

## So, are we satisfied?

*Last month, CMS blundered by celebrating how superior its NAEP scores were to those in failing big-city districts. It addressed the wrong question.*

*Do our students meet this community's expectations? Or are we blindly content with numbers that show 80% of poor children not proficient on a national test of reading and math skills, that show that less than half of even the children of college-educated parents are proficient in their schoolwork?*

*NAEP 2003 demands renewed investment in education – by parents at home, and by community leaders holding the school district's purse strings.*

NAEP 2003	Proficient in reading		Proficient in math	
	4th	8th	4th	8th
<b>All CMS</b>	31%	30%	41%	32%
<b>By demographic group:</b>				
Whites	52%	49%	66%	55%
Blacks	14%	14%	20%	11%
Hispanics	15%	14%	26%	18%
Asian/P.I.	31%	NA	60%	43%
Male	23%	26%	42%	33%
Female	39%	35%	40%	30%
On subsidized lunch	12%	13%	19%	10%
With disabilities	9%	7%	16%	16%
Limited English	4%	7%	17%	19%
<b>By parent education:</b>				
Less than H.S.		14%		NA
H.S. graduate		15%		11%
Some after H.S.		28%		29%
College graduate		41%		43%
<b>Achievement gap (points):</b>				
Poor/not poor	34	29	23	36
White-black	33	30	28	43
White-Hispanic	35	34	24	40

Source: NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment, Reading and Math Highlights, downloadable at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

# New school board member lists her priorities

*Earlier, we invited Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board members to share their goals. The writer is a new at-large member:*

**By KIT CRAMER**

Better teaching and learning conditions, better use of tax dollars and more straightforward communication in order to rebuild public trust. These were areas in which I said I'd focus if I were elected to the School Board.

Since election day I've met with each of the School Board members in an effort to learn about the things they're especially interested in accomplishing. In addition, I've been working with Chamber education volunteers on our program of work for 2004. Here are some potential areas of exploration:

**Funding framework:** Some County Commission members have made proposals about a funding framework for dealing with both capital and operating needs. I'm interested in really thinking through their ideas as well as exploring additional concepts with the CMS administration.

**Organizational efficiency:** Two years ago McKinsey and Co. did a pro-bono study on operational efficiency in a number of areas. CMS immediately implemented portions of the study. I'm hopeful that we can take a deeper look at the recommendations from the study in an effort to find further ways to improve efficiency and save tax dollars.

**Pupil Assignment:** When the Choice plan was implemented the Board agreed to only tweak the plan in the first three years. Given that we're approaching that third year, we need to begin to think about whether changes in the plan need to be made, and if so, how they might be conducted with the least amount of disruption to the system and with sensitivity to commitments like the home school guarantee and equity.

**Facilities plan review:** Because the Choice plan changed some pupil attendance patterns, a review of

the facilities renovation and construction plan is in order. But this issue needs to be approached with great sensitivity and involvement from a broad cross section of the community. In many cases we'll be discussing schools whose renova-



Cramer

tions or reconstruction were approved through votes for bonds. I think we need to involve all the previous bond campaign chairs, as well as the chairs of School Leadership

Teams for any schools that are on the list to be reviewed. In that way, we'll ensure that there's full public involvement in the process.

**Working conditions:** Research shows that you can reduce teacher turnover by improving working conditions (the way teachers are supported and the way decisions are made in a school, among other things). Research also says that the single greatest factor in improving student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the class-

room. It's my opinion that we need to make improvement of working conditions a priority.

**Exploration of programs to beef up under-capacity schools:** Creative concepts are going to be needed to attract parents and their children to some of our underperforming schools. On Dec. 17 CMS Partners for School Reform hosted a presentation on the KIPP Academy, a concept that has worked extremely well with populations largely composed of low-income students.

**High school reform:** Each year the Chamber and CMS conducts a best practices conference. At the request of Supt. Jim Pughsley, this year our topic will be high school reform. We'll be bringing in national leaders in the field to stimulate thoughts about steps we can take in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

I look forward to working in all these areas. I recognize that I have a pretty steep learning curve, but I'm anxious to get started. And I appreciate the voters giving me an opportunity to serve.

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# Diversity, achievement: Why not choose both?

