

Bonafide, board-certified teachers

National program sets good-practice standards; studies to show if kids learn more

North Carolina so often ranks low on educational statistics, it was cause for celebration last week when the state topped one national chart:

The state continues to have the largest cadre of teachers who have achieved certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The standards define, in the words of one of the board's early policy statements, "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do."

But it will be several years before research will answer the question the public has: Do the standards just create better teachers, which is nice, or do they also mean kids are learning more, which is critically important.

When the first teachers won certification in 1993-94, only eight N.C. teachers were among them.

This year, North Carolina had 1,469 teachers win certification, bringing the total to 5,111. About 6% of N.C. teachers are certified. Florida is No. 2 with 3,489 certified teachers. The list of newly certified teachers in CMS is below.

Born of the 1980s school-excellence movement, the program defined what teachers with three or more years of experience should know. Assessments are designed to assure that teachers know both their subject and how to teach. By one estimate, teachers spend 180 hours on certification tasks.

The voluntary program took root in North Carolina in part because of the leadership of former Gov. Jim Hunt, who was the board's first chairman.

Also key to the program's popularity are the rewards: a 12% pay boost annually, and 15 continuing education units. The state also pays the certification fee of \$2,300 in exchange for working in the state for one year, and provides three paid days off for certification-related activities.

National board certification is separate from teacher licensing, which is controlled by the states. The national board sees its niche as setting a standard for excellence in experienced teachers, not for entry-level teachers.

Research to date has focused on whether the program delivers quality teachers. A study completed at UNC Greensboro in 2000, for example, found that board-certified teachers scored higher on 11 of 13 "dimensions of teaching expertise" than other teachers. Dimensions of teaching include issues such as knowledge of subject matter, ability to create challenging and engaging lessons, and an ability to adapt and improvise instruction.

But research now under way will show if greater

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Signs of a dream come true



Berry Academy music and band teacher Tracy Shoff displays the color guard (left) and marching band uniforms that CMS's newest high school will field next year. The school's opening this fall was the culmination of a dream to return vocational and technical education to a respected place in CMS. Some of the leaders who pushed for more than 30 years to make the school a reality toured last week. Story, page 8.

Housing and diversity

CMS's monthly Diversity Brown Bag Lunch series takes a look at housing this Friday.

Debra Campbell of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission is to address the topic: "Would a change in housing patterns make our schools more diverse?"

The lunch is at noon in the Board Room of the Education Center, 701 E. 2nd St. Bring your own lunch, questions and comments.

Pughsley seeks first curbs on parent choice

CMS managed to implement its new family choice plan this fall. But parents' choices and the plan's inner workings left some campuses half empty and others with a second schoolful of children outside in mobile units.

Tuesday, Supt. Jim Pughsley took the first step to reign in choice, if ever so slightly.

His proposal would still guarantee that residents of an attendance area could attend that area's school – even if there really aren't any empty seats there.

And you could always go home: Parents with children at a magnet or in a school to which they transferred could always petition to return to their home school.

But when a school gets 90% or more full, the proposal would allow the administration to declare the school closed to all other parents seeking transfer or reassignment to the school.

The policy change would not affect magnet programs, which are filled only through lotteries. No transfers or reassignments are allowed to magnets.

But the policy would apply to all schools with base attendance areas. And thousands of children sought transfers and reassignments to those schools for this fall. Officials said some of the

transfers occurred when parents accepted their first choice in the lottery, then changed their minds and sought transfers later.

All the movement caused some of the overcrowding already reported (Educate!, Sept. 26).

The new policy would apply both to reassignment requests and petitions for board transfer decision. The policy reads:

"Except as set forth herein, request for [transfers or reassignments] to schools declared closed by the administration after a lottery will not be permitted. By action of the administration, a school may be declared closed for [transfers or reassignment] after the first lottery process has been completed if the school is within 10% of or exceeds its estimated capacity, as defined in Policy FBC and any accompanying regulations. Additional schools may be declared closed after each succeeding lottery based on the above criteria. Notwithstanding the foregoing, requests for [transfers or reassignments] to a student's home school, as defined in Regulation JCA-R will be permitted to be filed, even if the school has otherwise been declared closed. Requests for [transfers or reassignments] permitted by this policy will be handled as set forth below."

Pughsley did not say how much overcrowding would have been prevented this fall by the policy, where he would have declared schools closed, or where the children would have landed up.

The board's personnel/policy

committee will discuss the proposal in January.

