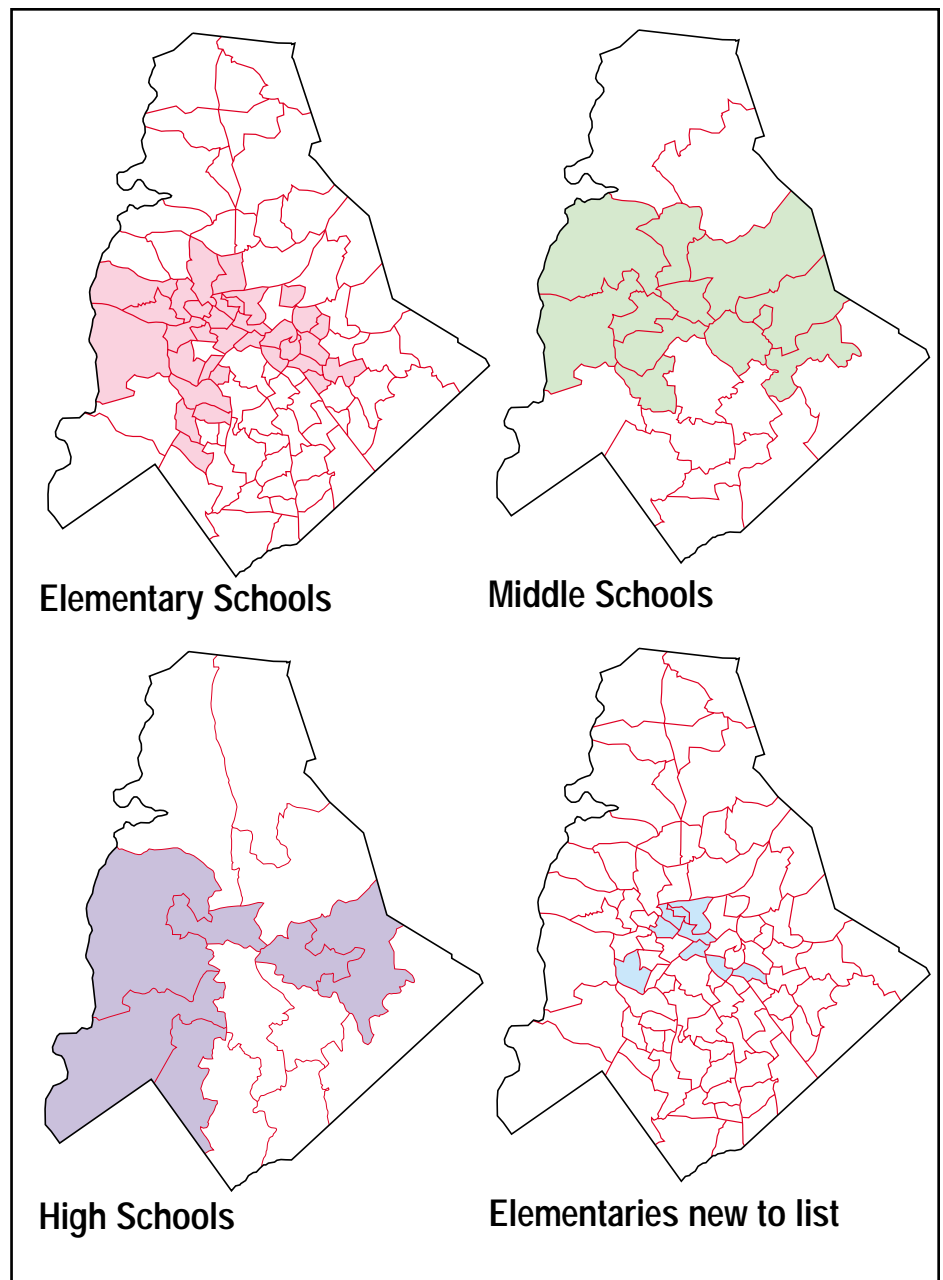
Equity Plus II schools identified for 2002-'03 year

CMS says 54 schools will be Equity Plus II schools next fall, adding 13, mostly former magnets. Equity Plus II cuts class size, boosts teacher pay and puts the schools first in line for money to bring schools up to standards in materials and equipment. Schools in the program tend to have large populations of high-poverty or low-performing students.

