

Reviving the classroom

Goals for teacher excellence aren't pie-in-the-sky: They mirror staffs at high-achieving schools, create test of district equity

Supt. Jim Pughsley continues to make the case for painful changes in teacher deployment to rebuild ailing schools and produce quality education for all children across the Charlotte-Mecklenburg district.

"We know there is a student achievement gap. We know there is a quality teacher gap. And there is a correlation," he told parents Tuesday night.

An annual report on equity initiatives, released last week, highlights the "quality teacher gap."

If there were no teacher gap between high-poverty and high-achieving schools, all boxes in charts below and on Page 5 would be green (or lighter gray).

If your children attend schools in Mecklenburg's northern or southern suburbs, chances are the measures of faculty quality at your elementary school are already in the green (map, Page 6).

To push every school into the green, Pughsley says he will limit teacher transfers. Earlier this week, he released a written statement, saying it "is unfortunate that some misunderstanding lingers" over the plan to narrow teachers' options to transfer to schools where a top-notch staff is already in place

(*Educate!*, Jan. 16; statement quoted below).

The equity report showed that CMS is getting stronger at providing most resources equitably across the district. There are more computers and textbooks. Media centers are being upgraded.

But on two issues – materials for exceptional children, and faculty experience and training – the report cited unresolved issues that were noted on a summary page with big Xs (see Page 7).

After a presentation on the equity report at last Tuesday's school board meeting, board chair Wilhelmenia Rembert noted that a number of Equity Plus II schools "are not meeting expectations" for faculty experience.

"I recognize," she said to Pughsley, "that your proposed plan regarding teacher deployment is perhaps one way to address this very issue.

"Of all the items on the list here from facilities to teacher-student ratio, I don't know that any one is more important than the faculty component.

"Unless we are able and willing to make sure that

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Middle, high school faculty goals

Charts show percentage goals in six areas of faculty training and experience. Shown are Equity Plus II schools. None of the middle and high schools meet all of the goals. Results marked in red (or dark gray) are short of the goal. Results for elementary schools are on page 5.

	Clear licensure	Adv. degree	New to teach.	Avg. exper.	Board certif.	5+yrs exper.
HIGH SCHOOLS						
2005 GOAL	91.10	34.77	7.16	14.16	3.71	71.72
Berry Academy	89.66	34.48	34.48	9.17	0	55.17
Garinger	84.11	40.19	5.61	14.45	1.87	71.96
Independence	85.54	30.72	9.64	12.67	6.02	74.70
Olympic	94.19	27.91	12.79	10.81	4.65	54.65
E.E. Waddell	87.95	48.19	13.25	11.44	1.20	59.04
West Charlotte	79.83	30.25	13.45	11.45	1.68	68.91
West Meck	82.35	29.41	17.65	11.72	7.56	60.50

	Clear licensure	Adv. degree	New to teach.	Avg. exper.	Board certif.	5+yrs exper.
MIDDLE SCHOOLS						
2005 GOAL	87.76	29.86	10.49	9.47	5.38	56.23
Albemarle Road	77.78	20.83	11.11	8.07	1.39	47.22
Cochrane	58.18	25.45	20.00	8.15	1.82	47.27
Coulwood	64.63	23.17	20.73	8.32	1.22	54.88
Marie G. Davis	61.36	18.18	38.64	6.28	0	36.36
Eastway	63.08	30.77	16.92	7.34	6.15	43.08
James Martin	61.95	18.58	30.97	10.80	0.88	34.51
Northridge	71.60	19.75	13.58	6.78	2.47	49.38
Piedmont	86.89	29.51	11.48	9.44	6.56	57.38
Randolph	84.13	23.81	7.94	9.53	0	50.79
Ranson	72.58	19.35	9.68	6.36	1.61	50.00
Sedgefield	73.47	20.41	14.29	9.87	4.08	57.14
Spaugh	77.08	22.92	16.67	7.63	2.08	50.00
J.T. Williams	75.47	32.08	15.09	9.25	0	56.60
Wilson	54.35	10.87	28.26	6.73	0	36.96

Looking through eyes of history shows CMS has failed its children of color

The writer is chairman of the NAACP Education Committee.

I was extremely impressed with the article by Bob Simmons, "Maybe Griffin was right about choice" (*Educate!*, Jan. 30). When, as a board member, Simmons first proposed his choice plan, I called him up. We had a very polite disagreement about the possibility of a choice plan working for the benefit of the black students in CMS. At the end of the conversation Simmons told me that he was leaving Charlotte and the Board of Education and that he would hate to be the one who put the choice plan in if it did not work.

In the article Mr. Simmons said, "I feel I delivered a baby as healthy as it could be under the circumstances and have watched it wither in the hands of its adoptive parents." I feel Mr. Simmons was looking at his baby through the eyes of an expectant father rather than through the eyes of history.

If Mr. Simmons had looked through the eyes of history he would have seen that on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine of Plessy for public education, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, and required the desegregation of public schools across

America. As he looked through the eyes of history he would have found that for 17 years this decision of the Supreme Court was ignored by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg educational system. It was only after a lawsuit was filed (Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, 1969) that CMS made an attempt to comply with the Supreme Court decision. During that time, over four generations of students entitled to equitable, integrated schools, attended inferior segregated schools.