But as board member Lee Kindberg said, the effect of the policy depends on how the administration resolves a debate over school capacities.

Planner Eric Becoats gave the board examples of how, under a capacity formula under development, the need for mobile units to avoid overcrowding would rise.

The formula would maintain smaller classes at low-achieving and high-poverty

schools, provide pull-out space for exceptional children's classes, and dedicate rooms at each school to music, art and a computer lab. Pughsley said that while it might be impossible to dedicate art and other rooms immediately, or buy all the mobile units, the district should move in that direction.

Mobiles needed under 2 formulas

	Current	New
D. Cox	10	13
Bradley	23	26
Eastway	5	10

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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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Splitsville

Keeping kids together was a key CMS objective in years past, but splits at transitions to middle or high school are increasing

Attendance areas for three new schools opening next fall are about to violate yet another paradigm: keeping children together during the march from kindergarten to graduation.

The school board learned Tuesday that opening three new schools next fall may create five new splits, on top of the 12 already put in place by last year's choice assignment plan.

"I would like to see us reducing them further than we have," said member Molly Griffin. "The two that worry me the most are McAlpine and Olde Providence, because they're split twice."

In some splits, elementary children move to two different middle schools, then reunite at high school. In others, there's a split for high school. At McAlpine and Olde Providence, groups separated for middle school move on to different high schools.

The proposed splits for next fall are all related to the opening of three new schools: Endhaven Lane, a new southwest middle and a new Mint Hill middle.

Current splits: 12

Blythe: Splits after Alexander for Hopewell and North.

Cornelius: Splits after Bradley for Hopewell and North.

Crown Point: Splits after Crestdale for Butler and East.

Hornets Nest: Splits after Ranson for Hopewell and Vance.

Huntersville: Splits after Bradley for Hopewell and North.

Huntingtowne Farms: Splits after Carmel for South and Waddell.

McAlpine: Part to South Charlotte and South; rest to Robinson and Providence.

Where the mobiles are

Here's where CMS's mobile classrooms are in use this year, based on a list released Tuesday, plus corrections and additions from Building Services. Restroom units (RR) are listed separately. At seven schools where some or all of the mobiles are on site during renovations, the units used for swing space are listed in (parentheses). Schools are elementaries unless otherwise listed.

	Classrooms	RR		Classrooms	RR
Hawk Ridge	30	4	First Ward	5	1
Vance High	30	4	Northwest Arts	5	1
Indepen. High (12)	27	4	Oakhurst/Grier Rd.	5	1
Bradley Middle	22	3	Collinswood	4	2
Martin Middle	24	1	Huntingtowne Farms	4	1
Northridge Middle	24	3	McAlpine	4	1
Providence High	23	2	McKee Road	4	1
Coulwood Middle	20	2	Montclair	4	1
Kennedy Middle	18	2	Reedy Creek	4	1
Piedmont Middle (12)	12	2	Smithfield	4	1
Butler High	16	2	J.T. Williams	4	1
Cornelius	13	1	Carmel Middle	3	1
Albemarle Road	12	2	Cotswold	3	0
Alexander Middle	12	2	Hickory Grove	3	0
Crestdale Middle	12	1	Hornets Nest	3	1
East Meck High	12	2	Long Creek	3	0
Merry Oaks (12)	12	2	Quail Hollow Middle	3	0
Myers Park High (9)	12	1	Randolph Middle	3	1
Eastway Middle	10	2	Tuckaseegee	3	0
Harding High (2)	10	1	Druid Hills	2	0
North Meck High (10)	10	2	Lansdowne	2	0
Elizabeth Lane	9	1	McClintock Middle	2	0
Lake Wylie	9	1	Pineville	2	0
Steele Creek	9	1	Thomasboro	2	0
Albemarle Rd. Middle	8	1	University Meadows	2	0
Blythe	7	1	Windsor Park	2	0
David Cox Road	7	1	Briarwood	1	0
Winterfield	7	1	Greenway Park	1	0
Davidson	6	1	Idlewild	1	0
J.H. Gunn	6	1	Olde Providence	1	0
Huntersville	6	1	South Charlotte Middle	1	0
Northeast Middle	6	1	Villa Heights	1	0
Cochrane Middle	5	1	TOTALS	537	72

Source: CMS

McKee: Splits to Crestdale and Robinson, reunites at Providence.

Olde Providence: Part to Carmel and Myers Park; rest to South Charlotte and Providence.

Sedgefield: Splits to Davis and Sedgefield Middle, reunites at Olympic.