*The following article was copyrighted by the N.C. Editorial Forum, and is reprinted with permission. The writer, an attorney, is an associate professor at the UNCC College of Education. She has been involved in the Leandro lawsuit challenging the adequacy of N.C. school funding methods.*

By ANN MCCOLL

North Carolina is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. That's a fact.

Our public schools can capitalize on this diversity or can go back to the segregation patterns that existed 50 years ago. That's a choice.

Population trends, school segregation patterns, and a United States Supreme Court opinion have converged in a way that calls upon us to consider the goals of diversity in public schools. This issue is especially timely as we approach the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the unanimous opinion by the Supreme Court that ended the separate but equal doctrine and required integration in schools.

North Carolina's growing population is becoming increasingly diverse, including a roughly 400% increase in the Hispanic population in just 10 years. This diversity is reflected in the public schools, where four of every 10 students are of minority race or ethnicity.

While diversity has been increasing, North Carolina's schools are becoming more segregated. This is occurring at the school level and in some upper-grade classrooms.

Resegregation is also evident in the increased number of minority students attending racially isolated schools. A recent study of North Carolina schools by Duke University professors found a substantial increase over just a five-year period in the percentage of "nonwhite" students attending schools with "nonwhite" populations of 90%-100%. There were particularly large increases in the coastal region (3.0% to 11.8%) and in some of the large school dis-

tricts, notably Winston-Salem/Forsyth (from 0% to 20%) and Charlotte-Mecklenburg (from 2.2% to 6.9%).



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Although residential segregation is the main cause for school segregation, it is not the basis for the trend towards resegregation of our schools. In fact, residential segregation has decreased in North Carolina from 1990 to 2000.

With an increase in diversity and a decrease in residential segregation, how have our schools become

more segregated? Part of the answer is in the convoluted history of school desegregation lawsuits.

In the post-Brown era, courts enforced integration plans in order to correct segregation that was required or sanctioned by law. Schools became fairly integrated under these court orders. But as residential patterns continued to cause school segregation, courts became reluctant to require schools to fix issues not related to the unlawful segregation.

While not required, many communities chose to pursue diversity in schools on the premise in *Brown*  
Continued on Page 4

## NAEP numbers show much work to be done

*The following article refers to NAEP results on Page 1.*

To say I was upset to hear the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education rejoicing over the recent NAEP test scores is like describing slavery as "a minor race problem." To hear the superintendent of schools express joy that the black students in Charlotte did "significantly" better than black students in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, etc. on the eighth-grade math test, and others, is like comparing the living conditions of blacks on one plantation to the living conditions of blacks on another plantation.

They are all slaves. They are all doing too poorly, when compared to white students, to justify any reaction except total dismay.

These are not the numbers on which you can build a 50-year celebration of *Brown vs. The Board of Education*. These are the numbers that show that the CMS school board has, for the last 50 years, failed *Brown*.

The CMS board has a moral, ethical and legal responsibility to provide a sound basic education for all children regardless of race or economic conditions. The fact that "high" and "low" test scores can be racially or economically identified is the strongest indication that the school system has failed to do its job.

The fact that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools and classrooms are becoming more and more racially and economically identifiable leads me to believe that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education is guided by the loud voices of selfish people rather than the best educational practices. Until the voices all people of color and good will join the chorus and change the tune from "Just Us" to "Justice," fulfillment of the promise of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* will be delayed. The celebration should be cancelled. There is too much work yet to be done.

– Richard McElrath Sr., a retired CMS math teacher



McElrath

## Seek both diversity and achievement

Continued from Page 3

that separate schools were inherently unequal. These voluntary strategies faltered in the 1990s when courts, including those with jurisdiction over North Carolina, struck down such race-conscious plans without even determining whether diversity was a compelling interest of schools.

While the legal basis for integration was unraveling, student achievement became the dominant feature of education reform. Expectations for parental options, such as the ability to choose a charter school or a magnet school, have also increased. With state-mandated accountability and local pressure to respond to these initiatives, integration strategies were sometimes neglected or even intentionally derailed as no longer important or as perceived barriers to these other reforms.

