

## Conference recounts perils of school separation

About 500 people gathered Friday in Chapel Hill for “The Resegregation of Southern Schools?” The question mark was a tip-off that academics were in charge, but it quickly became clear that this was a conference with an attitude – and a message.

Notes on some of the subjects discussed are on pages 4 to 7. But

### Resegregation of Southern Schools A conference report, pages 4-7

the overarching message, delivered in charts or graphs or prose as dense as kudzu, was that Southern schools are rapidly resegregating, and that children will be the ones to suffer.

In a paper prepared for the con-

ference, for example, UNC law professor Jack Boger wrote:

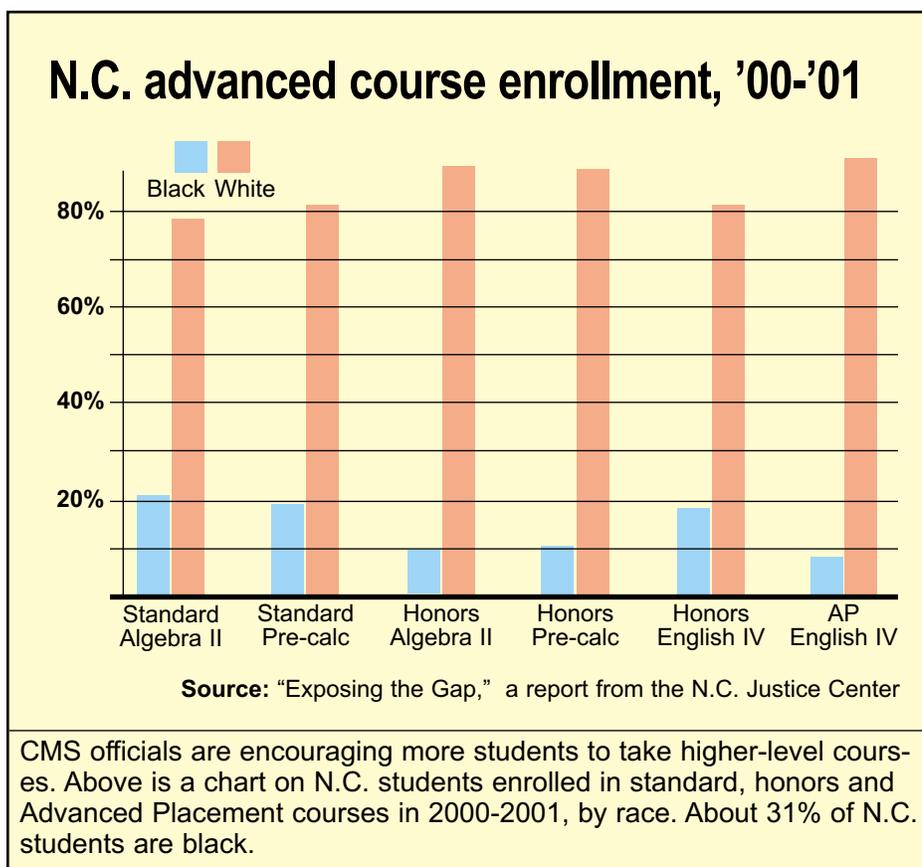
“...the evidentiary weight of scores of careful and unbiased studies – from James Coleman’s work in the mid-1960s to the present – suggests that no discrete quantum of resources, separately delivered to racially and economically isolated public schools, will easily remedy the cumulative education injuries worked by their isolation. It was just such an insight that Chief Justice Earl Warren brought to the nation’s attention in *Brown*. Fifty years later, it is a lesson not Southerners alone, but all Americans, need to relearn, for the sake of our children and our democratic future.”

The conference was three parts academic research, one part celebration of UNC’s new Center for Civil Rights, and one part pep rally to renew the spirits of scores of practitioners in schools, governments and nonprofits across the South. The conference has and will continue to generate news coverage (examples, pages 6-7).

Those who spoke were mostly researchers or lawyers. But they were joined by a veteran leader of the desegregation effort.

Julius Chambers, director of the UNC Center for Civil Rights and the lawyer who shepherded the

Continued on Page 3



## Education issues top the to-do list at Meck Ministries meeting

The discussion was about Mecklenburg Ministries’ future, and some among the 100 people at an Aug. 27 meeting suggested focusing on housing, or the justice system, the living wage, women’s rights or health care.