Sharon: Splits to Carmel and A.G., reunites at Myers Park.

Mountain Island: Splits after Coulwood for Hopewell and West Meck.

Proposed 2003 splits (5)

Endhaven Lane: Splits to South Charlotte and Robinson, reunites at South.

Pineville: Splits after Quail Hollow to South and Waddell.

Steele Creek: Splits to Kennedy and new southwest middle, reunites at Olympic.

Bain: Splits to Northeast and new Mint Hill middle, reunites at Butler.

Piney Grove: Splits to Albemarle Road and new Mint Hill middle, reunites at East.

Study of N.C. kids in child care sees long-term economic payoff

Another cost-benefit study, this time of graduates of an N.C. program, suggests the value of quality early-childhood education.

The Abecedarian Project began at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute in Chapel Hill in the 1970s. The program took children as young as four months and cared for them in unusually small groups.

The first children are now in their 30s, and the latest study by Rutgers University researchers finds that, compared with peers or families not involved in the program:

- Participants are expected to earn \$143,000 more over their lifetimes.

- Mothers are expected to earn \$133,000 more over their lifetimes.

- Schools can expect to save \$11,000 per child in remedial or special-education expenses.

- Since fewer participants smoke, the nation can expect to save \$164,000 in health-care costs.

- The benefits are so long-lasting, even the children of partici-

pants can be expected to make more over their lifetimes, about \$48,000 more.

Earlier studies of the participants found that college attendance doubled among low-income black children.

The Star-Ledger in New Jersey reported that the Rutgers study was performed in light of mandatory preschool programs in 30 poor N.J. school districts. Those preschools are open only to 3- and 4-year-olds.

The study is a sobering lesson in the price of what works.

Enrollment in the Abecedarian program was usually 12 infants, with four staff members for a 1:3 staff-student ratio.

Among 2s and 3s, there were usually 7 children, and the staff ratio rose only slightly to 1:3.5. Among 4s and 5s, there were usually 12 children and a ratio of 1:6.

North Carolina's minimum child-care standards allow ratios of 1:5 for infants; 1:6 for one-year-olds; 1:10 for twos; 1:15 for threes; 1:20 for fours and 1:25 for school-age children.



The children's library

The first 200 titles have been posted at the International Children's Digital Library, www.icdlbooks.org, eSchool News reported. The site is reachable only by ISDN or DSL line for now. Operated by the University of Maryland and a San Francisco nonprofit, the library expects 10,000 volumes online in five years. The drawing above is from "Calling the Doves" by Juan Felipe Herrera. The text says in part, "The sky was my blue spoon, the wavy clay of the land was my plate."

www.eschoolnews.com

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N.C. tops in board-certified teachers

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teacher competence leads to higher student achievement.

An Appalachian State study to be completed in two years, for example, asks the question, "Can National Board Certified teachers be distinguished from their non-certified counterparts based on the quality of work produced by their students?"

A Florida State study due in 2005 will look at 90 Florida schools to see whether board-certified teachers gave their students a boost in achievement.

There's no question that the road to certification is difficult, that teachers who accomplish their goal are dedicated to their craft. Last week N.C. Supt. Mike Ward said in a statement, "Achieving National Board Certification demonstrates a strong professional and personal commitment...."

But public interest is in whether the program bears fruit for kids.

With evidence on student achievement gains from the program undocumented, Educate! turned to 120 of CMS's newly minted board-certified teachers. We asked them to explain how the Board standards had changed school life for students, and several responded.

The teachers' comments don't provide the data some readers will want, or that the researchers will gather in the next few years. But they point to a number of factors that can reshape and deepen the learning environment available to students.

"Teachers who go through this process become totally immersed in content and pedagogy that is current and relevant to effective teaching today," said Bradley Middle band teacher Ruth Petersen. "Teachers are pushed to new heights in creating curriculum, enhancing instruction, and

Certification-inspired reform: Kids and music

Bradley Middle band teacher Ruth Peterson offered this example of how teaching practices unearthed during the journey toward national board certification can improve student learning:

"I read an article in a journal about a band director who had developed his own assessment process... that really motivated and encouraged his students. I adapted this process for my students.

"Musical skills have been sequenced into 13 levels. Each level is identified by a military rank. After passing off the first 20 musical skills, students earn the rank of Private. Students can pass off musical skills all the way up to four-star general.