If Mr. Simmons had looked through the eyes of history he would have seen that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System not only ignored Supreme Court decisions, which favored people of color, they ignored Judge James McMillan's orders. (Swann vs. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education, 1969) that:

- CMS should not build any schools in any area where they cannot be easily integrated;
- CMS should maintain control of the placement of their teachers and their own standards for choosing school sites.
- CMS standards prohibited the building of schools in census tracts where less than 10% of the population was black.

On Oct. 13, 1988, Arthur Griffin, Jr., former CMS board chairman, wrote a letter

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From Readers

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25

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History shows CMS failed people of color

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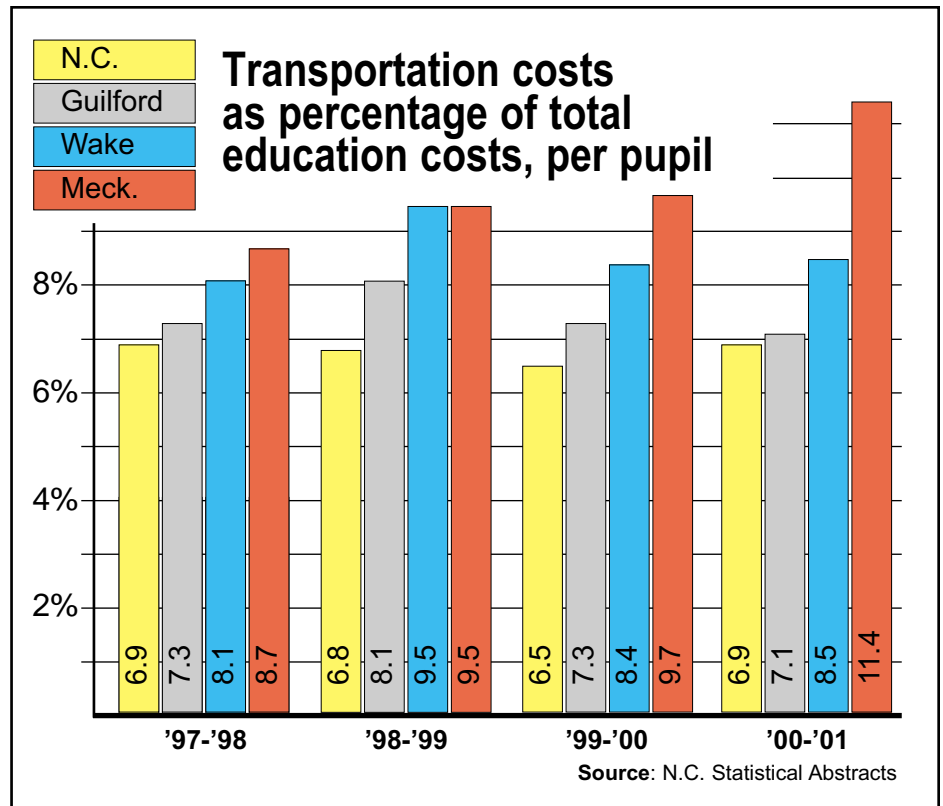
addressed to “Dear Religious and Community Leaders.” In this letter Mr. Griffin wrote:

“In the next 10 years the Board proposes to build 30 new schools in Mecklenburg County. The Board has already started its planning for the construction of two new elementary schools within the next two years. Can you guess the location of these two new schools? You’re right – the suburbs. And can you guess whose youngest children will be required to leave home earlier than most? You’re right – the inner city children. Also, can you guess which communities will have their needs placed on a back burner? You’re right once again – the inner city.

“As you have observed, the last four elementary schools have been built in the suburbs. The next two elementary schools and a junior high school will also be built in the suburbs. Each time an elementary school is built in the suburbs, an inner city school is closed.”

In the document, *Achieving the CMS dream: Equity and Student Success*; 1999, CMS Supt. Dr. Eric Smith listed five things that were wrong with the CMS school system. The fourth reason listed was: In schools with the highest percentage of African-American students, teachers are less experienced than teachers in predominantly white schools.

In 1991, CMS named Dr. John Murphy as superintendent. CMS ignored Judge McMillan’s order, which favored people of color, to keep control of teacher assignment in the hands of the central office and gave Dr. Murphy the right to put in a program called “site-based management,” which gave principals the power to hire teachers. Disparities in the staffs of predominantly black and predominantly white schools were



more pronounced after Dr. Murphy than before Dr. Murphy.

If Mr. Simmons had looked through the eyes of history he would have seen a Board of Education with a history of completely ignoring or delaying any court order or standard that was put in place to help people of color achieve equity. He would have also seen generations after generations of students who were entitled to be assigned to the best schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, attending schools that were not racially balanced, did not provide the same educational opportunities as those afforded white students, were not as well equipped as white schools and did not have the same quality of instruction as white schools.

If Mr. Simmons had looked through the eyes of history he would have seen the document, “Achieving the CMS Vision,” in which Dr. Smith, in five sentences, summed up what is wrong with the CMS school system.

1. Too many CMS schools are not racially balanced.
2. African-American students

have not been provided the same educational opportunities as white students.

3. African-American students have not had equal access to instructional materials, supplies and technology.

4. In schools with the highest percentage of African-American students, teachers are less experienced than teachers in predominantly white schools.

5. The facilities at predominantly African-American schools are inferior when compared to other school facilities.

After he summed up what was wrong, Smith wrote the following:

“These disparities are unacceptable. However, the most disturbing remnant of Mecklenburg’s once-segregated school system is the continued achievement gap between African-American students and their white classmates.”