But at all 10 tables, people wanted to focus on education.

Among education issues mentioned were lack of equity, fragile schools that divide the community, support for parents unable to help their kids, mentoring latch-key kids, adopting a school and getting private school parents more interested in equity.

Andy Baxter, the group’s execu-

tive director, said Wednesday that Meck Min has focused over the years first on public issues, then more recently on relationship-building. He hopes the results of the August discussion will help the group’s board chart a course.

“Maybe it’s time for advocacy,” Baxter said.

# IB change: Perhaps kids choose well

While the intent of establishing the IB Certificate Program (which is what they are calling the non-Diploma program) may have been to expand access, this has not been the major result. I am speaking from direct knowledge of the IB programs at Independence, Harding and Myers Park.

The primary result was that kids who were in the Diploma program "scaled back" to the Certificate. Many, many of them were going to drop IB altogether and take AP classes instead.

My daughter was one of them at Independence. She reports that there have no additions of kids who were never in IB in the first place, and that the classes have not been "dumbed down" at all. She, and many like her, are taking 4 IB classes, and the rest AP.

My son, who is an IB Diploma sophomore at Harding, reports no noticeable change in his classes.

Myers Park IB students report a slightly different scenario. They tell me that in addition to the kids who scaled back, there are some in the Certificate Program who chose it because they would have been forced to leave Myers Park due to rezoning. These kids, however, are taking three (the minimum) of the easiest IB courses, and no other advanced classes. They are staying away from the really tough classes like IB English, IB Math and IB History; therefore, the "quality" of these classes is unchanged. Theory of Knowledge is unaffected as well, because one must take IB English to select TOK.

## From Readers

There may be a misconception about "cherry-picking" one IB class, in that the students must take a minimum of 3 IB classes.

I truly believe the students who scale back to three or four IB classes are doing so for personal, family, medical, emotional or job-related issues, or to take other academic electives that broaden their high school experience (isn't that what colleges are telling the kids they want?), and that their choice is not at the expense of those who choose to take 5 or 6.

As we examine the disturbingly high drop-out rate from the traditional IB Diploma programs (and hopefully ask ourselves "why?"), perhaps the unexpected effect of retaining many of these kids by offering the Certificate program will actually meet the needs of more of our advanced students. Shouldn't this be the ultimate goal? Maybe taking a close look at the large numbers of kids who scaled back to the Certificate program will answer that "why?" question.

Here's an interesting thought for the author at Educate: Maybe the kids who are allegedly "crippling" the Diploma program were, in fact, the ones who were "crippled" by it...?

Vicki Reich

In a press release about today's announcement of a study lauding CMS's academic achievements, Supt. Jim Pughsley is quoted as saying: "Our goal in CMS is to be the premier urban school district in the nation in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills and values necessary to live rich and full lives."

The CMS Vision, which is mounted on the wall outside Pughsley's office, refers to "the premier urban, integrated system in the nation."

Said CMS spokesman Damon Ford, "I don't think that was supposed to be a direct quote of the vision statement." He said Pughsley had read over the text before it was released.

*Send us your story. For addresses, see "Educate" below.*

## **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.

Educate! is published by The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204. Voice and fax: 704-342-4330. E-mail: [sjohnston@educateclt.org](mailto:sjohnston@educateclt.org) Lucy Bush, president; B.B. DeLaine, vice president; Steve Johnston, executive director. Published since September 2000; 6-week average circulation through last issue: 2,069.

The Swann Fellowship, named for Darius and Vera Swann, was formed in 1997 out of several Charlotte religious congregations to be a witness to the value of diversity in public education and to educate 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.

To be removed from distribution, message: [imailsrv@educateclt.org](mailto:imailsrv@educateclt.org). In body of the message, type: `unsubscribe swann name@domain.etc.` To be added to our distribution list, subscribe at [www.educateclt.org](http://www.educateclt.org).

## Underwrite an edition of *Educate!*

Individuals, community groups and businesses interested in supporting the publication of this community journal should inquire about our underwriting program. Let our readers know that you support quality public schools for all children, and the kind of regular communication about school issues that *Educate!* strives to deliver.

For more information, call Steve Johnston at 704-342-4330, or message him at [sjohnston@educateclt.org](mailto:sjohnston@educateclt.org)

# Powell: Make case that integration benefits all

Produce a clearer vision of the public good that integration might bring, above and beyond the narrow gains from court-ordered desegregation, a University of Minnesota law professor advised a national conference in Chapel Hill Friday.