"Students have to pass off 10 skills per quarter as part of their quarterly grade. Many students stay after school to work ahead. Students have to play pieces, clap and count rhythm exercises, and complete theory assignments and quizzes. Every student is individually tracked according to

his or her progress. Students have to earn at least 90% on the skills before they are considered passed off.

"Students also can work at their own pace, which is great for providing really talented music students some extra challenges.

"Students who have the most skills passed off earn the higher chairs in the ensembles. At every concert, students who have earned a rank or ranks are honored with a pin that has the name of the rank on it. They wear these at their concerts.

"As a result of using this assessment process, I found that my students are playing better and understanding what they play.

"I am able to give them harder music much sooner...."

meeting the needs of every child. Student learning and achievement can only increase when students are under the instruction of teachers who constantly reflect about their instruction and expand their practices based on ongoing experience."

Kay Cox teaches accounting and other business courses at South Meck High. She says her students "have the advantage of having an instructor who is refreshed and motivated.

"The process has enabled me to take past teaching methods and strategies to higher standards. I have been able to utilize methods of individualizing instruction through the use of student portfolios, self-assessment, and group work. My students provide me the energy it takes to teach daily with renewed enthusiasm and purpose."

Cox says she was "overwhelmed during the process to see my students take ownership in their responsibility in assisting my quest for excellence. Particularly during the videotaping exercises, the cooperation of my students individually and as a group was very gratifying. They maintained a business-like decorum as we covered material and explored the competencies of the course."

Janette Lauro is a music teacher at Olde Providence Elementary. She confessed to "months of nailbiting" over her application but says she learned a lot.

"During this rigorous process, I rediscovered my strengths, but more importantly, I realized that my weaknesses taught me more than my strengths ever did.

"The students were the direct

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beneficiaries of my educational journey, because constant reviews and revisions of my lesson plans actively and successfully engaged every child.

"In addition, the standards set by the NBPTS showed the areas where I needed to focus my attention in the future. I have added these areas to my unit plans this year and the students are responding enthusiastically!

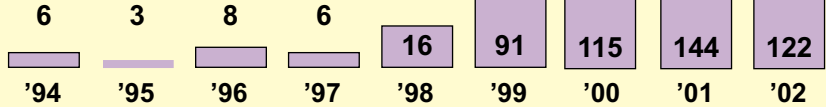
"I am proud to be a National Board Certified teacher, and would recommend the process to anyone ready for self-examination, professional development, and improving the quality of education for their students."

The following CMS teachers were certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards this year, according to last week's announcement:

Elementary Schools

- Albemarle Road: Angela Bliss, Rebecca Crawford.
- Allenbrook: Nina McNair-Mullen.
- Bain: Jessica Lanham, Kathleen Ryalls.
- Barringer: Deridre Austin, Roberta Bibbins, Lisa Lashley, Carol Reid.
- Berryhill: Phyllis Lambert.
- Cornelius: Constance Burns, Belinda Munday, Sandra Sparks, Lucia Washam.
- Cotswold: Amy Austin.
- Crown Point: Nancy Hunt, Nicolette Grant.
- David Cox Road: Patricia Berry, Patricia Lefler, Marie Messinger, Robyn Morris, Joan Nieves, Amy Waldon.

CMS board-certified teachers, by year



Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

- Davidson: Megan Jackson.
- Dilworth: Meredith Combs, Keith Hill.
- Elizabeth Lane: Reta Phifer, Patricia Prestopino.
- Elizabeth Traditional: Katherine Kinney, Donna Palios.
- First Ward: Glenda Massey, Lea McDaniel, Nina McNair-Mullen, Andrea Robinson.
- Greenway Park: Susan Diehl, Susan Sutton.
- J.H. Gunn: Kathleen Borgman.
- Hickory Grove: Tanjel Culp.
- Highland Renaissance: Nicole Barrow, Rebecca Crawford.
- Hornets Nest: Laura Champury.
- Huntersville: Amy Dawson, Mary Loeffler, Jennifer Shoczolek.
- Lebanon Road: Kathleen Ryalls.
- Lincoln Hts.: Catherine Phelan.
- Matthews: Stephanie Brubaker.
- McAlpine: Ashley Smith.
- McKee Road: Jo Ann Johnson.
- Montclair: Sandra Ross.
- Morehead: Mary Moss.
- Mountain Island: Julie Lussier, Deborah Skolaut.
- Myers Park Traditional: Margaret Graham, Suzanne Kulp.
- Oakdale: Patricia Berry.
- Oakhurst/Grier Road: Laura Cook.
- Oaklawn: Glenda Massey.
- Olde Providence: Janette Lauro, Karen Moore.
- Park Road: Cecelia McGloughlin.
- Pineville: Lisa Benlock, Candice Boatright, Cindy Crabtree.
- Providence Spring: Amanda Moore.
- Rama Road: Cindy Crabtree.
- Reedy Creek: Tanjel Culp, Sandra Hill.
- Shamrock Gardens: Jerry O'Keefe.
- Smithfield: Margaret Montgomery.
- Sterling: Nancy Mersereau.
- University Meadows: Vickie Monroe.
- University Park: Cheryl Maney.