This summer, the Supreme Court declared that the educational benefits of diversity justified taking race and other measures of diversity into account in admission decisions at the University of Michigan Law School. It is hardly a stretch to apply the educational benefits of diversity at the law school to public schools.

For example, the Supreme Court recognized the value of a diverse student body for breaking down racial stereotypes, making classroom discussion livelier and more enlightening, and for providing students with exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, and viewpoints so that they can be better prepared for the global economy, workplaces, the military and society.

For public schools, the Supreme Court opinion reopens the door for considering diversity. It is not a legal requirement, but a choice made by local boards with their community.

How we frame this choice is critical. It cannot be an "either or" choice: either diversity or student

## ***Brown v Board: A calendar of commemorations***

*The following events are among those scheduled to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1954 Brown ruling ending school segregation. Listings compiled by UNCC College of Education. Details will be added as they become available.*

### **JANUARY**

- 17-19** Annual NCCJ civil rights youth conference for area high school students, focusing on how civil rights issues affect access to classroom instruction, coursework and other issues. Students will participate in King march and get a preview of upcoming Levine Museum of the New South exhibit "Courage." \$100 fee, scholarships available for residential program at Four Points Sheraton. For information: NCCJ, 704-535-7277.
- 31** Opening of "Courage: The Carolina Story that Changed America," Levine Museum. Through Aug. 15.

### **FEBRUARY**

- 1** Exhibit, "Impact of School Desegregation on the Charlotte Area," Atkins Library, UNCC. Through May.
- 11** Book discussion, "Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision" by Peter Irons, led by Louise Allen, 5 p.m., UNCC Library.
- 13** Professional development conference for CMS teachers, "Teaching about Brown v Board and Issues Related to School Desegregation," 8:30-3:30, Myers Park High.
- 23-27** UNCC Africa and Its Diaspora Week.
- 23** Lecture, "Issues Facing African Diaspora and Education," Harvard's Prudence Carter, UNCC.
- 26** Lecture by Mary Dillard, Sarah Lawrence College, "Issues Facing

African Diaspora and Education," UNCC.

- 27** Lecture by Anani Dzidzienyo, Brown University, "Issues Facing African Diaspora and Education," UNCC.

### **MARCH**

- 2** Film, "The Intolerable Burden" about school desegregation in Drew, Miss., presented by filmmaker Constance Curry, Queens University.
- 3** Panel discussion, "Why Celebrate the Decision?" 7 p.m., Moore Hall, UNCC.
- 18** Book discussion, "Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary" by Juan Williams, led by UNCC's Ann McColl, noon-2 p.m., Cone Center Room 101, UNCC.
- 25** Book discussion, "Brown v Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy" by James T. Patterson, led by UNCC's James Lyons, 5-7 p.m., UNCC library.
- 31** Lecture and reception for the Brown sisters, Linda Brown Thompson and Cheryl Brown Henderson, 7 p.m., UNCC Cone Center.

### **APRIL**

- 9-11, 17-18** "Pass the Peas," a play based on the story of Clarendon County, S.C., performed by the Afro-American Children's Theater, time and place TBA.

achievement; either diversity or parental options.

Rather, it should be whether to pursue the educational benefits of diversity in order to bring together these important initiatives.

Some communities may not be ready to revisit this issue. The wounds of past battles and racial divisions may be too raw. The student assignment plan may be too new.

For communities that are ready

to reverse trends towards resegregation, they will need to define diversity, identify its educational benefits, and develop particular strategies that meet Supreme Court criteria and best incorporate their other educational goals.

While this may take some time, wouldn't it be fitting to be able to answer whether we are committed to the importance of diversity in time for the celebration of Brown in 2004?

# The Plan Formerly Known as Choice

Confronting the dwindling odds that parents could place their children other than in their assigned (and frequently overcrowded) school, CMS officials ripped the word “choice” out of the annual guide to this month’s assignment lottery.

The Charlotte Observer took note of the change the day after offering readers a snapshot of each school in a special section titled, “Choosing a School: A Parent’s Guide to Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s School Choice Plan.”

“Some board members said Friday they didn’t realize the district had abandoned the ‘choice’ label, but they knew crowding was limiting the options,” the Observer reported.