“There’s a lot of powerful evidence that segregation hurts everybody,” said John A. Powell, former national legal director of the ACLU. But there has been more outcry over college affirmative action than the erosion of desegregation of public schools.

“Parents are ambivalent.... We don’t want integration unless it’s cost-free.... Unless we can [address that issue] we’re not going to make progress.”

What many African Americans and others understand integration to offer is this, said Powell: “You can ride an hour across town ... and your kid is likely to be sent to the basement. And parents understand that the top floors for the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement classes are overwhelmingly white.

“That is what we have told peo-

ple desegregation is. We call it learning while black.... What’s the benefit? Why should I even accept that?”

The courts only promised desegregation and that’s what’s been delivered, he said. And about the schools that resulted, “it doesn’t matter if they’re all black, it doesn’t matter if they’re all poor, it doesn’t matter if they’re all failing... but the legal requirement has been satisfied. Is that worth fighting for? I don’t think so.”

Integration is not assimilation. “True integration is about transforming society,” Powell said. “It is not about redistributing what we have. It’s about reconstituting what we have, including ourselves.”

People recognize that race is not a scientific reality but a social construct. “And if race is real but socially constructed, then racial disparities must also be socially constructed. We don’t take seriously that the disparities them-



Powell

selves are a result of social engineering.”

What most people think of as race, he said, is the combined effects on people of ghettos, isolated schools, limited economic opportunity and low social status. “I’m not saying if we address all [these problems] we meld into some hue where we all look alike or think alike.

“We are all constitutionalists. We all want to have an equal voice in deciding what matters, in deciding who is on the Supreme Court, in deciding how tests are used,” the makeup of schools and the curriculum to be taught.

Powell warned against focusing too narrowly on any one problem, whether it’s school quality, teacher training or inappropriate academic tracking. “Any of those things could be achieved and we could still have inequitable schools....

“What we have to do is make the cost of injustice so high in this society that virtually no one can afford it. And we need to make the cost of justice so accessible that everyone can embrace it.”

## School resegregation meeting draws 500

Continued from Page 1

*Swann v. Mecklenburg* case through the U.S. Supreme Court, told the conference his aim in the ’60s wasn’t just to get black and white children into the same classroom. “I was trying to get ALL children in a school together,” believing they “would learn something from each other and we all could make a better world.

“I watched as our U.S. Supreme Court began to cut back on the relief we thought we had gained in 1971.... We could soon resegregate the schools and the community and really hurt all the efforts

we had made.”

Over lunch, NPR correspondent and “Eyes on the Prize” author Juan Williams spoke about a young Thurgood Marshall, the late Supreme Court justice, who was eating a sandwich during a tour of unequal black schools. He came across a lad who didn’t want Marshall’s sandwich but hungrily eyed his orange. Reluctantly, Marshall gave up his dessert. The child immediately bit into it, rejected the sour taste of the rind, spit it out and threw the orange in the dirt. Marshall was furious at the waste of a good orange – only later realizing that he had confronted a child so uneducated he had never encountered an orange, and didn’t know to peel the fruit. The story isn’t a bad

metaphor for the work the conference was designed to encourage:

Researchers provided evidence that, extensive as desegregation was in the South in the ’70s and ’80s, no district – including CMS – has peeled through the bitter layers of busing and other measures to experience a truly equitable society fed by schools that educate all children equitably.

Critics are no doubt correct that today’s governmental policies do not guarantee racial diversity, and likely cannot deliver equity either. But that’s not to say Americans won’t in time, as Boger suggests, heed Justice Warren’s “insight” about the perils, or as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. put it, the sin, of separateness.

– Steve Johnston

# Researchers examine state of South's schools

*As an inaugural activity, the UNC Center for Civil Rights Friday hosted a conference titled, "The Resegregation of Southern Schools? A Crucial Moment in the History (and the Future) of Public Schooling in America." True to its title, the conference was one of many words. Below are reports some of the subjects discussed.*

*Director of the UNC center is Julius Chambers, retired chan-*



**Boger**



**Orfield**

*cellor of N.C Central University and the lawyer who led Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Swann*

*case through the courts. Deputy director is Concord native Jack Boger, a UNC Law School prof and a veteran of death penalty litigation for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.*

*Other sponsors of the event were Gary Orfield's Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, the North Carolina Law Review and the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University.*

## Kids' crime: Not having been taught

The jury's still out on the "enormous" potential of testing – either "beneficial or catastrophic" – says a education professor at Columbia University.