The document “Achieving the CMS Vision” was presented to and approved by the Board of Education in March of 1999.

This document is a statement of denial. The five problems listed

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History shows CMS failed people of color

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by Dr. Smith have roots in events that occurred after 1954. What if we had integrated the schools in 1954? What if we had built schools where they could have been easily integrated? What if we had maintained control of teacher placement with the central office? On the matter of school sites Judge Potter wrote in 1999:

“Finally, the court notes that neither the Swann Plaintiffs nor anyone else ever called on the Court to intervene in these school siting decisions. These decisions were the subject of public hearings, televised meetings, and ballot referenda. Moreover, the board members who were the most aggressive advocates of desegregation policies, including CMS Chairman Arthur Griffin, supported and voted for many of these initiatives.”

If Mr. Simmons would have looked through the eyes of history he would have seen a group of six white parents join William Capacchione in a lawsuit against the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (Swann, Capacchione and Grant; 1999). In September of 1999 District Court Judge James Potter ruled in favor of the six white parents and Mr. Capacchione. Judge Potter ruled that CMS is “unitary,” issuing an injunction against the use of race in student assignment and the allocation of “educational opportunities,” and mandated that a new student assignment plan be in place for the 2000-2001 school year.

On June 1, 2000, Charlotte-

How to get good at reading

Author Jim Trelease, from “The Read-Aloud Handbook”:

“Reading is an accrued skill. That means reading is like riding a bicycle, driving a car or sewing: in order to get better at it you must do it. And the more you read, the better you get at it.

“The last twenty-five years of reading research confirms this simple formula – regardless of sex, race, nationality or socioeconomic background. Students who read the most, read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest. Conversely, those who don’t read much, cannot get better at it. And most Americans (children and adults) don’t read much, and therefore aren’t very good at it.”



Trelease

Trelease will conduct a free public session in Charlotte March 3 at 7 p.m. at the Great Aunt Stella Center, 926 Elizabeth Ave., sponsored by Charlotte Reads, Wachovia and Trinity Episcopal School. RSVP: randerson@charlottereads.org.

Mecklenburg Board of Education adopted a new student assignment plan for 2001-2002 school years. Judge Potter issued a mandate in favor of white parents in September of 1999 and six months later, (June 1, 2000) CMS had a plan ready. On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren read a unanimous mandate in favor of people of color. It took a lawsuit and 17 years for CMS to attempt to carry out that mandate.

If Mr. Simmons had looked through the eyes of history he would have seen that “Choice Denied” is not new to people of color. Mr. Simmons said, “Now the guarantees to choice out seem to be phantoms.” Guarantees to people of color are not just now becoming phantoms, they have always been phantoms.

I did not agree with Mr. Simmons on the matter of the “Choice” plan but I do agree with Mr. Simmons’ assessment that Dr.

Pughsley is on the right track. Dr. Pughsley needs to be not only on the right track: Dr. Pughsley needs to be on the fast track.

We must not allow another generation of students to attend inferior schools. All children in CMS are entitled to full equity NOW.

All children are entitled to start the next school year in a system that provides full equity for all of its children. If we can overhaul the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System in six months to satisfy a court order for six white parents and Mr. Capacchione, we can do it for people of color who have never experienced equity in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

Time, by now, should have taught us that neither “time” nor “more time” will solve our equity problems. We cannot change the past, but we can fulfill its dreams – if we act NOW.

Richard A. McElrath, Sr.

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Faculty data show work to do

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we have the very best teachers we can in front of all students, and especially those students who have extraordinary challenges before them, I think we will miss the boat on our student achievement goal.... For those who have access” to the equity report, she added, “and are concerned, as we are, about improving student achievement throughout the district and closing the achievement gap, there is probably not another item that is more important on this dashboard than the faculty line where we see far too many Xs, where we are not meeting expectations.”

Earlier, Arthur Griffin asked Pughsley, “When you look at improving and the X’s, what would it cost to deal with that?... to fulfill our promise we made with regard to having the kind of support both in personnel and non-personnel support.... I think we need to keep that goal in front of the community for all our students.”

Pughsley dodged the details, but offered Griffin this assurance: “I certainly agree with you in keeping it before the public and I can assure you once again that it will be one of the primary considerations we give as we move forward with the budget process.”

The budget process will be tricky for a district try-

ing to improve outcomes, which often translates into needing more money for the 84% of its annual budget that goes to hiring staff.

This week, county commissioners vice chair Dan Ramirez told a community group that the Republican majority on the board had already tentatively settled on giving the schools \$7 million to cover additional students, along with last year’s budgeted \$269 million. Translation: No additional money to bolster learning. Ramirez said he didn’t want to be perceived as against education; his wife taught for 18 years, and he prefers investing more in teachers and programs, and less in buildings. He also asserted, “The administration of this system is so fat... it is collapsing on itself.”

Developing goals

Listed on the charts on this page and page 1 are six pieces of information that CMS tracks on its teachers. In 1999’s “Achieving the CMS Vision” document, CMS asserted that “teacher experience, advanced degrees, licensure and demonstrated success are key factors” in educating all students. Former Supt. Eric Smith set goals for elementary, middle and high schools.