Choice, the cover story for Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s recent resegregation by class and race, had never been equal for residents of low-income neighborhoods. Those parents objected when the school board was considering the choice plan in 2001, saying they were being offered not only fewer choices, but worse choices.

Now, wealthier parents’ choices are also dwindling because of overcrowding.

The choice plan guarantees each parent a seat in a school close to home. With most parents choosing the home school, and assignment areas having far more children than each school’s capacity, there are few seats where parents seek them: in the suburban, high-wealth, high-performing, experienced-teacher schools.

Just to handle the guaranteed seats, CMS deployed more than 500 mobile units to put roofs over students’ and teachers’ heads. Yet, even with mobiles, enrollment is 8,000 students or nearly 400 classrooms over classroom capacity countywide. Students and teachers are in multipurpose rooms, hallways and rooms architects designed for storage.

The lottery to select students for open seats opened Monday, and closes Jan. 30.

Students who must enter the lottery, according to CMS, are those new to CMS next fall, including all kindergartners; all rising sixth-graders except those staying at Smith Academy, to choose a middle school; all rising ninth-graders, to choose a high school, even if they’re in a magnet program that continues; and small numbers of students living in areas affected by last fall’s assignment area changes.

All students who are required to enter the lottery, but do not return the form sent in the mail or apply by phone or online, will lose their home school guarantee. They might still be assigned to that school, but if it is overcrowded they might be assigned elsewhere.

In addition, parents of current students who think they might want to enter the lottery must request a personalized application form by Jan. 14.

The district’s annual Choice – um, pardon – School Information Fair is Saturday at the Merchandise Mart from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – four hours compared with the eight-hour fair in 2001.

In years past, the fair has been a splendid place to hug former principals and teachers. But while representatives from each school do the best they can to answer questions about their programs, the environment is not conducive to thoughtful or thorough exploration of school offerings.

Choices – um, pardon – selection of school options may be registered in several ways: At Saturday’s fair; online at [www.cms.k12.nc.us](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us); by automated phone line at 980-343-8157; or by returning the CMS form to the child’s school or to the Family Application Center at 124 Skyland Ave., off Randolph Road near the Mint Museum.

## Attn: North Meck (and all others interested in magnet programs)

The North Mecklenburg parent group FUME, or Families United for North Mecklenburg Education, weighed in last fall not with its preference that children be overcrowded rather than bused south toward empty seats, but a promise to help CMS market its central-city magnet programs to encourage voluntary sign-ups for the trip south.

The result is two CMS magnet fairs in the north: Monday at Cornelius Town Hall, and Thursday at University City United Methodist. Both are from 6:30-8 p.m. Participating programs:

Hornets Nest K-5 communications arts  
Lincoln Heights K-5 learning immersion/talent

development

Morehead K-5 math/science and environmental studies

Northwest Arts 6-12

Irwin Avenue K-5, Piedmont 6-8, West Charlotte 9-12 open program

Statesville Road K-5 and Ranson 6-8 International Baccalaureate

Participating Thursday only are:

Cochrane 6-8 math/science and environmental studies

Eastway 6-8 leadership and global economics.

# N.C. graduation rate information, No Child standards critiqued

No Child Left Behind, and North Carolina, came in for some heavy criticism over the holidays from the Education Trust, a Washington nonprofit group.

In both cases, the criticism dealt with the reliability of graduation rates.

A federal rule opens a huge loophole that could allow districts to report 100% graduation rates when half their ninth-graders never made it to 10th grade.

N.C. officials use a system that excludes from the statistics all of the dropouts themselves, according to a Dec. 22 report from the Education Trust.

On No Child, the Trust says the authorization legislation requires that "calculations must be made according to:

"1) The percentage of students, measured from the beginning of high school, who graduate from high school with a regular diploma (not including an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the state's academic standards, such as a certificate or GED) in the standard number of years; or

"2) Another definition, developed by the state and approved by the U.S. Department of Education, that more accurately measures the rate of students who graduate from high school with a regular diploma. State definitions must avoid counting dropouts as transfers.

"Inexplicably, the specific language that the Department used on the state September 1 data submission form does not match the language in the NCLB regulations.

"While the law clearly asks for a graduation rate based on students who began high school, the U.S. Department of Education submission form instead asked for:

"The percentage of students, measured from the beginning of

the school year, who graduate from public high school with a regular diploma ...'