For Jay Heubert, the biggest concern is that "schools will set up the high-stakes exams before they have put in the changes" needed in the curriculum.

Some states, he said, will "punish students whose crime is not having learned what we have not yet taught them."

"We are not yet at the point where states are in fact teaching kids the skills the tests measure."

Federal regulations will push states to tie both promotion and graduation to the tests, possibly increasing retention. And "the highest predictor of dropout," Heubert said, "is retention."

Heubert cited year 2000 research that found fourth-grade math curriculum and testing overlapping only 23% to 45% of the time in five states; in eighth-grade math, six states had overlaps of from 5% to 35%. Expectations that kids are being taught the test "are still more aspiration than reality in many schools," Heubert wrote in his paper for the conference.

And "neither the measurement profession nor the courts are likely to intervene to address these problems," he said.

## Wake's possibly doomed experiment

Wake County "saw the handwriting on the wall" and abandoned race-based assignment before a court could order it to, the Wake board's attorney told the conference.

What Wake developed as an alternative won praise from a number of speakers. But the plan may already be breaking apart.

Wake set a goal of having 95% of all children at or above grade level on state testing in grades 3

through 8. To achieve the goal, the board declared that it was educationally vital that no school be overburdened with high-needs children. It set assignment goal targets: No school should have more than 40% of its children on subsidized lunch, a common indicator of family poverty. No more than 25% of a school's population should be performing below grade level. And all campuses should be at 85% to 115% of capacity. All of these standards, board lawyer Ann Majestic said, would promote "an effective, safe learning environment for every individual." The plan "has meant you can live anyplace in Wake County and go to a good school," she said. The plan has kept property rates up in all neighborhoods.



**Majestic**

Majestic says that when she's asked if the Wake plan isn't "just another form of social engineering, I say no, it is a case of educational engineering."

But Majestic acknowledges problems. The district is not meeting state expectations for increasing the number of children above grade level. Dropouts continue to be a problem, and the white and minority populations are shifting further apart.

"We are not required to do this," Majestic noted, adding that "there is no clear constituency for continuing to integrate." Neither black families nor white families are interested in transporting their children the distances now required.

"The old civil rights folks now have their children in college," Majestic told the conference. Wake County's newcomers are "not accustomed to having their children in integrated settings. They have no idea what we have been fighting for."

In an interview later, Majestic acknowledged that the Wake school board last spring sowed the seeds for the plan's possible dissolution. District officials sought to reassign several groups of children to re-

Continued from Page 4

balance enrollments. The board agreed to reassign hundreds of low-income minority children, but refused to reassign higher-income white children whose parents objected.

### The power of the ballot box

A Charlotte professor, however, argued that in this era, the court of public opinion may be more supportive of diverse schools than the courts.

The last four ballots for the CMS board gave voters the chance to oust desegregation proponents, but they did not, said Winthrop University professor Steve Smith.

While inequities remain and funds are short, Smith argued that “electoral politics have been more congenial to the interests of children of color than the decisions of the federal courts.”

For years, decisions declaring school systems “unitary” and not subject to court oversight had the effect of returning decision-making power to local officials. But recent 4th Circuit decisions prohibiting the use of race in pupil assignment have, Smith argued, had the opposite effect. “They have prevented the duly elected board from doing what it wants to do.”

Nevertheless, “the CMS experience gives some reason for thinking we may not do too badly in this aspect of the fight.”

### Staffing high-poverty schools

Districts operating schools that have high concentrations of minorities should recruit more black teachers and pay salary differentials. But Georgia State professor Benjamin Scafidi warned that the tactics have limits. “Salaries are not a big driver of teachers to get into these schools,” he said. He suggested more research on “what drives white teachers away.”

### Look inside the classroom

“Very few black students experience anything that approaches a genuinely desegregated environment,” UNCC sociology Roslyn Mickelson told the conference. The reason, she said, is that blacks get “tracked” into lower-level classes, and those classes become overwhelmingly minority. “Tracking is pervasive” and the impact shows up not only in grades and test scores but in academic and occupational aspirations. “These effects accumulate over time.”