Eight current Equity Plus schools are not on next year's list. Of the eight, two are closing, four are becoming full or partial magnets, and one is becoming a pre-kindergarten.

In the list below, schools new to the list are in **bold**. Magnet programs are in *italic*. Abbreviations are FRL for students on subsidized lunch, an indicator of poverty; W for white; B for black; H for Hispanic. All figures are percentages of each school's projected 2002-2003 enrollment.

Elementaries	FRL	W	B	H
Albemarle Road	62	14	60	18
Allenbrook	77	15	61	8
Ashley Park	85	5	89	2
Berryhill	75	33	35	22
Briarwood	78	1	80	14
Bruns Ave.	87	1	94	2
Chantilly	82	8	74	12
<i>Collinswood</i>	60	14	34	42
Devonshire	80	3	69	24
Druid Hills	86	2	87	6
First Ward	74	5	88	3
Hidden Valley	86	2	72	24
Highland Ren.	88	10	73	9
Idlewild	66	11	57	24
Irwin Avenue	68	13	75	7
Lincoln Heights	67	11	71	12
Merry Oaks	79	14	51	27
Montclair	71	19	33	40
Nations Ford	73	15	64	16
New Greenville	90	1	91	2
Oakdale	56	32	57	1
Pawtucket	63	26	58	8
Pinewood	68	28	43	22
Reid Park	84	2	95	2
Sedgefield	80	15	61	18
Shamrock Gar.	86	11	61	21



Elementaries	FRL	W	B	H	Middle Schools	FRL	W	B	H
Statesville Road	64	24	46	18	Piedmont	51	34	54	7
Sterling	72	13	56	27	<i>Randolph</i>	47	40	48	6
Thomasboro	87	4	82	6	Ranson	58	17	71	4
Tuckaseegee	56	34	41	8	Sedgefield	61	25	54	16
Westerly Hills	83	5	73	12	Spaugh	81	10	84	2
Windsor Park	71	17	53	21	J.T. Williams	76	4	89	4
Winterfield	76	11	52	30	Wilson	75	21	65	6

Middle Schools	FRL	W	B	H	High Schools	FRL	W	B	H
Albemarle Road	49	29	54	13	Berry	58	18	74	4
Cochrane	68	9	73	12	Garinger	48	14	67	10
Coulwood	48	43	45	4	Independence	28	42	46	8
Marie G. Davis	81	7	88	3	Olympic	26	41	43	8
Eastway	73	17	62	15	E.E. Waddell	39	28	52	15
James Martin	54	19	66	8	West Charlotte	56	6	84	5
Northridge	47	23	66	6	West Meck	40	28	63	3

Voices on choice

Comments on schools and choice at last week's Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum. All of the speakers were African American:

"A lot of people's first and second choices were not their neighborhood schools."

"Some of the kids are splitting right along streets.... Whoever screams the loudest gets their choice."

"Our children just will not have the same chance. A lot of our parents, they don't have the time or the resources" to fight.

A lot of parents filed choice applications "at the last minute."

"We are naive if we think that CMS will teach our own people."

"If we need to march again, if we need to sit in again, I'm ready."

"What's the difference between 'choice with equity' and 'separate and equal'?"

Assignment Notes

The 4th Choice

Parents in the January school choice lottery who didn't get their first, second or third choices were assigned to the home school they were trying, through choice, to avoid. The percentages of parents now assigned where they least wanted to go varies widely by grade:

Grade	Pct.	Total
6	10.2%	908
11	9.0%	639
10	8.8%	771
7	5.5%	457
9	4.7%	395
K	3.8%	277
8	3.4%	277
1	2.9%	251
4	2.6%	224
2	2.4%	205
3	2.3%	194
5	1.9%	162
12	0.3%	18

Note: Pre-kindergarten assignments were not part of the choice plan.

Jigsaw Learning

Classroom strategy turns every student into an indispensable part of the learning process

It's 1971, and the Austin, Texas schools had just been desegregated. Distrust among students was running high. Elliot Aronson, a professor, and some of his graduate students were looking for a way to turn competition into cooperation.