Middle Schools

- J.M. Alexander: Alexandra Edwards, Charita Justice, Andrea King.
- Bradley: Ruth Petersen, Deborah Todd.
- Carmel: Nathaniel Orji.
- Cochrane: Poezia Tretiu.
- Crestdale: Susan Tinker, Kimberly Vague.
- Davidson IB: Donna Strickland.

- Eastway: Maurice Clampitt, Tanjel Culp.
- Alexander Graham: Kimberly Combs, Susan Jackson.
- Kennedy: Judy Benzel.
- Northeast: Stacey Holden, Crystal Liachoff, Amy Medlin, Christina Siriano.
- Piedmont: Windy Fullagar.
- Quail Hollow: Patricia Glassen, Jeffrey Lee.
- Robinson: Joanne Dawson.
- Smith K-8: Stephanie Crocker, Amy Eybl, Andrea Iosue, Debra Wallace, Heather Wood.

High Schools

- Butler: Donald Kirby, Jeffrey Pusser.
- East Meck: Linda Thomas.
- Harding: Alice Harrill, Christina Serbeniuc.
- Independence: John Hess, David James, GayAnn Loesch.
- Myers Park: Nina Adams.
- North Meck: Catherine Bumgarner, Lynda Pickney, William McComb.
- Northwest: Walter Goodwin, Shanna Sigmon, Eric Whiteside.
- Providence: Marsha Deming, Mary Purtill, Robin Hawkins Stanley.
- South Meck: Kay Cox, Russ Liachoff, Susan Smith.
- Vance: Tina Humphrey, Elizabeth Lasure, Nancy Webber, Joanne Whitley.
- E.E. Waddell: Elizabeth Withrow.
- West Meck: Delores Maxen, Edith McLaurin.

Newly certified, by year

1993-1994	177
1994-1995	199
1995-1996	219
1996-1997	318
1997-1998	924
1998-1999	2,970
1999-2000	4,728
2000-2001	6,509
2001-2002	7,886
Total to date	23,930

Total certified, by state

North Carolina	5,111
Florida	3,489
South Carolina	2,358
California	1,960
Ohio	1,771
Mississippi	1,459
Georgia	815
Oklahoma	632
Illinois	569
Alabama	456

Boundary lines offered; parents get an education

The search for attendance boundaries for three new schools forced more than 50 parents to juggle the conflicting interests that have always made student assignment a traumatic business for the school board.

David Huss, spokesman for the Endhaven Lane school task force, told the board his group had a “new appreciated understanding of your role. There is no one in our group who will be challenging you for your seats.”

As they worked to recommend new boundaries for an elementary on Endhaven Lane and middle schools in the southwest and Mint Hill, the parents came to grips with some of the key issues that board members must weigh. The board is scheduled to make decisions on the three areas on Tuesday. Among the issues:

Pathway to graduation: Kindergarten parents want both to know where their child will graduate from high school, and that the child won't have to make a whole new set of friends in those transitions to middle and high school. The Mint Hill-Matthews group started, Huff said, with some members favoring splitting all elementaries as the fifth-graders moved on. But consensus formed around minimizing those splits, which is current board policy.

Said board member Molly Griffin, “We have far too many of those divisions and we should be working to eliminate them.”

Some of the divisions are temporary – until new schools are open. Others, however, are permanent. (Story, page 3.)

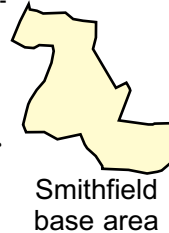
Travel times: Many of the attendance areas may be contiguous, but they are anything but compact. Two examples are

mapped on this page. Staff got to calling one end of the proposed McAlpine district “the claw.”

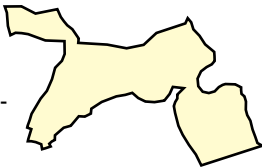
Serpentine base areas add to travel times. And travel distances played a large role in discussion of the southwest middle school. Parent spokesman Mike Murdock said his group worried that children bused out of the Nations Ford area to the new middle school farther south would sit in traffic on I-77.