"The Department's sloppiness has caused a great deal of confusion about defining graduation rates and has opened a loophole big enough for states to hide thousands of kids.

"States that strictly follow the language of the application form could technically be in compliance by reporting graduation rates based only on 12th graders, ignoring the fate of students who drop out in the 9th, 10th, or 11th grades.

"While no state can, in good faith, report such a rate, the Department is at fault for overlooking this inconsistency and for failing to fulfill its leadership responsibility to states, districts, schools, and, ultimately, students.

In the North Carolina case, "their graduation rate calculations were not based on the percentage of students who entered in the ninth grade and received a degree four years later, but on the percentage of diploma recipients who got their diploma in four years or less. In other words, students who drop out of high school are simply excluded from the calculations altogether.

"This means that, theoretically, if only 50% of students who enter 9th grade in North Carolina were to eventually obtain a high school diploma, but every one of those 50% did so in four years or less, then North Carolina would report a 'graduation rate' of 100%."

The Trust also noted that the state uses an entirely different reporting system on its annual report cards, a system that pegs the rate at 85%.

"North Carolina reports that it will have a data management system that will allow it to make graduation calculations according to the NCLB-required definition

## Griffin to McGraw-Hill

Textbook publisher McGraw-Hill announced Tuesday that it had hired former CMS school board member Arthur Griffin as a vice president of national urban markets.

The longtime paralegal would, the company said, "help districts identify solutions that improve student achievement."

During Griffin's tenure on the board, CMS adopted

McGraw's Open Court reading program in elementary grades. A CMS spokesman told the Charlotte



Griffin

Observer that CMS purchases materials from all four top textbook publishers.

The company said Griffin's position is new. He will report to Dan Domenech, who joins McGraw in March after leaving the superintendency of Fairfax County, Va. schools.

Griffin did not reply to an inquiry for information.

— [www.mcgraw-hill.com/releases/education/20040106.shtml](http://www.mcgraw-hill.com/releases/education/20040106.shtml)

in place by 2005-06, and that the first public reporting of these new calculations will take place in 2006-07. Until then, it seems, schools and districts will bear no responsibility for the young people leaving school without even the most basic certification of knowledge and skills.

"Meanwhile, educators, parents, community members, and policy-makers will be getting mixed signals about the progress of students through the education system, as the state provides graduation rate statistics that are conflicting, contradictory, and sometimes overstated..."

## Researchers find Texas teachers transfer mostly to change class mix

Three academic researchers write that data on Texas teachers show that the kind of financial carrots used to attract teachers to high-poverty schools don't work.

White teachers, who represent the bulk of the teaching force nationally, transfer out of inner-city schools not for a pay hike but to find higher-achieving, higher income, non-minority students.

Writing in *Education Next*, Eric Hanushek, Steven Rivkin and the late John Kain say the only salary enticements that work would be at least 40% of base salary – an unlikely event in cash-strapped districts.

The transfer pattern leaves low-income students with inexperienced teachers.

Most teachers who transfer in Texas leave for a salary increase of only \$100 a year, hardly an incentive.

But “the picture for working conditions is quite different,” the researchers write.

“There is strong evidence that teachers moving between districts have the opportunity to teach higher-achieving, higher-income, non-minority students. The findings for achievement are the clearest and most consistent.... The shares of the district's students who were African-American, Hispanic, or low income also declined significantly for movers. On average, the districts to which teachers moved had 2 percentage points fewer African-American students and 4.4 percentage points fewer Hispanic students than the districts they had left. The percentage of low-income students in movers' districts fell by more than 6 percent.”

Hanushek is one of the nation's

**Continued on Page 8**

## ‘Highly qualified’ rule: Where’s the ‘teaching’?

*The vagabonds at Chapel Hill's Southeast Center for Teaching Quality have visited nine school districts in four states, interviewing educators about No Child's mandate that all teachers be “highly qualified.” A teacher can meet the rule by having a bachelor's degree, being in a lateral entry program that leads to state certification, and passing a test in the the subject to be taught. Two quotes from December's “Teaching Quality” report:*

Human resources director, Alabama: “I've been in this business for 38 years, and to be honest I have never seen a teacher get into difficulty because they didn't have the content. It has always been they didn't have the mastery of teaching strategies, management and those kinds of skills.”

