

Achievement's up

CMS celebrates its rising test scores; more kids meet low N.C. expectations; yet, results bode ill under No Child

CMS brought the school year to a close this week in a celebratory mood: Academic achievement scores in elementary and middle schools were up, in some case dramatically. And the persistent achievement gaps between wealthy and poor, and white and black, were clearly closing, at least in tested subjects.

The scores were lauded by school board members. And there were political overtones to the public statements: Mecklenburg's county commissioners vote in the next days on the money CMS has asked for to keep the momentum going next year even as it adjusts to 3,000 or so additional students.

For a community dependent on its schools for its economic vitality and, to some degree, even the character of its people, the stakes are high as CMS moves to reach all children with a quality education.

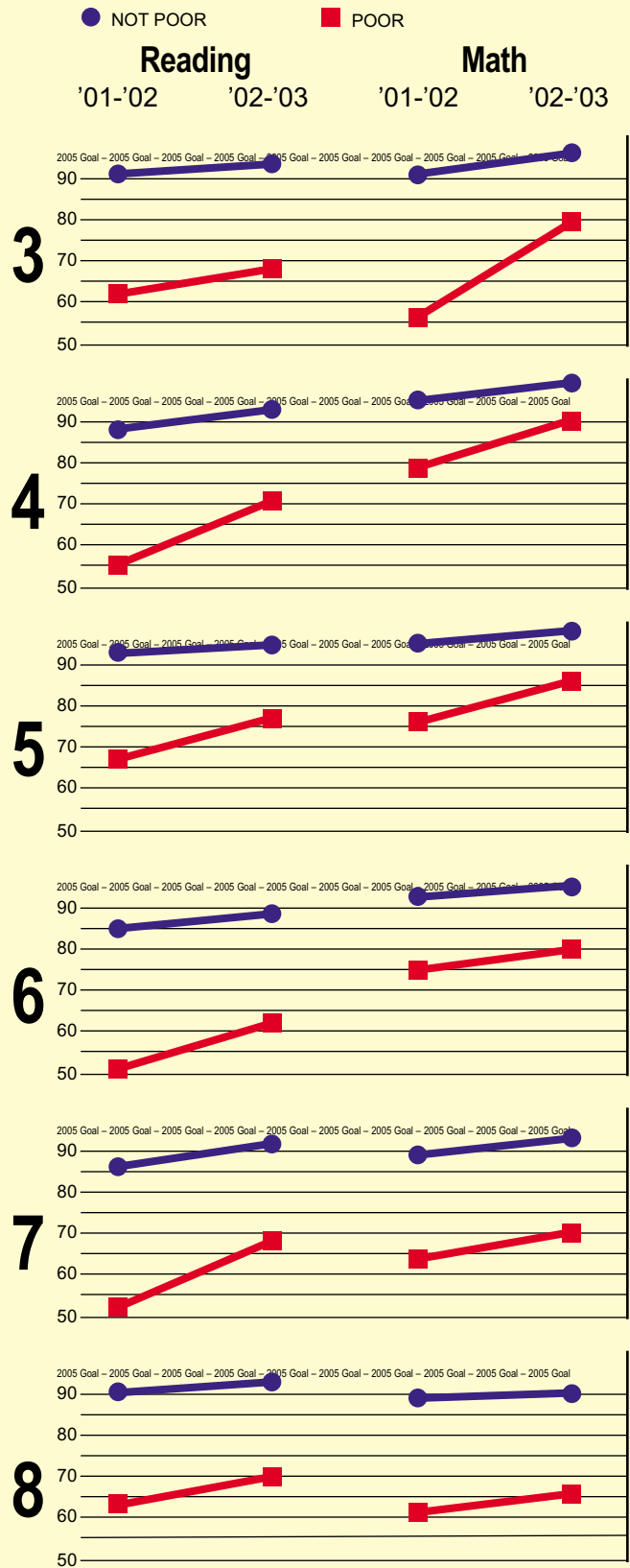
Some of the difficult issues facing CMS show up in the numbers. The bars in the graph at the right show improvements – but no certainty that the goals of having 95% of students on grade level by 2005 can be achieved.

Other issues, however, lurk in what is not being said. There is a debate raging over whether the tests are tough enough. Or whether there are too many of them. Or whether the tests themselves are reshaping what is taught.

Those debates are bearing fruit, at least in this

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CMS end-of-grade test gains



Inside

New texts aimed at raising algebra achievement will be piloted at Equity Plus II schools. Page 13.

A word about fathers – and other mentors. Page 2.

Retiring administrator says CMS will progress only if it evaluates teachers differently. Page 12.

And next week ... *Educate!* will return for an issue chronicling what former school board members said when they gathered June 5 over breakfast.

Kids are watching us, for we are their role models

The writer is president of Charlotte-based Junior Achievement of the Central Carolinas.

By PHILIP A. VALPONI

Sorry J. Lo, it's not you. My apologies Kobe, I thought you would be a slam dunk. Mr. President, with all due respect, someone else leads in the polls.

From Readers

You've heard it before. The role models of yesteryear are gone. That may or may not be true, but now we learn the most important role models of them all never really left.

During his basketball-playing days, Charles Barkley was fond of saying he was not a role model for teens, parents were. Now, on the court of life, today's teens seem to get it: they want mom and dad to coach their plays.

In a spring 2003 poll Junior Achievement conducted with Harris Interactive, teens say parents are the role models they look up to most. Some encouraging news in uncertain times.

According to the poll, 32% of teens say parents are their best role models. Next up were teachers (at 15%), and then basketball star Kobe Bryant (5%), followed by Oprah Winfrey and President George W. Bush (tied at 3% each). Significant mentions included Jennifer Lopez, Bill Gates and Condoleezza Rice.

Certainly, teens look up to famous individuals for their accomplishments and, in some cases, for their fame alone. But fame doesn't cut it. A one-way "relationship" largely forged through the media can't compete with the presence of a caring adult in a child's life. From den

mothers to soccer dads, parents slip easily into the mentor role when their children are young. But even with a seemingly distant teen-ager roaming about the house, underneath the occasional "attitude," behind the smug face proclaiming "I'm cool, you're not," parents are still the ultimate role models.

Most experts agree that parental involvement is crucial to a child's success in school. Parents can help with homework, offer guidance on how to use their free time productively, or even volunteer in their child's school.

Through alliances with organizations such as YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs and 4-H, Junior Achievement gives parents a number of ways to engage their teens.

Parents can volunteer for an afterschool program or volunteer to teach right in their child's class. Topics include how to prepare for the real world of work and business, or how to deal with personal finance issues such as balancing a checkbook, using a credit card, or filing taxes.

Almost always, it helps parents learn as much about their teens as their children learn about the economics of life.

Like the rest of us, teens learn by example. Now that they have quietly admitted they seek that example from their parents, let us remind ourselves: They're watching.

On this Father's Day, I encourage dads – and moms alike – to get as involved as possible with their children. Take your mentoring role even further by volunteering in their classroom this fall.