Capacity: At most schools, mobile units can be trucked in to accommodate more students. The Endhaven task force decided to blink at Hawk Ridge's size – 30 trailers, 1,423 students – with Huss saying that mobiles are “a way of life.” But board member John Lassiter has led an effort to review that, saying that by 2005 Hawk Ridge may have nearly 1,900 students. He said he opposed an elementary getting “that big that fast.”

Credibility: One task force was hobbled in its efforts because parents named to represent two schools did not attend meetings. For that and other reasons, Supt. Jim Pughsley could offer the board Tuesday some very different proposals for use of the new southwest middle school campus.



Smithfield base area



McAlpine base area

“You see how easy this stuff is to do,” quipped chair Arthur Griffin. “You see what competing interests there are that you have to balance.... There are tough choices. You have to balance all the issues for the whole district.

“With your new experience, you're ready to run for school board next time around.”

None of the task force members were carrying campaign signs, but in fact these types of citizen panel experiences are a splendid proving ground for future school board members.

Named to the task force:

Endhaven Lane elementary: Carol Barry, Janet Bevis, Robert Campbell, Patrina Collins, Deborah Comeau, Linda Cranford, Susan Davis, Alicia Durand, Doris Gyorody, Carrie Harding, Gail Heron, Don Herzhauser, David Huss, Kelly Johnson, Michelle Jones, Lisa Kelly, Juanita Mottley, Vicki Myers, Terri O'Leary, Terri Pearlman, Ann Pichirallo, Jane Shutt, Madie Statford, Amy Watson, Melanie Winton.

Mint Hill middle: Jacquelyne Flanagan, Sheila Hill, Cynthia Johnson, Melinda Johnson, Kimberly Kelly, Grace McLain, Andrea Merchant, Janice Parker, Laura Prince, Tina Ross, Diane Shaul, Jennifer Shinn, Karen Silliman, Dolores Stark, Jim Taylor, Carol Weddle, Leigh Wells, Jill Wooten, Phyllis Zellmer.

Southwest Middle: Brenda Harper, Tricia Knudson, Windy Kuan, Marvelyn Lemaitre, Marvin Lemaitre, David Lombana, Cheryl McKnight, Mike Murdock, Beth Parker, Laura Simmons, Brenda White, Al Winget, Rhonda Yommer.

Whither middle school?

In a lengthy story about districts turning middle schools into K-8s, the Norwich (CT) Bulletin wrote that Michigan State professor William Schmidt, a critic of middle schools, said “the push for K-8 schools ignores the key problems facing middle schools: little rigorous curricula in important subjects like math, science and English, and too few teachers qualified to teach those topics.

“‘Until we confront those issues, all this chair-moving isn't going to make much difference,’ said Schmidt.”

www.norwichbulletin.com

At Berry, community leaders see a promise finally kept

The fight for a replacement vocational and technical high school has been won, and many of the earliest leaders in that movement toured Phillip O. Berry Academy in Charlotte last week.

The group of two dozen included former school board members, former principals of segregated black schools, and former students of Second Ward High School, the first high school open to blacks in North Carolina that closed in 1969.

Second Ward closed after a promise to rebuild, and after a 1967 bond issue committing \$2 million to the task. But the school board instead dispersed the black students of Second Ward to desegregate other high schools, and the county chose to put vocational education at Central Piedmont Community College.

"It's been a long struggle," said Bob Davis, community leader and former principal of Spaugh Jr. High. "I'm glad to have lived long enough to see it."

Said Gloria Berry, widow of the former school board chairman for whom the school is named, "It's just a joy to see part of his dream come true."

Current school board chairman Arthur Griffin, who graduated from Second Ward, asked for the visitors' "vigilance" so that money will continue to flow to the campus to keep its technology current. "The Board of County Commissioners will have to have the will" to maintain Berry if it is to serve its students well, he said.

Berry Principal David Baldaia said the high school's building



Former school board member Sarah Stevenson (facing camera) led a tour last week of the new Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology for members of her Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum and guests. The school, which combines academics with job training, had been sought by black leaders since Charlotte's Second Ward High School closed in 1969.

and curriculum had been designed with the help of advisers in business and industry so that its graduates would be prepared for the work world. "They've got their fingerprints all over what we teach," he said. "We believe they will be at the table with time, talent and treasure" to continue to develop the school.