“Within-school segregation by race is not simply a matter of black kids scoring lower and therefore they are in the lower tracks.” Among all highest-performing students, whites are three times more likely than blacks to be in top classes, she said.

Her research data, she said, “indicates that tracking is not simply a matter of putting kids in classes based on their prior performance.... Race has something to do with the tracks where students learn.

“Even in an ostensibly desegregated school sys-

## Evidence of resegregation

*In a paper prepared for the conference, John Yun of Harvard and Sean Reardon of Penn State looked at school system data from 1987 and 2000, looking for what the academics call a reduction in black-white “exposure.” So, below, the average black student in Guilford County, N.C. who went, in 1987, to a school that was 74% white was, by 2000, going to a school that was only 35% white, a decrease of 39 percentage points. School districts below are listed in descending order of the amount of resegregation in percentage points.*

Chg.	District	1987	2000
39	Guilford Co., N.C.	74%	35%
33	Arlington, Tex.	73%	40%
31	Aldine, Tex.	41%	10%
21	Hillsborough Co., Fla.	60%	39%
20	Baltimore Co., Md.	53%	33%
20	Gwinnett Co., Ga.	69%	49%
19	Orange Co., Fla.	47%	29%
18	Cobb Co., Ga.	64%	45%
18	Cypress-Fairbanks, Tex.	72%	54%
18	Jefferson Parish, La.	49%	31%
17	Montgomery Co., Md.	56%	39%
16	CMS	53%	38%
16	Nashville	54%	38%
14	Austin, Tex.	34%	19%
14	East Baton Rouge, La.	32%	19%

**Source:** John T. Yun and Sean F. Reardon, “Trends in Public School Segregation in the South, 1987-2000,” a paper presented to the Resegregation of Southern Schools conference at UNC Chapel Hill, Aug. 30, 2002.

tem, we still find whites have privileged access to higher tracks,” Mickelson said.

“I don’t believe that we can conclude that desegregation didn’t work. The policy was never fully implemented.

“Citizens need to look more carefully” inside classrooms, Mickelson said.

### Equity not on public agenda

Vanderbilt’s Ellen Goldring reported on research into Nashville’s schools, which were declared unitary in 1998. The city has spent six years on an assignment plan, but a change in superintendents has marked a big shift in focus. Transportation to inner city magnets was withdrawn, so the magnets have turned into “de facto neighborhood schools for black parents.”

“The story of equity and integration and access is simply not on the radar screen” for public discussion, she said. “No one is left from the desegregation era – no school board members, not even the staff. Monitoring of earlier court agreements is limited to where new schools will be built. Enrollment projec-

Continued from Page 5

tions are no longer reported by race.

“It’s wonderful we are focusing on achievement,” Goldring said, and she predicted that test scores would show “a short-term blip. But we have to ask ourselves, is that the only thing that’s important to us?”

### Transfer rights have possibilities

Bill Taylor was among the lawyers involved in the Little Rock school case in the ‘50s. Today he’s acting chair of the citizens’ Commission on Civil Rights and teaches law at Georgetown.

Taylor says the federal No Child Left Behind law’s creation of transfer rights out of failing schools “has the potential for having a desegregative outcome,” but community groups must help parents exercise those rights.

Transfers could evaporate if states dilute their definitions of “failing schools” (see Briefs, page 8), and Taylor warned that “local superintendents simply don’t want to implement these programs.

“And there is a strong possibility that the federal government will be a tower of Jell-O” in enforcing the law. “The key to the success of this program is action by civil rights groups and activists” to counsel parents and to follow up with students who are transferred.

No schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg have been declared “failing” under the NCLB statute.

### Tests and self-fulfilling prophecies

The graduates of Charlotte’s West Charlotte High and four other schools are helping Amy Stuart Wells trace another impact of state testing in what has, for Wells, become a “tale of white flight and resegregation.”

At about the time demographics began to change at West Charlotte and schools in California, Ohio, New Jersey and Texas, states began testing programs. The widely discussed test scores tended to “feed perceptions,” Wells told the conference. She asserted that the testing programs created a “self-fulfilling prophecy of white flight.” And as the middle class has fled the schools, educational programs have been cut, she said.

As for the graduates who experienced a desegregated school environment, Wells said “virtually every graduate said they would do it again. They learned something” about getting along with others that’s been useful in their jobs.