Today’s goals are pegged to the average level of teacher experience or training at schools that have been honored in the state’s annual ABCs testing program. In the map on Page 6, the schools on

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Elementary school faculty standards

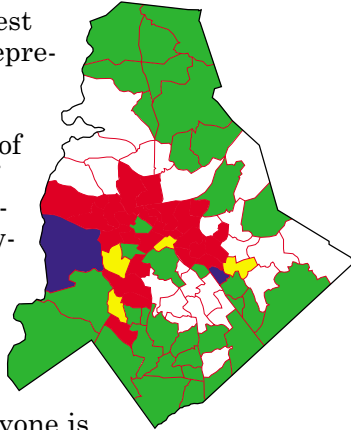
Chart shows percentage goals in six areas of faculty training and experience. Results marked in red (or dark gray) are short of the goal.

	Clear licensure	Adv. degree	New to teach.	Avg. exper.	Board certif.	5+yrs exper.		Clear licensure	Adv. degree	New to teach.	Avg. exper.	Board certif.	5+yrs exper.	
2005 GOAL	92.57	31.50	8.04	11.39	4.60	67.11		Merry Oaks	93.48	21.74	2.17	12.83	6.52	71.74
Albemarle Road	77.97	25.42	18.64	8.59	1.69	45.76		Montclair	92.11	34.21	15.79	11.87	5.26	68.42
Allenbrook	78.26	17.39	8.70	7.13	0	47.83		Nations Ford	100	18.18	6.06	8.49	0	54.55
Ashley Park	96.15	38.46	3.85	8.86	3.85	57.69		Oakdale	88.89	11.11	11.11	10.67	3.70	59.26
Berryhill	95.83	41.67	4.17	15.25	16.67	79.17		Oaklawn/Bruns	75.76	27.27	21.21	7.90	3.03	45.45
Briarwood	90.00	15.00	10.00	11.08	0	57.50		Pawtuckett	85.19	14.81	11.11	6.85	3.70	51.85
W.G. Byers	80.95	28.57	28.57	8.62	4.76	52.38		Pinewood	93.33	20.00	6.67	7.67	3.33	43.33
Chantilly/B’ville	78.57	28.57	21.43	9.32	3.57	57.14		Reid Park/A.James	87.23	31.91	17.02	8.17	2.13	51.06
Collinswood	97.14	31.43	14.29	8.63	0	62.86		Sedgefield	97.78	28.89	4.44	12.91	6.67	80.00
Devonshire	90.00	37.50	10.00	11.83	0	65.00		Shamrock Gardens	93.18	31.82	4.55	8.64	4.55	52.27
Druid Hills	68.57	8.57	17.14	10.71	0	54.29		Statesville Road	91.43	31.43	11.43	12.20	2.86	71.43
First Ward	94.34	37.74	9.43	11.94	5.66	67.92		Sterling	82.86	34.29	14.29	12.23	2.86	60.00
Hidden Valley	88.10	26.19	11.90	8.20	4.76	57.14		Thomasboro	90.63	28.13	3.13	13.31	0	75.00
Highland Renais.	92.11	23.68	7.89	9.47	10.53	63.16		Tuckaseegee	88.89	30.56	8.33	13.92	0	69.44
Idlewild	93.88	38.78	4.08	12.45	6.12	81.63		Westerly Hills	91.43	34.29	17.14	7.11	0	60.00
Irwin Avenue	85.71	24.49	16.33	9.15	0	53.06		Windsor Park	77.50	32.50	17.50	10.03	0	47.50
Lincoln Heights	89.47	36.84	21.05	11.23	0	55.26		Winterfield	91.11	22.22	11.11	11.62	2.22	57.78

Faculty data show work to do

Continued from Page 5

which the goals are based are shown in green (light gray). The high-poverty schools listed in the boxes are marked on the map in red (middle gray). Two of the high-poverty schools, Berryhill and Idlewild, have achieved the goals and are marked in blue (darkest gray). The yellow areas represent high-poverty schools that were honored by the state and thus were part of setting the goals. None of the schools marked in yellow met all the goals, however. That's possible because the goal is based on two years' data and is an average of all schools. Remember: It's only in Lake Wobegon that everyone is above average.



Last week, *Educate!* asked CMS for faculty standards data for schools that are not part of the Equity Plus II program. A spokesman said Tuesday that administrators “are actually working on that at this time. They’re trying to get that all put together in time for the [upcoming] transfer fair.” CMS has published Equity Plus teacher data for years.

The impact of the goals is to push all faculties toward the training and experience levels of the faculties at schools with the most successful students.

The Charlotte Observer reported that among CMS's two teacher groups, leaders of the NEA-affiliated Association of Educators favors the transfer initiative, while the Classroom Teachers Association is pushing instead for removal of inadequate principals. Pughsley's statement quoted later in this article responds to the CTA charges.

Readers are welcome to contribute to a future edition of *Educate!*, which will pursue this question: To what degree do the six measures of faculty experience contribute to identifying the highly qualified teaching staff that everyone wants in the schools?

The Association of Educators is working with CMS to create “cadres” of teachers to act as mentors and resources to new teachers. For each first-year teacher who returns, a mentor would be paid \$750, the mentee \$500. The cost of replacing a teacher, in recruiting and other costs, runs about \$11,000.

Transfer limits

Pughsley's most recent effort to nudge CMS more quickly toward the faculty goals has caused a lot of controversy. He was briefing elementary school teachers Tuesday afternoon at Byers Elementary, and has similar meetings planned for middle and high school teachers.