To learn more about mentoring opportunities, visit www.mentoring.org or www.jacarolinas.org.

When this journal resumes in August, it may be for only

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more issues, based on the funds on hand at the beginning of this month. We offer our thanks to the

8%

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Results

Parents received their children's scores on EOGs this week. Scores are by levels, with I and II being below grade level, III at grade level and IV above

grade level. Below are percentages of children tested at each level, with schools ordered by their percentage of children on or above grade level

Elementary school reading scores

Pct. on grade level (III & IV)	II	II	III	IV	
VILLA HEIGHTS	100.0	0.0	0.0	13.4	86.6
PROVIDENCE SPRING	99.1	0.3	0.6	14.2	84.9
ELIZABETH LANE	98.9	0.0	1.1	17.2	81.7
DAVIDSON	98.4	0.2	1.4	19.7	78.7
HAWK RIDGE	98.3	0.0	1.7	23.1	75.2
MCKEE ROAD	97.8	0.2	2.0	19.3	78.5
COLLINSWOOD	95.8	0.0	4.2	52.1	43.7
MCALPINE	95.5	0.8	3.7	26.1	69.4
OLDE PROVIDENCE	94.9	0.6	4.5	21.7	73.2
MATTHEWS	94.3	1.0	4.7	29.1	65.2
CORNELIUS	93.6	1.1	5.3	28.6	65.0
SELWYN	93.6	1.7	4.7	24.6	69.0
HUNTERSVILLE	93.3	0.7	6.0	26.9	66.4
BEVERLY WOODS	92.6	1.0	6.4	26.2	66.4
BAIN	92.5	2.4	5.1	38.1	54.4
CLEAR CREEK	92.3	2.3	5.4	38.5	53.8
EASTOVER	92.3	2.2	5.5	29.1	63.2
ELIZABETH TRAD.	92.3	1.6	6.1	36.2	56.1
MOUNTAIN ISLAND	91.2	2.2	6.6	40.4	50.8
CROWN POINT	89.7	2.1	8.2	44.1	45.6
LAKE WYLIE	88.9	2.2	8.9	38.9	50.0
LANSDOWNE	88.9	1.6	9.5	38.2	50.7
BLYTHE	88.4	2.3	9.4	33.2	55.2
MALLARD CREEK	87.6	3.0	9.5	35.2	52.4
PINEY GROVE	87.5	2.0	10.5	40.0	47.5
DAVID COX ROAD	87.4	1.9	10.7	37.5	49.9
REEDY CREEK	87.1	2.8	10.1	40.2	46.9
HUNTINGTOWNE	86.9	1.4	11.7	41.4	45.5
MYERS PARK	86.7	3.7	9.5	26.1	60.6
HIGHLAND MILL	86.6	3.1	10.3	40.2	46.4
MOREHEAD	86.6	2.4	11.1	42.0	44.6
TUCKASEEGEE	86.1	2.3	11.6	53.7	32.4
SHARON	85.8	4.9	9.3	25.2	60.6
PARK ROAD MONT.	85.6	3.4	11.0	28.8	56.8
LONG CREEK	85.5	5.1	9.4	36.2	49.3
OAKHURST/GRIER	85.3	4.3	10.3	47.0	38.3
PAW CREEK	85.1	2.2	12.7	48.6	36.5
UNIVERSITY PARK	84.8	1.5	13.6	42.8	42.0
PINEVILLE	84.4	1.5	14.2	39.8	44.6
STEELE CREEK	84.4	2.5	13.2	44.7	39.7
COTSWOLD	83.6	4.1	12.3	39.5	44.1
WINDING SPRINGS	83.4	4.8	11.8	44.9	38.5
GREENWAY PARK	82.6	6.7	10.7	37.0	45.6
HIGHLAND REN.	82.6	2.1	15.3	60.0	22.6
J. H. GUNN	82.3	4.3	13.3	46.5	35.8
DILWORTH	81.0	4.7	14.2	40.9	40.1
BARRINGER	80.9	4.2	14.9	22.8	58.1
LEBANON ROAD	80.7	5.1	14.3	43.5	37.2
SMITHFIELD	80.0	6.2	13.8	41.8	38.2
PINEWOOD	79.8	3.5	16.7	55.6	24.2
ALBEMARLE ROAD	79.5	2.6	17.8	51.8	27.7
NATIONS FORD	79.5	5.5	15.0	52.0	27.5
IDLEWILD	79.2	5.5	15.3	50.6	28.6
BERRYHILL	79.1	4.1	16.9	51.4	27.7
RAMA ROAD	79.1	5.5	15.4	40.4	38.7
UNIVERSITY MEAD.	78.8	5.6	15.5	42.8	36.0
HICKORY GROVE	78.5	5.6	15.9	47.6	30.9
PAWTUCKETT	78.2	4.6	17.1	49.5	28.7

Pct. on grade level (III & IV)

	II	II	III	IV	
STATESVILLE ROAD	78.0	4.7	17.2	42.7	35.3
LINCOLN HEIGHTS	77.4	4.0	18.6	40.9	36.5
MERRY OAKS	77.4	6.0	16.6	45.5	31.9
NEWELL	77.2	5.5	17.4	46.3	30.9
FIRST WARD	76.2	5.9	17.9	43.8	32.4
HORNETS NEST	76.0	4.7	19.4	52.2	23.8
NATH. ALEXANDER	75.1	7.9	17.0	47.9	27.2
STERLING	74.7	5.3	20.1	51.9	22.8
SEDFIELD	74.0	9.1	16.9	53.0	21.0
WINTERFIELD	73.5	5.5	21.0	47.9	25.6
MONTCLAIRE	73.4	7.0	19.6	49.1	24.3
WINDSOR PARK	72.4	4.6	22.9	47.2	25.2
HIDDEN VALLEY	71.9	5.4	22.7	51.7	20.2
ASHLEY PARK	70.6	8.5	20.9	54.3	16.3
IRWIN AVENUE OPEN	70.4	8.4	21.3	37.6	32.8
OAKDALE	69.6	4.6	25.8	45.9	23.7
THOMASBORO	69.0	5.4	25.6	49.8	19.2
SHAMROCK GARD.	67.9	5.8	26.4	51.6	16.3
WESTERLY HILLS	67.3	6.1	26.7	50.6	16.7
ALLENBROOK	67.0	3.7	29.2	48.4	18.6
BRIARWOOD	66.5	7.8	25.6	45.9	20.6
OAKLAWN/BRUNS	66.3	6.6	27.1	49.7	16.6
WALTER G. BYERS	65.3	11.2	23.5	48.8	16.5
REID PK/A. JAMES	62.7	9.4	27.8	46.2	16.5
DEVONSHIRE	61.6	12.5	25.9	46.4	15.2
CHANTILLY	58.5	12.9	28.6	47.1	11.4
DRUID HILLS	58.3	13.0	28.7	44.1	14.2