The \$51 million Berry Tech opened this fall with 9th- and 10th-graders. The first class will graduate in 2005, and the school will ultimately have 1,600 students. Last year's lotteries to fill the two classes turned away more than 350 students. About half of currently enrolled students are on subsidized lunch, and 73% are

African American. ZIP codes nearest the school are most represented in the student body, Baldaia said, but some students further away are on buses at 5 a.m. and don't arrive home until 6 p.m. "Now that's commitment," he said.

Sarah Stevenson, a former school board member, arranged the tour for the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum. A catered breakfast, held in a conference room in the school, was paid for by CMS Supt. Jim Pughsley, who said to the group, "If it had not been for the leadership of this community, this facility would not be here today."

Sound off!

How to submit letters to media:

The Charlotte Post: By e-mail: thepost@clt.mind-spring.com; by fax: 704-342-2160; by mail: Editor, The Charlotte Post, 1531 Camden Road, Charlotte, NC 28203-4783.

The Charlotte Observer: By e-mail: opinion@charlotteobserver.com; by fax: 704-358-5022; by mail: The Observer Forum, The Charlotte Observer, P.O. Box 30308, Charlotte, NC 28230-0308.

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

Briefs

Smart cards: Schools are experimenting with issuing “smart cards” to students and staff, the Buffalo News reported. The main motive is to protect the anonymity of high schoolers, so more will use the subsidized lunch program they qualify for but refuse to be publicly identified with. (The participation rate drops 50% in high school). Other uses: purchases at the school store, borrowing library books and, in the future, automated class attendance and room access (replacing keys).

www.buffalonews.com

Endow a school: In Madison, Wisconsin, citizens are raising \$10,000 at each of the city’s schools to begin an endowment for each school, the Wisconsin State Journal reported. While critics say endowments will only multiply the disparities between schools in rich and poor neighborhoods, advocates say they can’t wait for tax support to provide supplements to strapped operating budgets. And one school serving a high-poverty neighborhood was among the first three schools to open endowments, thanks largely to one grateful alumnus.

www.madison.com

Reading first: Good readers from poor homes out-achieve poor readers from rich homes, the BBC reported, saying that “encouraging reading for pleasure could be one of the most effective ways of bringing about social change.” The OECD’s Pisa survey found that access to reading materials had a big impact on reading skill development.

www.bbc.co.uk

Reform math: “The good old days of mathematics never were,” says University of Missouri-Columbia math prof Robert Reys in a column for the Christian Science Monitor. Rote memorization left 20th century students

Breaking the cycle via school stability

The most mobile kids in our society are poor. And poor kids are most at risk of school failure. To leave no child behind, a number of districts don’t let family moves disrupt classroom stability – even if it takes busing.

According to an article in Education Update, the 23-school Victoria district southwest of Houston is providing transportation so that, wherever an uprooted child moves, his school classroom stays the same. Charlotte-Mecklenburg does not provide similar benefits to poor children who move within the district.

But CMS and all other systems are preparing to meet the provisions of the federal McKinney-Vento act, which mandates that homeless children be allowed to finish out the school year despite a change of residence. The CMS school board has even discussed the hypothetical case of a homeless child who moves to South Carolina, and whether CMS will be required under McKinney-Vento to provide that child transportation to Rock Hill.

For the purposes of the 2001 revision of McKinney-Vento, kids whose families double up after losing a home, or live in substandard housing, or live in motels are all counted as homeless.

– Education Update is posted at www.ascd.org; summary of McKinney-Vento at www.nlchp.org

with little understanding, and today calculators can do the rote instantly. New math standards integrate arithmetic, algebra, geometry, statistics and probability at all grades. “But most U.S. schools are still mired in a 19th-century course sequence of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.”

www.csmonitor.com

Open forum: Howard Schott, headmaster of a New York City private academy, was seeking ways to develop students’ character amid a “crisis in virtue in the Western world,” the Times reported. One suggestion, from Britain, was a weekly half-hour for group discussion among students on subjects of their choice. A recent discussion was about bullying.

www.nytimes.com

Reform wins: A backer of charters and vouchers counted November’s balloting as a “big win for education reform,” according to stateline.org. Stateline said about half the pro-charter and voucher candidates won in gubernatorial elections, including in the

states of South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire and Hawaii. There were upsets in two big states, Michigan and Wisconsin. Stateline.org is run by the Pew Center on the States at the University of Richmond.