At a meeting of a Charlotte Chamber group Jan. 15, the superintendent said he would limit transfers by current CMS staff into schools that already have a strong faculty. Where faculties are already strong, vacancies would be filled from new applicants (both first-time teachers and veterans from elsewhere).

Pughsley said more than 20 schools would be off-limits this spring. He emphasized that no teacher would be denied the right to seek transfer, and that the schools that would be off-limits are not focused in any one area of the county.

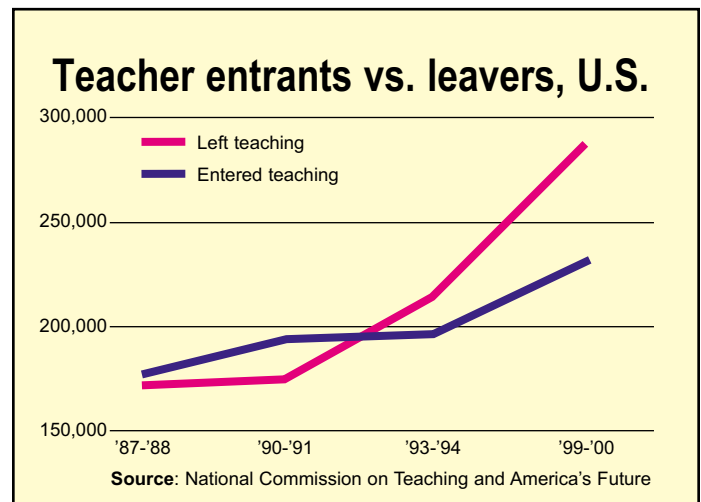
A strong school faculty would be determined by selecting three of the six faculty measures already tracked. Those six measures include five percentages (teachers with clear licensure, advanced degrees, teaching for the first time, certified by the National Board, and teaching with five or more years of experience) and one average in years (length of teaching experience).

At an Equity Committee last week, human resources chief Barbara Jenkins said simulations of a transfer policy had used three of the six standards above, and that four Equity Plus II schools would be off-limits under the three factors chosen. She declined to identify the three standards used, or say when the details would be announced.

Further, neither Pughsley nor Jenkins has identified the cutoff level in the simulation. Did schools become off-limits when they met the 2005 goals? If so, the equity report data suggests that only these four combinations of factors could have been used: clear licensure, advanced degree and new to teaching; clear licensure, new to teaching and board certification; clear licensure, new to teaching and 5+ years of experience; or new to teaching, average experience and board certification.

Jenkins said the transfer policy “is not intended to harm individual teachers, and we don't believe it will harm individual schools.” But she said the change was justified “when you see how slight our improvement has been” in raising faculty competence in all schools.

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Faculty data show work to do

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Board vice chair Louise Woods told the committee that a large portion of the 19% annual teacher turnover rate is “new teachers that, frankly, we are chewing up.” Many new teachers don’t find assistance from experienced colleagues, or from full-time mentors. “We are not getting our new teachers a chance to succeed.... We know the way we’ve been doing it doesn’t work.”

Improving retention

Last week, a private group headed by former N.C. Gov. Jim Hunt issued a call for “states, school systems, institutions of higher education, unions, school boards, business leaders, and the federal government to join us in setting an ambitious goal – to accept the challenge to improve teacher retention by at least 50% by 2006, creating incentives for those moving toward this goal, and rewarding schools that achieve it.”

The report focuses on what the school itself can become – “learner-centered, assessment-centered, knowledge-centered, and community-centered.” It highlights the need for more collaborative work among teachers, better training. It notes that small schools – 300 to 600 students – seem to work better. It promotes the idea that technology may give teachers the means to share amongst themselves and reflect on what works in teaching children.

But the work of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future appears to emphasize that the way to boost retention is to place qualified, well-trained, licensed teachers in the classroom in the first place.

“In the starkest terms, the failures of policies and practices, whether in federal or state government, in university preparation programs, or in school dis-

E+II SCHOOLS	Faculty	Instructional Materials	21st Century Standards	Technology Systems used in schools	AV Resources	Media Center Resources	Professional Programs / Career Advancement	Culturally Appropriate	Textbooks	Faculty assessed 2005 retention	Teacher / student data in multiple measures
Albemarle Rd. Elementary	⬢	⬢	⬢	⬢	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Albermarck Elementary	⬢	⬢	⬢	✓	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Arling Park Elementary	⬢	✓	✗	✓	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	⬢	✓
Berryhill Elementary	⬢	⬢	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Brimwood Elementary	⬢	⬢	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓
Charity / Ellingville Elementary	⬢	✓	ND	⬢	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Collinwood Elementary	⬢	⬢	⬢	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Devonshire Elementary	⬢	✓	✓	⬢	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Druid Hills Elementary	✓	✓	ND	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

OVERALL RATINGS: ✓ Meets Expectations ⬢ Improving but needs continued focus ✗ Not Meeting Expectations ND = No Data Available at this time *To be of standard by 2005

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First of six pages of a “dashboard” summary of the annual CMS equity status report. The “faculty” column, second from the far right, reported just on the district’s 54 high-poverty or low-achieving Equity Plus II schools. Of the 54 schools, 44 were listed as “not meeting expectations.” Eight were listed as “improving but needs continued focus.” Two schools, Berryhill and Idlewild elementaries, were listed as “meets expectations” for meeting or exceeding goals set for 2005. But the 2005 goals are not just pie-in-the-sky goals: They reflect current faculty competencies at 35 elementaries, 13 middle schools and two high schools that have been honored under the state’s ABCs testing program. A description of the measures of faculty experience and training that are part of the dashboard summary on faculty are discussed on page 6. The full text of the “dashboard” summary, along with all other pieces of the equity report, may be downloaded at www.cms.k12.nc.us/discover/goals/equityScorecard/toc.asp

tricts, are being shouldered by children,” the report says.