Middle school reading scores

Pct. on grade level (III & IV)	II	II	III	IV	
DAVIDSON IB	98.8	0.0	1.3	18.8	80.0
JAY M. ROBINSON	96.6	0.7	2.7	29.2	67.4
SOUTH CHARLOTTE	96.6	0.4	3.1	23.7	72.9
CRESTDALE	93.0	1.3	5.7	30.7	62.3
BRADLEY	90.8	2.2	7.0	38.2	52.6
NORTHEAST	89.6	1.3	9.1	42.9	46.7
ALEX. GRAHAM	89.1	2.5	8.4	29.0	60.1
PIEDMONT OPEN	88.0	1.9	10.1	36.7	51.3
RANDOLPH	87.8	2.7	9.5	36.5	51.3
ALEXANDER	87.4	2.8	9.9	40.1	47.3
SMITH LANG.	85.6	3.6	10.7	32.5	53.1
CARMEL	84.0	3.2	12.8	37.4	46.6
KENNEDY	80.8	4.0	15.2	50.9	29.9
NORTHBRIDGE	80.1	3.5	16.3	54.5	25.6
MCCLINTOCK	80.0	5.0	14.9	39.1	40.9
RANSON	77.4	4.8	17.8	48.1	29.3
J. T. WILLIAMS	77.2	2.8	19.9	57.3	19.9
QUAIL HOLLOW	75.9	5.2	18.9	39.1	36.8
COULWOOD	74.1	5.6	20.2	47.3	26.8
ALBEMARLE ROAD	72.7	5.7	21.6	49.4	23.3
MARTIN	71.4	5.4	23.2	50.5	20.9
WILSON	70.9	6.1	23.0	55.1	15.8
SEDFIELD	70.5	5.6	23.9	47.7	22.8
COCHRANE	69.2	7.0	23.8	48.8	20.4
EASTWAY	66.6	8.0	25.5	51.7	14.9
SPAUGH	56.6	12.0	31.5	44.2	12.4
MARIE G. DAVIS	55.5	9.6	34.9	43.8	11.7

Data: CMS

Trends

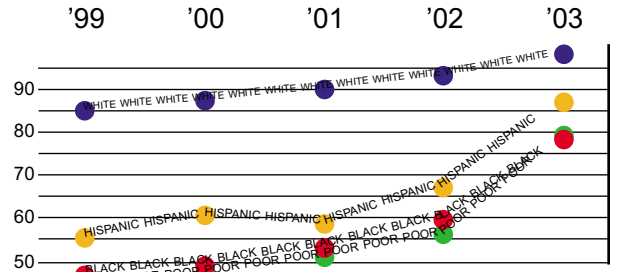
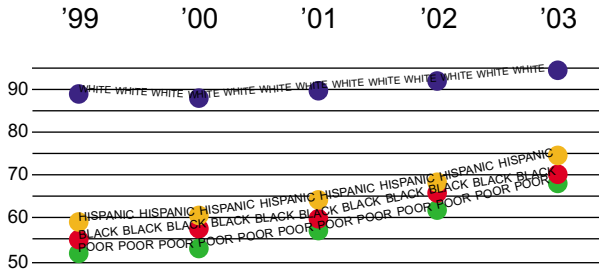
Systemwide, all grades moved up in both math and reading. The system's 2005 goal (just two years away now) is to have all demographic groups 95% on

grade level – the top horizontal line. Lower-grade math scores are on track; despite big gains this year, others may not be. Data from CMS.

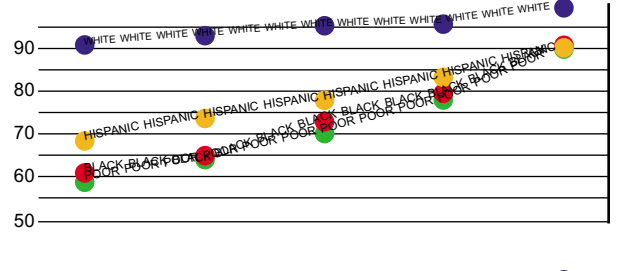
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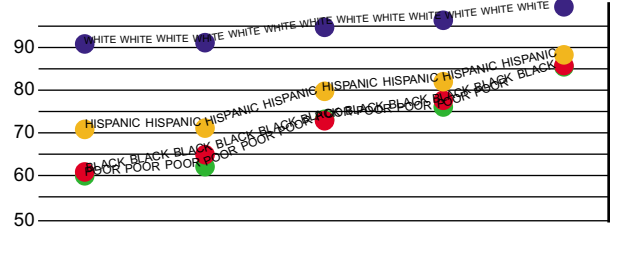
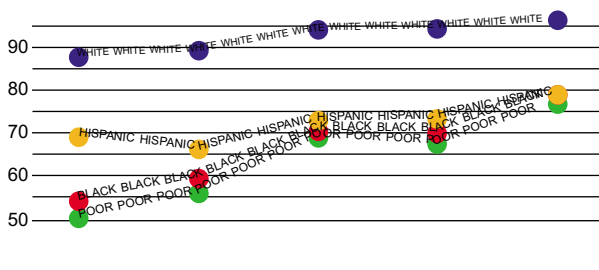
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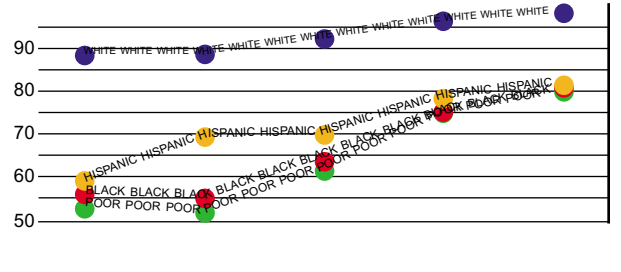
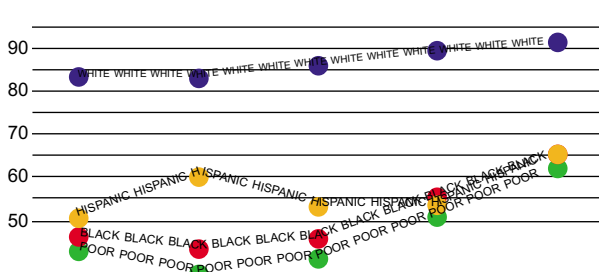
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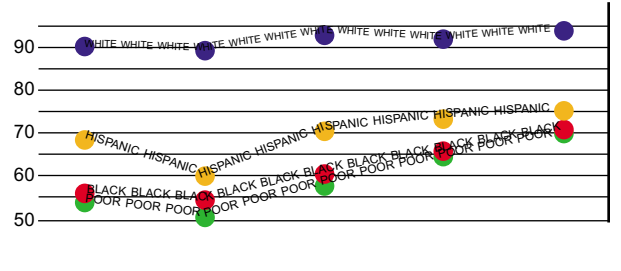
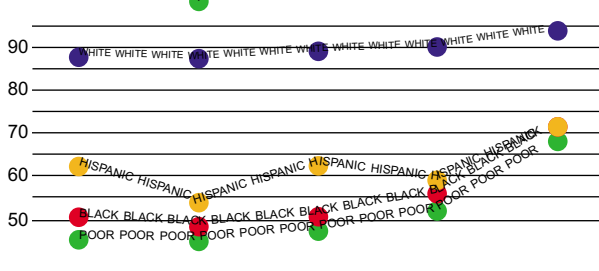
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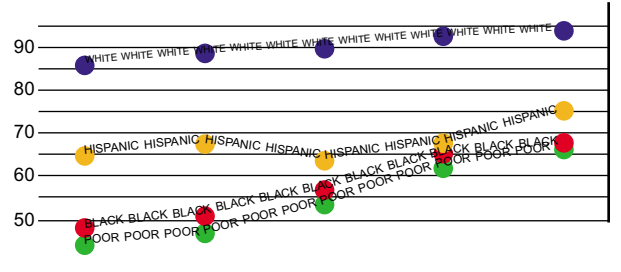
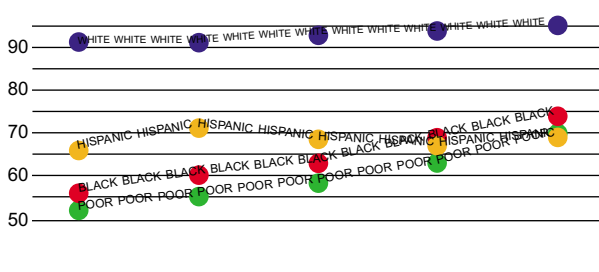
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End-of-Grade Test Results