www.stateline.org

School cuts: In a review of school cutbacks nationwide, the Christian Science Monitor noted this example: Albert Lea, Minn. has ordered all students within two miles of school to walk, unless parents pay \$30 per month to pay for the bus ride.

www.csmonitor.com

Afterschool maturing: Writing in the November-December Harvard Education Letter, Gil Noam says his Program in Afterschool Education and Research is finding a “decreasing focus on divergence and an increasing focus on joint programming and problem solving. Whatever the mix, the time of glorified babysitting is over. More and more, afterschool programs are being constructed as

Continued on Page 10

Briefs *continued*

informal learning environments, using those three hours each day to create meaningful and rich spaces to engage and teach children.”

www.edletter.org

Bar too high? Connecticut educators are debating whether the performance goals on their statewide test for 10th-graders are set too high. In Hartford, 75% of the students did not pass any of the four parts of the exam, the *Courant* reported. Test designers say every question covers material a 10th-grader should know.

www.ctnow.com

Retaining teachers: In Philadelphia, 13% of this fall's teaching recruits have already quit, the *Inquirer* reported. Supt. Paul Vallas, who wants a report from a business task force by February, has the group looking at tax breaks and discounts for new recruits, bonuses for teachers who recruit their friends, and “demonstration schools” where new teachers would have mentors.

www.philly.com

Attention... me?: In a long story about children's attention spans, the *Washington Post* quoted Cornell research Michael Posner as saying there was no proof that children have lost their ability to concentrate, because of television or some other habit. There isn't even a scientific consensus on what's normal, though some experts say parents and teachers should expect a normal child to concentrate on a task for 3 to 5 minutes per year of a child's age.

www.washingtonpost.com

Satisfied in Seattle: The city school board's draft evaluation of Supt. Joseph Olchefske's year is positive, the *Post-Intelligencer* reported. This despite a \$34 mil-

In the November issue of *Principal Leadership*, Angela Peery offers ways teachers can share with colleagues what works in their classrooms. One suggestion: “We have devoted 15 minutes of each monthly faculty meeting to a segment called ‘Teachers Helping Teachers.’ The brief (from 2 to 10 minutes each) presentations have included a broad range: effective discipline techniques, ideas for family involvement, using sketchbooks as learning logs, creating PowerPoint presentations, library scavenger hunts, having students design board games, and many other topics.”

Story
Corner

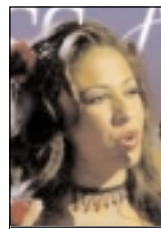
www.principals.org

Send us your story. For addresses, see page 2.

lion budget shortfall blamed on computers. Board members said the district is making progress on its primary goals: raising test scores, reducing dropouts, cutting violence and narrowing the racial achievement gap.

www.seattlepi.nwsourc.com

No bullying: Miss America Erika Harold launched a campaign in Hartford, Conn. to reduce bullying in U.S. schools, the *Courant* reported. As a 14-year-old in Urbana, Ill., Harold received death threats and had to switch schools. “There are kids suffering in silence every day,” Harold told a group of students. “They go into adulthood wondering if they are stupid or a loser or any of the other horrible names they are told in school....”



Harold

www.ctnow.com

Extra tutoring: Portland was

obligated under the No Child Left Behind law to offer tutoring at only one failing school, the *Oregonian* reported. But the district convinced federal officials to expand the program to all four schools headed for the failing-school list, and will begin tutoring in January at three high schools and a middle school. The annual cost is about \$1,000 per student, and only children on subsidized lunch are eligible.

www.oregonlive.com

D.A.R.E. assessed: A study of the new curriculum in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program suggests that it's working, preparing children with the information that can help them say no to drugs, the *Detroit News* reported. The six-state study by researchers at the University of Akron said seventh-graders who took the new curriculum were less likely to say they'd use inhalants, had fewer misconceptions about drug use and were better at refusing to participate. A Chapel Hill study of several anti-drug programs including the earlier D.A.R.E. curriculum concluded that they were either ineffective or insufficiently tested.

www.detnews.com

Parents 101: When Education World asked principals for a subject they wished they'd been taught before taking the helm, several mentioned talking to parents. Said one: “Nobody told me that parents would be in my office screaming, manipulating, begging, crying, and demanding.”

www.educationworld.com

Calendar

- 10** Board meeting, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 11** Budget Advisory Committee, 9th floor conference room, Government Center.
- 12** Parents on the Move workshop, 7-9 p.m., Sugaw Creek Recreation Center, 943 W. Sugar Creek Rd.