“This is unconscionable. In most cases, teachers in high-poverty schools are more likely to be teaching out-of-field than are teachers in more affluent schools.

“And because students in high-poverty schools are the ones most likely to be taught by uncertified and out-of-field teachers, disadvantaged students have become the most blatant victims of constant quality compromises that are made to keep a sufficient number of teachers in classrooms.

“It is unacceptable, as a matter of public policy, to hold students to academic standards that some of their teachers are unable to help them meet. It is time for full

public disclosure.

“States and school districts should ensure that every teacher in every classroom has met teaching standards aligned with K-12 learning standards. The Commission believes it is time to make accountability for results a reality for everyone involved. The chain of accountability should include states, teacher preparation programs, and school districts. They all should be held responsible for enforcing high standards for all entrants to teaching coming from all forms of teacher preparation. All links in the chain should deny teaching appointments to unlicensed and unqualified individuals”....

Faculty data show work to do

Continued from Page 7

“If we expect today’s new teachers to become tomorrow’s accomplished teachers, we must devote equal energy to building career paths that offer them the satisfactions of a rewarding profession.

“This means recruiting good teachers, supporting them with mentoring, sustaining them with professional growth opportunities and recognition, and rewarding them with pay that recognizes the value they provide to our nation.”

The Hunt report also notes that departures from teaching are a slightly bigger problem at private schools than public, and the overall churn – departures plus moves – was 19.7% in private schools vs. 15.1% in public schools.

Specific initiatives mentioned by the Hunt panel include mentoring, training, help with time management and technology, and better pay. The full report by the Hunt group, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, is available at www.nctaf.org.

Nowhere does the report mention other possible causes of turnover: an overscripted curriculum, picky parents, unsupportive principals, spoiled kids – or a job market that pays more money for far less aggravating work in other sectors of the economy.

The lure of the nonschool economy has been strong.

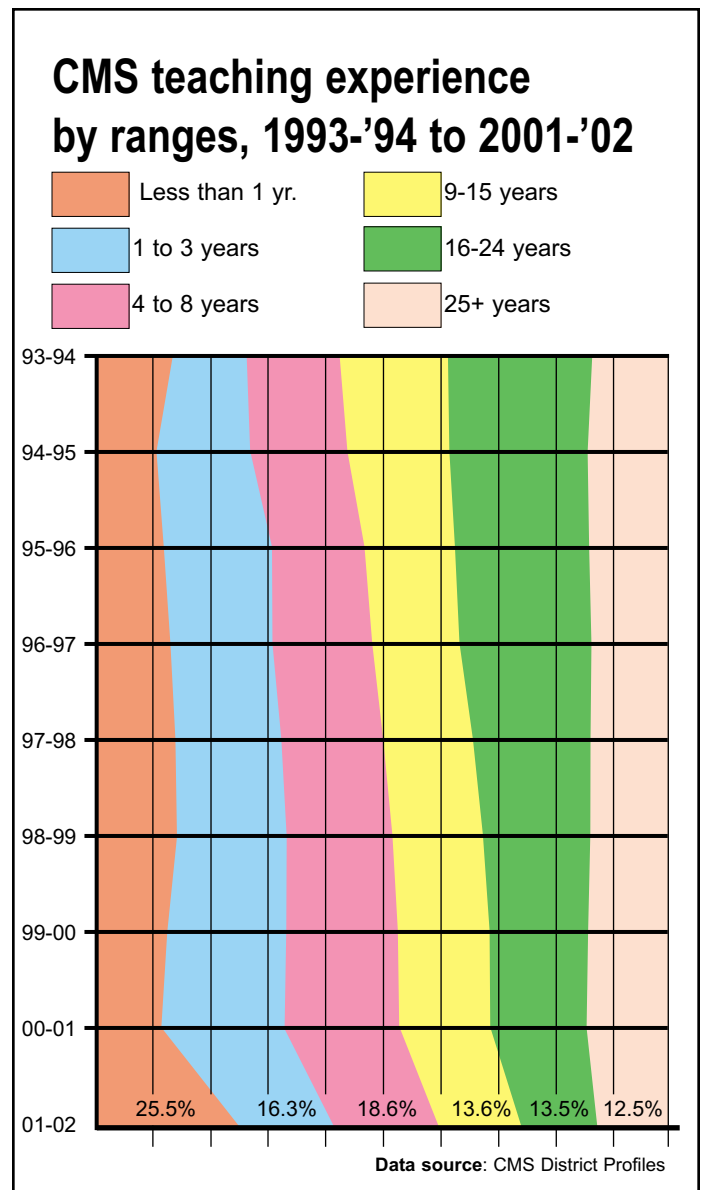
A chart on this page displays the percentage of CMS teachers at various experience levels over time. Teachers themselves should be heard from to assess what the chart shows, but two things pop out immediately:

- The high percentage of first-year teachers is a very recent phenomenon in CMS. That’s not to say it’s an aberration: In fact, this may be the new reality. Historically, however, the district has had far fewer first-year teachers.