District administrator, Alabama: “Nine out of ten of people we have hired on alternative BAs are dismal failures. We hired one person with a great science background, but he had not ever had the first education class. He had no clue. That was disastrous for those students, not to mention the wear and tear on all of us.”

– [www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)

## Calif. researchers track pain from the sting of No Child sanctions

In a policy brief by Policy Analysis for California Education in California, authors John Novak and Bruce Fuller suggest that Washington pull back from the punishments and shaming that dominate No Child Left Behind.

They offer the data below to show that the deck is stacked against schools of all types that have the largest number of demographic groups that each must meet No Child guidelines.

Among schools with similar socioeconomics, the more demographic groups, the more likelihood of trouble with the feds – even if the state wins state plaudits for achievement growth.

PACE says schools dominated by English language learners are most vulnerable.

Proponents of federal Annual Yearly Progress standards say the only way to close achievement gaps is to hold all groups to the same standards.

The data below, for all California schools, lists the odds

of hitting all AYP targets, by the school's number of AYP targets.

Families economically disadvantaged groups	Total AYP groups	Total schools	Odds of meeting all targets
Less than 25%	1	616	83%
	2	458	80%
	3	364	76%
	4	215	58%
	5	107	55%
	6	30	53%
25%-50%	1	54	67%
	2	259	76%
	3	389	63%
	4	567	55%
	5	303	49%
	6	77	39%
50%-75%	2	141	74%
	3	360	59%
	4	746	55%
	5	274	38%
	6	110	21%
	More than 75%	2	79
3		951	40%
4		698	37%
5		198	23%
6		74	16%

Source: <http://pace.berkeley.edu>

## Texas teachers' transfers studied

Continued from Page 7

premier education researchers. His work is highly touted by conservative groups.

Moves from urban to suburban districts tended to bring lower salaries, but 14-percentile-point gains in student achievement and drops in minority enrollment of from 14% to 20%. "Those who choose to change schools within districts appear to follow the same attributes, seeking out schools with fewer academically and economically disadvantaged students," the researchers write.

"These patterns are also consistent with the notion that new teachers are often placed in the most difficult teaching situations and that senior teachers can often choose comfier positions within the system."

African-American teachers in Texas "tend to move to schools with higher percentages of African-American enrollment than their previous schools...."

"White teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, will tend to move to schools with fewer African-American and Hispanic students.



Harvey

**"As a WestEd Board member once noted, trying to improve schools without addressing the broader context of their communities is like trying to freshen the air on one side of a screen door."**

— WestEd CEO Glen H. Harvey, quoted in "R&D Alert" from WestEd, a San Francisco-based nonprofit and federally funded Regional Education Laboratory. [www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org)

"Less experienced white teachers are also more likely to leave the public schools altogether if they come from schools with higher concentrations of African-American and Hispanic students.

"For African-American and Hispanic teachers, the reactions to varying concentrations of African-American students are almost exactly the opposite."

In Charlotte and elsewhere, low-income students are increasing isolated in neighborhood schools. For school boards hoping to boost achievement at those schools, the researchers offer this:

"We do know from our other work that differences in teacher quality are more significant than the differences arising from having inexperienced teachers. Therefore, an approach with more

appeal might be simply to accept the fact that there may be greater turnover in schools serving a larger disadvantaged population, but then to concentrate much more attention and resources on the quality dimension.

"While we do not have much experience with such policies, they seem like the most feasible way to deal with the problems of schools serving low-income and minority students."

Hanushek is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. Rivkin is an associate professor of economics at Amherst College. Kain taught economics and political economy at the University of Texas at Dallas.

"The Revolving Door" is at [www.educationnext.org/20041/76.html](http://www.educationnext.org/20041/76.html)

## County to hear idea to renovate schools every 60 years

Mecklenburg's Board of County Commissioners was scheduled next Tuesday to review a proposal from a citizens committee to transfer to CMS enough money annually to renovate 1/60th of the seats in the system, then let the school board decide how to spend the money.

"Currently the buildings CMS is constructing should last 75 years before needing major renovations," says the report by the Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee.