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way: As one Charlottean puts it, “more and more people are beginning to learn what the questions are.”

What made difference?

For Supt. Jim Pughsley, there was no question but that a new emphasis on teamwork played a key role in raising scores.

Pughsley thanked teachers and students for redoubling their efforts. He thanked his central administrative staff, many of whom had stayed on last June to make the first year of his superintendency run smoothly.

For curriculum chief Frances Haithcock, the scores rose because of two key factors: programs, and expectations.

Several research-based curriculum initiatives are in their first or second year. Haithcock believes data will show later this summer that the CMS version of the highly scripted Saxon math curriculum allowed some high-needs schools to beat the systemwide average math scores this year.

And Open Court, the scripted reading program initiated by former Supt. Eric Smith, is in its second year.

Pughsley referred to Open Court Wednesday, saying some teachers “were resisting it last year. There is more support this year.” Open Court has a basic

Overall at grade level

Percentage of students on or above grade level, by grade. All categories are up:

Gr.	Reading		Math	
	'02	'03	'02	'03
3	78	82	76	88
4	74	83	88	95
5	81	87	87	92
6	71	77	85	88
7	73	82	79	82
8	81	84	79	81

Data: CMS

text, but it is designed to provide supplemental material for readers across a spectrum of achievement. In theory, no child should be bored with the material, and there appeared to be fewer complaints of boredom this year.

Were students taking the work more seriously this year? Were teachers better connecting with their students? Were those factors in the test results? Pughsley dodged those questions, preferring to highlight his administrators, who worked “as a team with a common focus.”

That message of teamwork was “a very powerful message to people in the schools,” he said. It is part of a culture change, of “altered behaviors” that Pughsley says he wants to bring about.

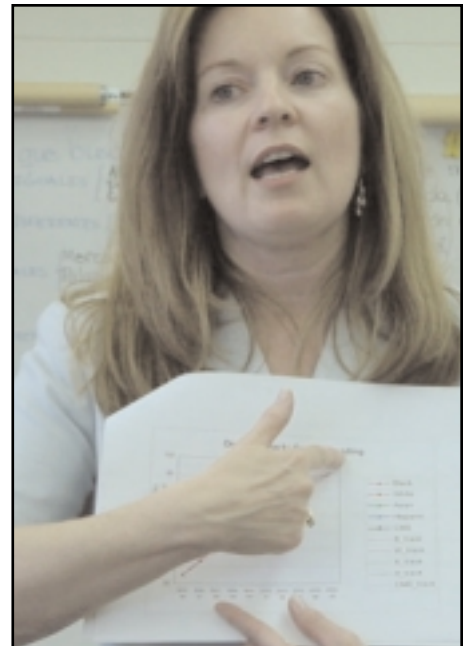
“We will continue to make a difference,” he said.

Are the scores right?

Collinswood Elementary was used for the announcement of test scores this year to honor a school that had 95.8% of its students on grade level – in a school in which about a quarter have limited English skills.

Yet one Collinswood parent who came to the announcement was not prepared to believe that students in all grade levels systemwide could possibly have improved – or certainly not as much in one year as the test results suggested.

Testing chief Susan Agruso says



CMS testing chief Susan Agruso explains results to reporters at a briefing Monday. Agruso says July will bring less happy news when annual yearly progress is calculated under No Child Left Behind – and many schools will be labeled “needs improvement.” But about kids’ test scores this week: “Let them go home for the summer feeling good about themselves,” she says. “They deserve it.”

the state won’t know for sure that the tests were properly calibrated until more systems’ data is analyzed. But thus far, she said, all indications are that the tests went as planned, and that the gains are real.

Two years ago the math results had to restated downward when it became clear that the pass rate had been set too low. Individual children kept their inflated scores, but school and district data was revised downward.

Is standard adequate?

But the larger issue with the state’s tests has to do with whether, in general, “on grade level” is set at a sufficiently rigorous level.

Readers of *Educate!* will be

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Growth at the top

Percentage of students classified Level IV, the top group, by grade. All are up except grade 6 reading:

Gr.	Reading		Math	
	'02	'03	'02	'03
3	43	46	38	47
4	34	44	46	62
5	41	44	56	64
6	36	30	49	57
7	38	43	50	54
8	40	43	45	48

Data: CMS

Continued from Page 5

familiar with this argument: that in the mid-'90s, state education officials set the pass rates low, both to avoid having an overwhelming number of children fail in the tests' early years, and to make enough schools successful that a fair number of teachers would receive the annual salary bonuses that go to staff at schools achieving expected growth.

Those low pass rates were supposed to be raised periodically in succeeding years. But they never have been.

Former CMS board chairperson Arthur Griffin lobbied hard to get CMS involved in annual testing for NAEP, the national test that is, to many educators, a far better test of schoolchildren's proficiency. NAEP scores for CMS will be released this fall. School-by-school results will not be available, because NAEP uses too small a sample of students to compile reliable school data.

For parents and some school advocates, NAEP scores will be a shock. They will be far lower than the EOGs reported this week. They may help shape public understanding, however, of how much work is ahead for CMS, its

Blacks: Gains, task ahead

Year's increase in percentage on or above grade level, by grade, and points yet to go in two years, to reach 2005 goal of having 95% on grade level:

Gr.	Reading gain	To go in 2 yrs	Math gain	To go in 2 yrs
3	4	25	19	17
4	15	22	12	4
5	9	16	9	9
6	10	30	6	14
7	16	23	5	24
8	5	21	3	27
3-8	10	23	9	16

Data: CMS

teachers and students, on the road to proficiency for all.

At what cost to teachers?

Teacher turnover peaked at 22% two years, and was more than 19% last year. The state's average is around 12%, and other large N.C. districts are even lower.