- A much longer-term trend is erosion in the percentage of veteran teachers, particularly the group with 16 to 24 years of experience. One former teacher says that staying 20 years to boost state retirement pay is not the incentive it used to be. There may be other reasons as well.

(Teachers who would like to comment on the chart or other trends should feel welcome. *Educate!* will identify those writers who request anonymity in print only as, for example, “Third-grade teacher” or “Middle school science teacher.”)

Meanwhile, the Education Commission of the States is beginning to audit the states’ efforts to meet No Child requirements. Two issues on which the commission has raised red flags about N.C. compliance are related to teachers: The commission could find no “measurable objective to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified by 2005-06.” It also could find no N.C. measurable objective to increase



professional development – another key issue in the teacher retention puzzle. The commission’s report on all 50 states is at www.ecs.org.

There are many pieces to the teacher retention puzzle. Writing in the February issue of *Teachers.Net Gazette*, columnists Harry and Rosemary Wong say school districts make a mistake when they don’t have strong induction programs. Induction is a term covering what schools organize, in terms of group meetings, resources, and “culture,” to both support teachers in their first year and to be sure teachers know the rules, the curriculum, and the expectations. Mentoring, a one-on-one enterprise, is a valuable tool but separate from the formal activities of induction.

“What keeps good teachers,” the Wongs write, “are structured, sustained, intensive professional development programs that allow new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers

Faculty data show work to do

Continued from Page 8

share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other's work."

In his statement Monday on the transfer policy controversy, Pughsley wrote:

"It is unfortunate that some misunderstanding lingers regarding my proposed revision to the transfer regulations. I have attached a news release that was shared with the media on Friday for further clarification.

"The regulations are not intended to harm individual teachers or individual schools. To the contrary, the change should promote quality education for all of our students without harming teachers.

"This strategy is part of a much broader proposal to enhance CMS, entitled 'Recruitment, Retention and Deployment of Quality Teachers' [*Educate!*, Jan. 16]. It is the same plan that proposes lateral entry tuition assistance and reimbursement for PRAXIS testing at all schools. The complete plan can be found on our website at www.cms.k12.nc.us.

"Additionally, a representative group of teachers (Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council) meets with me on a monthly basis to discuss various issues and concerns. It is a time of dialogue that my staff and I greatly value.

"For the past few weeks I have been scheduling visits to area Teacher Advisory Council meetings where each school is represented. Regional Superintendents currently meet with these groups on a regular basis to discuss issues and gather feedback.

"I also want you to know that CMS has some of the finest principals in the country working in our schools. Each principal is held to very high standards of performance in all areas, and compensa-

'A peek into the future of 2005'

Comments by Supt. Jim Pughsley at a parent meeting at Shamrock Gardens Elementary Tuesday night:

By 2005, "ANY student who has been in CMS for a majority of their elementary years, that student should be on grade level or above.... That's a goal that I have personally."

About questions on choice priorities for parents to leave high-

poverty schools: "There were questions, legitimate questions. But I assure you that there was no attempt to hide any of those."

About national stories focusing on resegregation nationwide: "That's not something I favor. We are going to have to deal with that."

On testing: "I'm not overly enamored by the fact that there is so much testing."

tion is directly tied to their performance.

"In fact, data from teacher survey instruments (which are submitted to the district's Instructional Accountability Department) are included in the principal evaluation instrument. It is important to note that specific issues regarding such evaluations are confidential in nature and cannot be discussed, but I can assure you that the process is fair and thorough.

"Finally, please understand that I place a very high value on the more than 7,000 teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. It is because of this value that I recognize the impact each teacher has on our 112,000 students. As we work together, I am convinced that we can provide a quality education for every student."

The Friday statement Pughsley refers to above was posted Monday afternoon. It reads:

"In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools we understand that the quality of the classroom teacher has the greatest impact on student learning. Our ultimate goal is to provide an excellent education to every one of our 112,000 students. Efforts are continuously under way to reach this goal and to spread the talent of our teaching staff throughout the district.

"As a part of the Superintendent's plan to recruit, retain and deploy quality teachers, changes to the teacher transfer regulations are under consideration.

Specifically, 'In order to assure an equitable distribution of quality teachers, as defined by the district, transfer opportunities will only provide for movement into schools which have not achieved the district's designated staffing standard.'

"In essence, the change would slightly decrease the number of schools allowed to advertise transfer opportunities to other teachers in March. Those schools that already have a staff that matches the designated standard would need to fill any vacancies for the coming school year from the pool of candidates new to CMS. This strategy involves all 145 CMS schools.

"Preliminary simulations indicate that around 27 of our 145 schools may meet the standard and therefore be excluded from advertising transfer opportunities. That means about 118 schools would be advertising transfers. The 27 schools would be spread throughout the district, and a few would be EquityPlus schools. There is still a good possibility that most teachers interested in transferring would find several schools to apply for in the vicinity of their choice.

"As always, CMS remains committed to our students and to our employees."

Comments?

E-mail your comments to: swannfello@aol.com or call Steve Johnston at 704-342-4330.