Aronson now has his solution on a Web site -- and in use at what he estimates to be 20% of America's schools. He called his solution the Jigsaw Classroom. The theory is this:

Divide students into small groups. Divide a learning challenge into small parts. Give each student responsibility for learning one part, and the opportunity to teach the others that part. When the work is done, every member of the group is ready for the test. Aronson reflects on the benefits

on his Web site:

"It is a remarkably efficient way to learn the material. But even more important, the jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the academic activity."

In a story about Aronson for Time2act.org, Gail Osgood quotes St. Louis sixth-grade teacher Ellen Berg as saying, "It takes time for students to become comfortable with the structure.... Teachers need to thoroughly prepare ahead of time."

Aronson describes his Jigsaw Classroom techniques at www.jigsaw.org. Osborne's story is posted at www.time2act.org/feature.html

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If you would prefer to receive Educate! regularly through your fax machine, please message SwannFello@aol.com. Or leave a voice message at 704-342-4330.

Briefs

Budget cuts: In the state of Washington, school districts are fearing major reductions after the state's legislature reduced statewide school spending by \$98.6 million, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported. Educators say the cuts have the effect of erasing money added to programs in a November 2000 referendum passed by 73% of the state's voters to "reduce class sizes, train teachers and offer extended learning opportunities such as remedial education."

www.seattlepi.com

'Soldiers of democracy': Laura Bush went to Capitol Hill recently to press Congress for money to train and equip teachers, the Washington Times reported. More must be done to recruit the "best and brightest" into the profession, the first lady said.

www.washingtontimes.com

Brain-based: An article for the Detroit Free Press reviewed area efforts to put into the classroom the lessons learned from recent brain research on how people learn. Examples: Kindergartners chant the alphabet while on a trampoline. Drawing is encouraged as a part of other lessons. Multi-age classrooms let children stay with a teacher for more than a year. Classes use daily themes. And, shades of Socrates, when teachers are asked questions, they ask their students questions back, to put "the responsibility for learning on them."

www.detroitfreepress.com

Reading for points: Thousands of schools nationwide use systems for awarding points for books read, based on the difficulty of the reading, the Washington Post reported. Some schools test for comprehension before awarding points. Proponents say reading is up.

Critics worry that reading higher-point books can quickly become a status issue among students. An example of the system is at Myers Park Traditional Elementary's Web site: www.cms.k12.nc.us/allschools/mpts/ar.htm

www.washingtonpost.com

Test not: Missouri legislators are considering budget cuts that would reduce spending on achievement assessment tests from \$13 million to \$5 million, the Post-Dispatch reported. A new fine arts test mandated by law has already been postponed, at a savings of \$900,000.

www.post-dispatch.com

Double degrees: Four foundations led by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation are bankrolling 70 new high schools designed to cut dropouts by having older teens complete work for high school and two-year associate

degrees at the same time, the New York Times reported. Critics worry that the foundation money will cover start-up costs, but not ongoing operations.

www.nytimes.com

User fees rising: School Board News reports that tight budgets are pushing costs back to the student. Examples: Franklin, Mass. charges \$1 a day for bus transportation. Camp Hill, Pa. is considering an activity participation fee – on top of their existing \$50 driver's education fee.

www.nsba.org

Wake results: A study of Wake County public schools suggests per-pupil spending is lower than similar districts but achievement is comparable or better, the News and Observer reported. But fewer students take Advanced Placement exams.

www.newsobserver.com

Calendar

March

- 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, possibly in room 270.
- Personnel/Policy Committee, 3 p.m., board conference room.
- Board budget work session, 5 p.m., Board Room.

April

- 9** School board scheduled to complete work on budget, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- "The gap between rich and poor: Dives and Lazarus Today, an N.C. Council of Churches seminar in Greensboro. Registration due by April 2. For more information, contact Mecklenburg Ministries at 704-347-2404 or meckmin@meckmin.org
- 12-13** Seventh annual Neighborhood Symposium to build strength of neighborhood groups achieving the "model neighborhood." Co-sponsored by city and JCSU. Details: 704-336-2173
- 16** Joint lunch with city council, county commissioners, noon, Government Center, room 267.
- School presentation to commissioners on school budget, 3 p.m., Government Center, room 267.