Pughsley says it's too early to be certain, but "it looks like it is down" this year. He said some reforms inside the CMS human resources department would help: Case managers will ride herd on

Whites: Gains, task ahead

Year's increase in percentage on or above grade level, by grade, and points yet to go in two years, to reach 2005 goal of having 95% on grade level:

Gr.	Reading gain	To go in 2 yrs	Math gain	To go in 2 yrs
3	2	1	4	*
4	4	1	2	*
5	2	*	2	*
6	3	3	1	*
7	4	1	1	1
8	1	*	1	1
3-8	3	1	2	*

*Goal achieved

Data: CMS

provisional teachers who must pass a test to remain eligible for employment.

Pughsley tells a story about meeting a teacher last spring who was going to quit teaching for lack of the roughly \$200 testing fee. CMS now has a fund to assist teachers – perhaps a wise public investment, when recruiting and training a new employee costs \$10,000 or more.

CMS does not regularly report teacher turnover. But if the rate

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Reading on grade level of blacks, by racial isolation in middle schools

School	School's black percentage	Pct. of blacks on grade level	School	School's black percentage	Pct. of blacks on grade level
MARIE G. DAVIS	91.5	53.9	RANDOLPH	44.8	78.8
J. T. WILLIAMS	90.3	76.5	MCCLINTOCK	44.2	67.8
SPAUGH	89.2	53.9	SMITH LANGUAGE	32.9	68.8
COCHRANE	74.8	67.7	QUAIL HOLLOW	31.7	68.3
RANSON	72.1	74.7	ALEXANDER	31.6	78.1
MARTIN	71.1	67.4	CARMEL	27.4	68.0
NORTHRIDGE	69.9	77.4	ALEXANDER GRAHAM	27.2	67.7
EASTWAY	66.9	65.3	NORTHEAST	22.7	78.6
WILSON	64.6	65.9	BRADLEY	20.8	75.2
ALBEMARLE ROAD	59.4	70.2	CRESTDALE	15.4	80.2
SEDGEFIELD	57.5	66.5	JAY M. ROBINSON	9.5	78.0
PIEDMONT OPEN	51.4	82.5	SOUTH CHARLOTTE	9.4	84.5
COULWOOD	49.3	69.4	DAVIDSON IB	9.2	95.4
KENNEDY	48.4	72.9			

Data: CMS

End-of-Grade Test Results

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is going down, perhaps now is the time to institutionalize regular reporting. If recent trends continue, such reports will show that hundreds of teachers depart by Thanksgiving, hundreds more by Christmas. And that's not counting the retirees, whose numbers will be growing for some years to come.

What about No Child?

As good as the end-of-grade scores are, they suggest that many CMS schools will, in just a month, be declared as "needs improvement" under No Child Left Behind.

Indeed, of the seven schools CMS highlighted this week for their EOG achievements, six may be headed into the No Child doghouse.

In July, new reports will list how schools did on "annual yearly progress," a No Child term that is designed to push all schools to make incremental progress toward the 2013-2014 goal of having 100% of children on or above grade level.

Schools that don't make AYP will be labeled as "needs improvement." To avoid the bad publicity

or worse, schools must make AYP with all subgroups of students. If just one group misses the mark, the whole school gets labeled.

Statewide, 60% or more of schools are expected to miss AYP – many because of not meeting the goal with just a few children.

Testing chief Agruso says this week's scores do not clarify yet which schools will meet AYP. The reasons are many, but here are several:

- Students who have been at a school less than 140 days will not count when a school's AYP is figured.
- In practice, that means that some at-risk children from the low-income

families that tend to move during the year won't be counted, possibly boosting a school's chances of meeting AYP.

Another part of the law allows some students who are below grade level to be counted as meeting AYP if they have made some progress. This "safe harbor" provi-

sion may cut the number of exceptional children not meeting AYP.

A third factor has to do with attendance: Students must be in school 95% of the time. Agruso says absences on Memorial Day, when CMS was making up a snow day, now put some schools at risk of not meeting AYP.

But for some schools, the die is already cast: No Child in this state requires, this year, that 68.9% of all students in a school, and 68.9% of students in each subcategory under the law, must be reading at or above grade level. The floor this year in math is 74.6%. As the tables on these pages make clear, there will be lots of "needs improvement" signs to hang in July.

Where are high schools?

End-of-grade tests are administered first. End-of-course tests in the high schools were only just completed last week, and will be reported later.

What about choice?

At Tuesday night's school board meeting, several members noted that these EOGs are the first under the family choice plan. Pughsley has talked about how

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Grade	Read.	Math
3	4	18
4	11	8
5	8	8
6	7	3
7	10	3
8	5	3
3-8	7	7

Reading on grade level of poor children, by isolation in middle schools

School	School's percentage poor	Pct. of poor on grade level	School	School's percentage poor	Pct. of poor on grade level
MARIE G. DAVIS	88.3	54.6	QUAIL HOLLOW	42.9	59.0
SPAUGH	86.7	53.3	KENNEDY	39.7	69.0
EASTWAY	79.2	64.4	RANDOLPH	39.7	76.7
J. T. WILLIAMS	75.2	72.9	SMITH LANG.	30.3	64.6
WILSON	75.2	68.6	CARMEL	26.5	61.4
COCHRANE	69.2	64.2	ALEXANDER GRAHAM	25.4	66.5
SEDFIELD	63.6	63.8	NORTHEAST	23.4	76.5
RANSON	58.4	68.6	ALEXANDER	22.6	70.7
ALBEMARLE ROAD	57.2	66.2	CRESTDALE	16.4	77.0
MARTIN	54.5	60.9	BRADLEY	16.3	71.5
COULWOOD	53.5	64.6	SOUTH CHARLOTTE	8.7	85.9
NORTHRIDGE	51.1	73.4	JAY M. ROBINSON	6.6	76.0
PIEDMONT OPEN	43.7	76.9	DAVIDSON IB	5.4	77.0
MCCLINTOCK	43.6	68.5			

Data: CMS

End-of-Grade Test Results

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students were uprooted, but how all students would be expected to learn, wherever they were (Statement, Page 11).

The choice plan resegregated many schools, and family choices this spring assure further racial and socioeconomic segregation next fall. Charts on these pages may help readers assess whether choice has created educationally unsound schools.

Pughsley has said he will seek unspecified changes in the choice plan, effective with next January's lottery. A school board committee may take up that discussion as early as next month.

The tenor of the discussion Tuesday night, however, and the clear "message" from CMS, was that progress is being made at all grades, with all kinds of students, wherever they are.

What are gateways?

For children in grades three, five and eight, EOGs may signal whether or not they advance to the next grade. Agruso says she hates the thought of sending third-graders to summer school, because they are too young to understand the import of testing, or even of how important it is to be learning every day.

But summer school, and the additional chances it brings to pass the tests, really captures the attention of eighth-graders, she says. Eighth-graders are focused on moving on to high school. If last year is a guide, most will do so, either by passing the test or by being promoted by the principal, based on other factors.