'Safe harbor' rule in No Child applies to closing a gap

The writer is accountability services director for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

I noticed something you said in the Jan. 9 edition of Educate! that needs clarification. On page 4 you say the following:

From Readers

"Second, if a subgroup at a school drops in number by 10% from the previous year, a failure by that group to meet annual progress goals would not trigger the 'failing' label. So, for example, if 8 of the 65 poor students at a mostly wealthy school left – or were pushed out – and the remaining poor students were not on grade level, the school could avoid being labeled 'failing.'"

I know you are referencing what some refer to as "safe harbor." However, it has nothing to do with simply reducing the number of students in a subgroup.

What it means is that a subgroup will be labeled as making AYP even if the percentage of students who score at or above the proficient level is below the state standard.

This will happen only IF the subgroup has "made progress" on the other academic indicator (attendance in grades 3-8 and graduation rate in high school) AND the percentage of students not proficient in the subgroup is

reduced by at least 10 percent from the previous year.

For example, in reading for grade 10 the SBE standard is set at 52% proficient for this year and the 2003-2004 school year.

If you have a subgroup that only has 40% of its students proficient (meaning 60% not proficient) then although they have not met the state standard of 52% proficient the subgroup will have met AYP if the 60% not proficient is a reduction of at least 10% of the percentage not proficient from the previous year.

If the subgroup had only 32% of

its students proficient last year (68% not proficient) then the safe harbor occurs if the subgroup reduces the 68% not proficient from last year by at least 6.8% (10% of 68%).

Since, in this example, the subgroup performance went from 68% not proficient last year to 60% not proficient this year, the U.S. Department of Education will say that the group has made AYP (again assuming it made progress on the other academic indicator).

Hope this helps.

Lou Fabrizio

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Briefs

Shortfall: Michigan may ask school boards to cut a total of \$134 million from what they spend between now and June 30, the Detroit Free Press reported. Rainy-day and other surplus funds are already depleted.
www.freep.com

Report card: High school graduates tell surveyors that grades are up and homework is down, USA Today reported. The percentage of college freshmen who reported studying six or more hours a week while they were seniors dropped to 33.4%, a record low. In 15 years, the percentage reporting studying less than one hour a week has doubled.
www.usatoday.com

Physics first: About 1% of U.S. high schools have begun teaching physics to ninth-graders, reversing the normal procedure and leaving biology to last, the Washington Post reported. The controversial move's advocates say physics provides an understanding of force and matter that is required for chemistry and biology. Opponents say physics, properly taught, requires more mathematics than ninth-graders have mastered. The traditional pattern of biology-chemistry-physics was set in the late 1800s.

www.washingtonpost.com

Online grades: A Chicago district has begun delivering report-card grades to parents via a Web site, the Tribune reported. The password-protected site also offers attendance data and progress reports. Schools see the system as saving postage costs, speeding up delivery, and assuring parents that they see all grades.

www.chicagotribune.com

Later start time: Seattle's Nathan Hale High will pilot a plan to open later next fall, begin-

Are we making AYP on funding front?

Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association:

"Under the new law [No Child Left Behind], the federal government requires that states report once a year to determine whether schools are making 'adequate yearly progress' on the academic front.

"I say that every year we should also have a second report. This second report will assess whether our leaders in Washington are making 'adequate yearly progress' toward achieving school funding that is adequate to provide the quality ingredients every school needs, including highly qualified teachers and support professionals, small class sizes, modern facilities, and more...."

www.nea.org



Weaver

ning at 8:45 a.m., to give students more sleep, the Times reported. Scheduling concerns focus on afterschool sports. [CMS high schools begin at 7:15 Supt. Jim Pughsley mulled pushing back the schedule, but said Tuesday the additional money for buses and drivers was "just beyond our reach." He said one or two schools might open later on a pilot basis.]
www.seattletimes.com

Using computers: Writing for techlearning.com, Arnold Pulda urges principals to avoid meetings about technology but to encourage one-on-one mentoring. "Teachers are a tough audience to begin with, jealous of their time and attention. They generally range from the skeptical all the way to the cynical to the bunch of guys in the back of the room laughing and pointing. But on the other hand, no one is more grateful than a colleague for a small favor, a hint, a time-saving shortcut, a great Web site or two, or a lesson plan that can be used right away."

www.techlearning.com/db_area/archives/WCE/archives/apulda1.html

The call home: Heather Migdon teaches in Washington D.C. and says she was warned not to call one child's mom. But when the child acted up, she did so, first talking about good things she'd noticed about the child. "Wait. Do you mean to tell me

that Thomas did something GOOD???" Teacher and parent talked more, about both good and bad, and the conversation ended with the parent saying, "I will not let him mess up what he has going for himself with you. I want to keep getting these good phone calls!" Migdon writes that she learned "an important lesson – that so-called uninterested parents can become allies when they know that the teacher is on their side."

www.middleweb.com/mw/msdiaries/02-03wklydiaries/HM02.html

Calendar

- 7 Equity Committee, 8 a.m., Board Room.
- 10 Legislative breakfast, Berry Academy multipurpose room.
- 11 School board meeting, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 20 "Character Development and Work Ethic: Are They Linked?", 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Westin hotel downtown. Free, but for reservation, message kcramer@charlottechamber.com.

March

- 3 Author Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, at Stella Center, 7 p.m., on the value of reading to children.
- 29 Parents on the Move, parent conference, UNCC, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For information: Blanche Penn, 704-890-4101.