And the graduates report that now, years after schooling ended, “they are living much more segregated lives.”

Wells said reports of low interest in transferring out of familiar “failing” schools for unfamiliar ones across town suggest that “parents and students are connected to those schools, and don’t define them in the ways the test scores do.”

## Media excerpts, Part I

*Excerpts from articles written by the national and state press:*

### Parental decisions trump all

“If classroom segregation affects performance, it will be difficult to fix.

“Parents and students are making personal decisions about what classes to take and when to take them, and denying them that choice would be a drastic step, [Duke economist and paper co-author Jacob] Vigdor said.

“Those sorts of policy options don’t have the same connotations as ... magnet schools,” he said. ‘And no matter how much you legislate and how much the courts do there will always be avenues for individuals to make choices to undo the things they’ve done.’”

– Deirdre Fernandes, Winston-Salem Journal  
www.wsjournal.com

### Education as surest security

“CMS school board Chairperson Arthur Griffin, the final speaker on the program, said he remains dedicated to preserving diversity in Charlotte. For instance, he said, new schools can be located where they’re most likely to draw a mix of students.

“The crowd interrupted him with applause when he made a patriotic pitch. ‘A strong public education system is the best homeland security this country could ever think of having,’ Griffin said. ‘Bombs and bullets won’t work.’”

– Ann Doss Helms, The Charlotte Observer  
www.charlotte.com

### Get all players at the table

“The benefits of an integrated education” go far beyond academic achievement, “and yet that is where all the conversation lies,” says Anita Brown-Graham. “This is a story we need to spend more time telling.”

Brown-Graham, a product of desegregated Baton Rouge schools and a professor at UNC’s Institute of Government, told the conference that the benefits have been limited by “the singular way ... we have approached the societal goal of integration.”

Schools have borne the brunt of the task, while segregated housing patterns make the schools’ task impossible. There is discussion of housing, but “we never have the conversation with people from the educational community in the room at the same time.

“We are far from creating constructive and permanent solutions.”

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

## Equity's still debated 134 years later

The head of the state's largest school system walked to the podium and mused, "I'm just the guy who has to make all this work."

Arthur Griffin said it was ironic that the 1868 legislative battle over establishing public universities and schools had been dominated by the issue of race and supplies and resources. "And 134 years later we are still talking about this thing called equity."

And he noted that in 1993-94 he had rallied the school board, county commissioners and city council behind creating more affordable housing. Griffin said the initiative collapsed when then-Mayor Richard Vinroot, deciding to run for governor, attacked the proposal as "social engineering."

Griffin was on the attack himself, lambasting the "popular press" and the Charlotte Observer in particular for the "frenzy" created by coverage of the school choice plan. He said that he hoped the large contingent of people at the conference would "take back to the Queen City an understanding of why it has such a devastating effect to educate kids in a segregated environment."

Griffin had advice for others at the conference, too.

– Do "what is right under this new legal framework we have to work under, to get as much diversity as we can. It is not going to be easy.... We can make a difference in America but we can't turn our eyes in the opposite direction."

– Siting of schools can help create balanced schools, but "demographics are constantly changing. You have to be strong enough... to maintain diversity."

– Know what the numbers show. "You can't even begin... if you don't have the capacity and the will to deal with your data.... It doesn't often shed a pretty light on what's going on... but data will lead you out of where you are."

– Get out of the ivory tower. "I want to read newspaper articles from you professors," Griffin exhorted. "I want to see you on talk shows. There's too much ignorance out there."

### One vital new asset

The dean of civil rights researchers told the Chapel Hill conference to remember the roots of

## Media excerpts, Part II

### Where to from here?

*From a Q&A with Julius Chambers, a lawyer involved in "dozens of desegregation cases."*

**"Q:** What is the No. 1 thing that must be done?"

**"Chambers:** We need to do more to promote integration of housing and to make sure that people are able to enjoy comfortable housing at any place in the community. What we are doing now is building what we call "affordable housing" or other housing that is setting up continued segregation that we should be trying to eliminate.

"Second, we've got to do more to stop running the schools behind the discriminatory practices of developers. You buy 50 acres of land, build some houses for whites, put up a school, then that school is going to be for white students, and you have the same kinds of problems and same kinds of subtle discriminatory practices that we were trying to address years ago."