CMS's new vision of "the high school that works," presented Tuesday to the school board, includes a ninth-grade academy at each high school where low-performing students will, as one wag puts it, "be rehabilitated."

Agruso told the school board Tuesday night that the number of children not making it through the gateways during regular school session was cut by about 25% this year – another sign that children and staff are taking the program more seriously.

Must we test so much?

"My problem is that we do too much testing," board member Vilma Leake said Tuesday night. "There is too much testing, across the country, in this state...."

Testing chief Agruso agrees.

The burden of days lost to testing is only part of the problem. For many critics, tests that can be easily (and inexpensively) graded narrow the material that can be

evaluated, which means that teachers narrow what they teach.

And, of course, the state's focus just on reading and math means that social studies, art, languages and other parts of the N.C. Course of Study get less time in the classroom as teachers concentrate on subjects to be tested.

No Child Left Behind will force the state to add a science test in several years.

Advocates believe that testing has forced educators to achieve results with all students. No Child Left Behind was modeled on the extensive testing programs in North Carolina and Texas.

Agruso's beef with the testing program appears to lie chiefly with the "field tests" that are administered at selected grades and schools to "try out" the questions that might be used in future years. The field tests take still more time away from instruction. Also, the field tests do not carry consequences for children or teachers. As a result, some children do not take them seriously.

Where's rest of data?

Test results have been compiled in PDF files and are available at www.cms.k12.nc.us. A school's results cover three pages, with data for reading and math listed

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A student project breaks up the concrete block wall space in Collinswood's multipurpose room.

End-of-Grade Test Results

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for subgroups and the school as a whole, with the number of children tested in each group and the percentage falling into each of the four levels. A percentage also is

given for the number in each group on or above grade level.

More data is on the way. For high schools. For AYP, or annual yearly progress under No Child Left Behind. In September, the state will release final data for all

school systems. By year's end the state's new report cards, also mandated by No Child, will give basic information on every school and district in the state. Partial data from last year is already posted at www.ncreportcards.org.

Reading on grade level of black children, by isolation in elementaries

School	School's black percentage	Pct. of blacks on grade level	School	School's black percentage	Pct. of blacks on grade level
REID PARK/AMAY JAMES	96.2	61.8	MYERS PARK TRADITIONAL	49.4	75.6
OAKLAWN/BRUNS	93.9	64.1	STEELE CREEK	49.2	81.1
ASHLEY PARK	93.0	70.0	GREENWAY PARK	45.3	74.3
WALTER G. BYERS	92.4	63.7	REEDY CREEK	44.8	79.4
DRUID HILLS	90.3	58.7	PAW CREEK	42.3	80.4
FIRST WARD	89.5	74.2	COTSWOLD	42.1	74.4
THOMASBORO	83.3	70.4	PINEY GROVE	42.0	83.8
WESTERLY HILLS	80.6	66.9	RAMA ROAD	40.8	60.5
CHANTILLY	80.0	58.9	VILLA HEIGHTS	38.7	100.0
BRIARWOOD	79.0	68.0	MALLARD CREEK	38.7	78.1
HIDDEN VALLEY	78.9	73.3	DAVID COX ROAD	38.6	79.6
DEVONSHIRE	73.8	61.3	MONTCLAIRE	38.3	70.8
NATHANIEL ALEXANDER	72.5	73.8	TUCKASEEGEE	37.8	81.6
HIGHLAND REN.	72.1	81.1	PARK ROAD MONTESSORI	37.0	64.8
NATIONS FORD	71.5	74.8	LEBANON ROAD	36.9	71.8
HORNETS NEST	71.3	71.1	HUNTINGTOWNE FARMS	36.6	76.4
ALBEMARLE ROAD	69.9	77.1	LANSDOWNE	31.7	72.2
IDLEWILD	69.4	82.5	SMITHFIELD	31.3	65.9
WINDING SPRINGS	69.0	80.6	MOUNTAIN ISLAND	30.3	84.7
IRWIN AVENUE OPEN	68.6	65.5	CROWN POINT	30.0	83.4
HIGHLAND MILL MONTESSORI	68.0	81.9	LAKE WYLIE	28.5	82.0
OAKDALE	68.0	65.9	BERRYHILL	27.7	68.3
SEDFIELD	68.0	69.8	CLEAR CREEK	25.8	86.0
MOREHEAD	67.9	83.0	EASTOVER	25.3	78.2
LINCOLN HEIGHTS	67.5	73.5	SHARON	24.0	66.1
STERLING	66.1	71.2	LONG CREEK	22.8	69.8
SHAMROCK GARDENS	65.9	65.8	COLLINSWOOD	22.7	92.6
WINTERFIELD	64.7	72.8	PINEVILLE	22.6	74.7
HICKORY GROVE	63.2	77.3	BEVERLY WOODS	18.8	78.6
OAKHURST/GRIER	62.0	81.2	SELWYN	18.5	83.7
WINDSOR PARK	60.1	65.7	BLYTHE	17.4	81.0
ALLENBROOK	59.6	64.6	MATTHEWS	12.2	83.8
PAWTUCKETT	59.3	77.4	HUNTERSVILLE	11.8	71.4
UNIVERSITY PARK	58.7	76.8	MCALPINE	11.3	92.5
UNIVERSITY MEADOWS	58.6	73.9	OLDE PROVIDENCE	9.5	81.2
MERRY OAKS	58.3	72.2	CORNELIUS	8.7	65.3
DILWORTH	57.3	70.7	DAVIDSON	8.6	86.4
NEWELL	57.0	73.4	MCKEE ROAD	6.8	83.8
BARRINGER	54.8	65.6	HAWK RIDGE	6.3	90.3
ELIZABETH TRADITIONAL	53.7	86.3	BAIN	6.1	91.3
J. H. GUNN	53.5	78.9	PROVIDENCE SPRING	5.7	100.0
STATESVILLE ROAD	52.2	77.7	ELIZABETH LANE	4.0	100.0
PINEWOOD	50.0	75.8			

Data: CMS

Calendar

- 17 Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services.
- 17 Board policy committee, 3 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 19 Finance, Capital & Facilities

- Committee, 4 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 24 Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Board Conference Room.
- 24 School Board meets, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 25 Ed. Budget Adv. Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center.

- 25 Cooper Thompson, author of "White Men Challenging Racism." Reception 5:45, reading 6:30, signing 8:00. Museum of the New South, RSVP by 3 p.m. June 24 to rthompson@ci.charlotte.nc.us or 704-336-2424.

Reading on grade level of poor children, by isolation in elementaries

School	School's percentage poor	Pct. of poor on grade level	School	School's percentage poor	Pct. of poor on grade level
REID PARK/AMAY JAMES PK	95.8	61.5	COTSWOLD	50.8	72.7
HIGHLAND REN.	93.2	83.1	HUNTINGTOWNE FARMS	50.7	76.9
SHAMROCK GARDENS	92.6	67.4	WINDING SPRINGS	50.3	78.8
DRUID HILLS	91.5	57.1	LEBANON ROAD	50.0	73.8
CHANTILLY	91.4	58.6	STEELE CREEK	49.0	77.3
WALTER G. BYERS	91.2	64.5	DILWORTH	48.7	65.5
OAKLAWN/BRUNS	91.2	64.2	RAMA ROAD	46.6	65.5
THOMASBORO	88.7	68.4	MOREHEAD	45.8	76.8
SEDFIELD	87.7	72.4	SMITHFIELD	44.2	64.3
ASHLEY PARK	87.6	68.2	BARRINGER	42.4	60.8
HIDDEN VALLEY	86.8	71.0	PAW CREEK	42.3	76.4
DEVONSHIRE	86.7	59.6	CROWN POINT	40.3	82.5
WESTERLY HILLS	86.1	65.2	HIGHLAND MILL MONTESSORI	38.1	75.7
BRIARWOOD	85.8	66.0	PINEVILLE	37.7	70.4
MERRY OAKS	84.3	76.8	PARK ROAD MONTESSORI	35.6	69.3
ALLENBROOK	82.0	65.9	ELIZABETH TRADITIONAL	34.6	89.4
MONTCLAIRE	80.8	71.1	LANSDOWNE	34.3	75.3
FIRST WARD	80.6	73.5	REEDY CREEK	31.3	75.5
STERLING	79.4	71.4	CLEAR CREEK	30.8	85.3
PINEWOOD	79.3	79.0	MYERS PARK TRADITIONAL	30.7	68.9
NATIONS FORD	77.5	76.1	DAVID COX ROAD	28.4	72.9
WINTERFIELD	76.1	70.7	EASTOVER	27.5	74.0
IDLEWILD	74.1	76.2	LAKE WYLIE	26.1	78.8
COLLINSWOOD	73.9	95.4	MOUNTAIN ISLAND	24.6	83.4
BERRYHILL	73.6	75.2	MALLARD CREEK	22.4	74.5
WINDSOR PARK	72.0	67.5	LONG CREEK	21.4	67.8
ALBEMARLE ROAD	71.7	75.9	SHARON	21.1	57.7
OAKDALE	71.6	66.1	BLYTHE	20.5	65.3
IRWIN AVENUE OPEN	69.0	60.6	VILLA HEIGHTS	20.4	100.0
PAWTUCKETT	66.2	74.1	MATTHEWS	19.5	82.9
LINCOLN HEIGHTS	65.7	70.0	BEVERLY WOODS	19.5	72.5
STATESVILLE ROAD	65.5	70.4	SELWYN	16.4	84.2
TUCKASEEGEE	64.5	82.0	CORNELIUS	14.3	72.8
NEWELL	60.1	69.7	BAIN	13.9	78.9
J. H. GUNN	59.0	75.5	MCALPINE	11.9	81.0
UNIVERSITY MEADOWS	55.8	72.2	HUNTERSVILLE	11.5	62.5
OAKHURST/GRIER	53.3	78.2	OLDE PROVIDENCE	11.3	73.7
HORNETS NEST	53.2	66.9	DAVIDSON	10.2	88.6
UNIVERSITY PARK	52.3	76.1	HAWK RIDGE	6.3	85.3
NATHANIEL ALEXANDER	51.8	67.8	ELIZABETH LANE	5.0	100.0
HICKORY GROVE	51.4	68.6	MCKEE ROAD	4.4	75.0
PINEY GROVE	51.2	82.1	PROVIDENCE SPRING	2.5	100.0
GREENWAY PARK	51.1	71.8			

Data: CMS

Pughsley: 'Our total CMS family came together'

A statement from Supt. Jim Pughsley summarizing the EOG test results:

On August 19, 2002, we began a new school year in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, but it wasn't just any school year. We were gearing up for one of the most challenging years ever for our district and our community. Schools throughout CMS were experiencing tremendous change with the new family choice plan. Many students would be going to new schools, several new principals were at the helm, and yes, we even had a new superintendent.

At that time, I challenged our administrators and staff members to come together as a team to make this school year successful. From day one, our total CMS team took on this challenge with a can-do attitude. Today, 180 school days later, we see the fruits of our labor.

Across the board, end-of-grade test scores for students in grades 3-8 are up in reading and math, and our achievement gap continues to narrow for all students. As superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, I cannot think of a better way to close out this school year than by celebrating these great results.

Here are just some of the highlights of the scores:

- At the third-grade level, 82% of students performed on grade level in reading as compared to 78% last year. In math, 88% of third-graders scored on grade level as compared to 76% last year.

- At the fourth-grade level, 95% of students performed on grade level in math as compared to 88% last year. Reading scores for fourth-grade students increased from 74% last year to 83% this year.

- Fifth-grade results were just as impressive, with 87% of students performing on grade level in reading, up from 81% last year.

In math, 92% performed on grade level as compared to 87% last year.

- At the middle school level, gains were also made across the board in both reading and math at every grade level.

- Scores for African-American students increased, with 79% of fifth-grade students on grade level in reading and 86% of fifth-grade students on grade level in math.

- Students achieving at Level IV (the highest level) increased for every grade level, except sixth grade in reading. In reading, 46% of third-grade students performed at Level IV and 44% of fourth- and fifth-grade students performed on Level IV. In math, 62% of fourth-grade students performed at Level IV and 64% of fifth-grade students performed at Level IV.

- Scores for students receiving free and reduced price lunch went up, with fourth- and fifth-grade students performing extremely well.

I believe that it is truly in times of adversity and change that we demonstrate who we are and focus our efforts on what really matters – teaching for learning. These results clearly demonstrate that our total CMS family came together to make this year work for our students and their families.

I want to take this opportunity to thank “the team” for their focus and for not taking their eyes off the goal. To the CMS Board of Education, thank you for your leadership and direction. To our senior staff and administrators, thank you for remaining committed and dedicated, even during a time of great change. To our teachers and staff who serve on



Pughsley addresses a briefing Monday at Collinswood Elementary.

the front lines every day, you truly made the difference for our children. Each and every day you entered the classroom ready to teach every child, and your efforts paid off. To our families and the community at large, thank you for your interest, your involvement and your support. And to our elected officials, your financial support and interest in our schools helped make these success stories possible. Because of your support, we were able to continue in our journey to build a culture of achievement, fairness and hope for every child.

Most importantly, to our students, thank you for taking your education seriously. The opportunities you received in school this year were limitless, and you took advantage of them. I am extremely proud of our students and those who helped them achieve greatness. As I said earlier in the year, in CMS, we are about excellence, equity and beyond. Thank you, Charlotte community, for helping define what “beyond” can look like for every child. Just imagine what 2003-2004 can look like with all of us pulling together!

Teacher evaluation next step in raising scores?

Equalizing facilities and access to challenging coursework has just about been accomplished, a retiring CMS administrator asserts.

The next boost in achievement must come from a change in teacher attitudes, he says.

"My premise is that what you evaluate, you get done," says John Fries, who next month leaves CMS from the position of executive regional superintendent.