The News & Observer, Raleigh  
www.newsobserver.com

America's racial change.

"It was only when there was a social movement that Southern apartheid was destroyed," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard.

"We must find a way to have a democratic discourse on the challenges we face as we become a predominantly nonwhite society."

Society is more complicated than in the '50s and '60s, he said, but there is one great new asset available: "We have millions whose lives were transformed by the movement for social justice.

"They know that things can work that didn't work before."

The vision, he suggested, is "a society that actually functions more equitably" and offers every person "positive opportunity."



OLUNTEER IN YOUR SCHOOLS

FOR A RESERVATION, CALL 704-343-6245

## Briefs

**Not failing:** Arkansas ranks 49th in students completing college, and half of boys and a third of girls in grades 7-11 score in the bottom quarter on the SAT-9, but the state has no schools declared failing under the Leave No Child Behind law, the Washington Post reported. That's because the federal designations are triggered by state standards, not federal ones. Wyoming also says none of its schools are failing.

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

**Fewer supplies:** Edison, the company hired to run some Philadelphia schools, had some supplies retrieved from the schools last week when it realized the smaller contract covering its work in Philly no longer covered its costs, the Inquirer reported. The company's stock faces delisting from Nasdaq.

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

**Choice looms:** Pinellas County, Fla., school officials are behind as they prepare choice assignments for next fall, the St. Petersburg Times reported. Parents say key details like transportation routes are in flux, and decisions haven't been made about locations for special education classes. Also, no one seems to know how much the plan, authorized in 2000, will cost.

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

**Teacher quality:** Schools receiving federal Title I money must hire only "highly qualified" teachers beginning this fall, and the standard will be extended to all schools by 2005. The Christian Science Monitor reported that the push to find acceptable teachers has spawned new techniques bypassing the traditional college departments of education. The Education Leaders Council, for

example, will offer accreditation after applicants take a series of online tests.

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

**California scores:** California reported increases for the fourth straight year on standardized tests, but an L.A. Times analysis pointed out some other statistics: The gap between poor and affluent students has widened at all grade levels since 1997. And it is at elementary grades, where class size has been reduced, that the gains have been greatest. Middle school gains have been smaller, and high school results are flat.

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

**Georgia progress:** Results from the tests to be used as a promotion standard in 2004 in Georgia showed student gains for the third year running, the Atlanta Constitution reported. The tests, tied to the state curriculum, showed 79% of fourth-graders at or above standard in reading. Critics say curriculum standards are too low. The state ranks 50th on SAT scores.

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

**New protections:** The Reno, Nevada schools have settled a lawsuit and agreed to new rules to protect gay students from harassment, the Sun-Times reported. A youth now living in San Francisco says he was beat up, insulted by his principal and once lassoed around the neck at school because he was gay.

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

## Calendar

### September

- 6** Bond campaign kickoff, 10 a.m. Barringer Elementary.
- 10** School board meeting, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 12** Curriculum Committee, 9:30 a.m., Board Conference Room.

## Achievement gap

*Percentage of responses by fifth- through 12th-graders in a survey for The Colorado Trust and the Family and Work Institute when asked to grade their mothers and fathers on the following issues:*

Listening to me without criticizing me or making fun of me in hurtful ways:

	A	B	C	D	F
Mother	60	25	9	4	3
Father	46	27	13	8	6

Being really focused on me when I need [them] to pay attention to me:

Mother	45	29	15	6	4
Father	44	23	19	7	7

Knowing what is really going on in my life:

Mother	38	28	16	10	8
Father	28	25	21	13	14

Keeping promises and being people I can trust:

Mother	59	20	10	6	4
Father	51	24	10	7	8

Supporting my interests and getting involved in the things that interest me:

Mother	54	25	11	7	4
Father	49	24	13	7	7

Helping me figure out how to deal with my own problems in ways that don't hurt others:

Mothers	61	24	9	4	3
Fathers	43	26	17	9	6

Giving me the help I need when I am in a tough spot:

Mother	62	21	11	5	2
Father	51	24	12	6	6

*More data on "Youth and Violence" report is available at [www.familyandwork.org](http://www.familyandwork.org)*

- 12** Parent information session, 7-9 p.m., Greenville Center, 1330 Spring St. Topics include testing, cumulative folders, working effectively with teachers and administrators. Free. Sponsor: Winners Plus Agency.