Fries

CMS has put in place "much tighter supervision of principals in terms of expectations for curriculum." But those principals have little way to reward excellent teachers.

Principals evaluate teachers chiefly on whether they perform specified tasks, like filling in forms, maintaining order, asking children the appropriate questions and so forth.

"Our present teacher evaluation doesn't take into account, nearly as it should, actual student performance.... That's an area we probably need to do more work on."

Addressing the CMS Equity Committee Friday, Fries said teachers and administrators will have to negotiate a way to evaluate what student achievement can tell principals about teacher competence.

The district must factor in how much students knew at the beginning of the year, he said.

"We need dialogue between teachers' organizations and administration.... It's an area of uncharted waters.... We've had some preliminary talks but we're nowhere where we need to be."

Equity Plus II schools have been the focus of CMS's effort to equalize school offerings across the district. E+II schools have the largest number of struggling chil-

dren, and millions have been spent assuring that each has the facilities, materials and extra personnel needed to boost students' achievement.

But, says Fries, "we've given these schools about all the stuff we can give them." Incentives are in place to encourage strong teachers to stay.

"The only think I see we need to continue to work on is behavior of teachers."

End-of-grade testing, the results of which were released this week (story, Page 1) sends a message of what's important, Fries acknowledged.

"What you measure is generally what you get," he said, but added, "We're doing it at a school level, but not at a teacher level."

Principals should be evaluating each teacher's ability to have each child learn the curriculum.

"If principals aren't evaluating (teaching) plans, how are you ever going to get kids to learn?" Fries asked.

"If you want the school to perform appropriately," he said, teachers must get "credit for the outcomes of their kids," just as principals are held accountable for their school's outcome.

When a school's scores go up, as happened this year, "some teachers contribute more than others, but right now every one gets the bonus.... I think we're going to have to take it one level lower."

"It's going to be tough, because you're going to get resistance."

Fries said he hoped CMS learned from business leaders how to improve working conditions to reduce teacher turnover.

Successful schools, he said, have the following hallmarks:

Sense of community: "Teachers are lead teachers and parents are the first teachers," Fries says. When a schoolhouse really honors both parts of that pairing, "when you walk in, you sense it, you feel it."

Curriculum of coherence:

When all the pieces of a curriculum are in place, Fries says, students "see that learning has a purpose," that all the pieces are related, and that the results "apply to life."

Climate: The field trips and extra materials are not distractions, but "the underpinning of ensuring that the core business of the school" is accomplished.

Character: CMS has "just started" focusing on a formal character curriculum that includes "are you teaching kids to get along, to be diligent in their work?... What are we doing for the greater good?"

Asked whether administrators are listening enough to teachers, Fries asserted, "We're not talking enough," he said, and warned that "if you're not careful with that, it becomes 'us' and 'them.'"

Meetings bring administrators together, but in those venues "you don't get into that real dialogue that you're talking about," Fries said. The big issue is "whether that principal is receptive to hearing those things or even has the training to understand that (listening) is an important part of their job."

"We have some very strong principals, and with the right training we can improve that whole listening process."

To Fries, listening includes exit interviews. "We don't do nearly enough research with those who leave." He believes one outcome of such research will be to prove the value of mentors.

Mentors don't just teach new teachers to teach: They are often the person who listens.

Committee chair Wright asked Fries if, before he retired, anyone would be debriefing HIM about how ways in which CMS could improve.

"You are doing it right now," Fries said. "I hope you do something with it."

New algebra texts to be piloted at E+ schools

Among next year's tasks is adoption of new math textbooks for CMS. But for the district's curriculum leader, preparations began a year ago.

Frances Haithcock, associate superintendent for education services, said she had been reviewing texts and programs for a year now. The adopted materials won't be in most schools until 2004-05.

Based on research, CMS believes it has found a text, Algebraic Thinking, that will prepare Level 1 and Level 2 learners for success in algebra.



Haithcock

"We feel that that is going to solve most of our problems," she told members of the CMS Equity Committee Friday.

"It's no longer which textbook has the prettiest pictures. And believe me, that was an important criterion in the past."

The texts will debut early at Equity Plus II schools, which have many below-grade-level students. And she said there were three reasons for that.

First, she said she prefers always to have a pilot program with a new text to confirm national research that supports the book's approach.

Second, limited funds also required a small pilot.

And third, because so many students at E+ schools are struggling with algebra, "I didn't want to wait for math adoption."

When committee member Mike Kasper asked about programs for children at levels 3 and 4, Haithcock said some sixth-graders are already taking eighth-grade math.

Serving high-achieving children "has not been our problem," Haithcock asserted. "Our problem has been to get more students into that accelerated path."

Haithcock said CMS was in the

second year of an effort to push more students into supplemental material.

"Every Level 3 and Level 4 student needs to be in accelerated material," she said. Test data supports the effort.

"If you push the kids and expose them, then even if they don't turn out to be an A+ student, they will be more involved in the next class."

"The exposure to rigor is very valuable for students and allows a lot of additional students to be successful."

The Talent Development program is of particular interest to several members of the committee. Haithcock reminded them that the TD teacher's role has changed.

Once a teacher of small groups of students pulled out for supplemental material, today's TD teacher make sure regular classroom teachers have the curriculum they need to teach each child.

"The whole organization of TD," said Haithcock, has changed so that every teacher is supposed to be able to appropriate differentiation."

The decision about what is "appropriate" has brought friction, with students, parents teachers and counselors in various cases objecting to placing children in more demanding coursework.

"Parents were concerned that their children were being pushed too much," Haithcock said. Students would register for where they felt comfortable, which usually wasn't in a challenging course.

To end the debate, CMS has simply placed children in more demanding courses when test scores suggest they can handle the work. Now, says Haithcock, "it has to have a lot of attention to get a kid out of the class."

The committee appeared focused on whether the new math

adoption would be implemented equitably across the district.

Haithcock replied that while the final decision was up to Pughsley, she expected that all students would be involved. Even in special programs like Montessori, teachers will be expected to blend the new textbooks into their work.

"What checks and balances are there to be sure that's happening?" asked member Gwen Cunningham. As for the language arts texts adopted two years, "I know they are not being utilized," she said.

Haithcock's answer seemed to sum up the management problems CMS is wrestling with.

"The answer," she said, "is a little bit more rigorous at the elementary and middle school levels than it is at the high school level."

At elementary levels in particular, quarterly and in some case biweekly testing tends to make it obvious if a teacher is not following the curriculum.

Consultants are in elementaries as many as 10 days a month monitoring progress, Haithcock said.

In general, high-end and low-end students are watched carefully. "It is those middle areas that have the regular textbook that have not had as much monitoring," she said. "That is something that is up for discussion."

When Cunningham asked if parents could be given copies of the "pacing guides" designed to help teachers be sure students cover all the curriculum that's to be tested, Haithcock said yes. But John Fries, executive regional superintendent, said parents probably would be refused — because CMS doesn't have the money to print them.

Copies are available to staff on the internal CMS Web site. Haithcock said the material should soon be available to the public at CMS's Web site, www.cms.k12.nc.us.