"This is not true of those built during the '70s, which have a life

span closer to 50 years.

Additionally, many schools have had major renovations done during the past decade and this work continues.

"Taking all this into consideration we believe enough capital money should be made available each year to renovate 1/60 of the seats of the entire school system."

The proposal covers only major renovations that last many years. Another part of the report suggests that all reroofing, paving, ventilation and other shorter-life work be funded out of the district's annual operating budget. In

the past, those types of dollars in the operating budget have been shifted to teacher salaries as enrollment growth outpaced revenue growth.

CCBAC also recommended that new students be housed in new buildings, not mobile units, and that 80% of the current 586-unit mobile classroom fleet be phased out over a 20-year period.

Commissioners were scheduled to meet in a budget and policy meeting at 3 p.m. Tuesday in Room 267 of the Government Center.

# How teachers succeed with low-income kids

*An excerpt from the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Distinguished Lecture presented at the May 7 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Lisa Delpit is executive director of the Florida International University's Center for Urban Education and Innovation.*

"...What teachers should be doing is developing the knowledge of the outside world that children from less privileged families might lack.

"The 'fourth grade slump' that poor children encounter in schools is well documented.... What those who have been successful teaching these children to achieve at high levels know is that they do not need to 'fix' the language of the parents, or to devise some pre-school intervention that will 'fix' the children, or to 'dumb-down' instruction with scripted instruction.



Delpit

"Rather, students need focused instructional strategies throughout their school years that are designed specifically for their cultural and academic backgrounds.

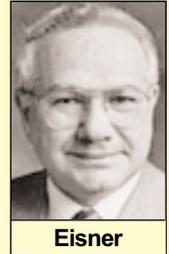
"In my work in dozens of successful classrooms, effective teachers of low-income students of color take every opportunity to introduce children to complex material. While children are learning to 'decode,' teachers read complex information to children above their reading level and engage in discussions about the information and the advanced vocabulary they encounter.

"Students are involved in activities that use the information and vocabulary in both creative and

## Prepare children for today, not tomorrow

*Stanford professor of education and of art Elliot Eisner, writing in Educational Leadership, argues that education should prepare students not for the future, but the present we know. Excerpts:*

"We need a radically different conception of what matters in education. Test scores need to take a back seat to more educationally significant outcomes. As long as schools treat test scores as the major proxies for student achievement and educational quality, we will have a hard time refocusing our attention on what really matters....



Eisner

"We need an approach to accountability that is wider than measurement and more sensitive to nuances that count. Such an approach will require a radically different view of where we look to find out how well students are learning. After all, the major lessons of schooling manifest themselves outside the context of schools. The primary aim of education is not to enable students to do well in school, but to help them do well in the lives they lead outside of school. We ought to focus on what students do when they can choose their own activities."

– [http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed\\_lead/200312/eisner.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/200312/eisner.html)

analytical ways, and teachers help them create metaphors for the new knowledge that connects it to their real lives.

"Students memorize and dramatize material that involves advanced vocabulary and linguistic forms. Students are engaged in thematic units that are ongoing and repeat important domain knowledge and develop vocabulary through repeated oral use. Students are asked to explain what they have learned to others, thus solidifying new knowledge.

"Not only do the teachers and schools who are successful with low-income children practice these strategies, but some other researchers (Beck et al., 2002; Hirsch, 2003; Stahl, 1991; Sternberg, 1987, to name but a few) have documented the efficacies of the strategies as well.

"Successful instruction is constant, rigorous, integrated across disciplines, connected to students' lived cultures, connected to their intellectual legacies, engaging, and designed for critical thinking and problem solving that is useful beyond the classroom.

"Never do the successful teach-

ers of these children believe that students have learned enough or that they cannot learn more.

"Make no mistake, when we fail to provide such instruction, when we fail to educate children in inner-city schools, the students are quite aware of our failures to teach them.

"Despite their purposeful attempts to 'not learn,' as Herb Kohl calls it – enlisting various forms of classroom disruption and disengagement to thwart the system that disrespects them, and that assumes their intellectual inferiority – they are saddened and, indeed, brokenhearted with the results."

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SCHOOLS

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## Carolina Briefs

**Inadequate:** Testimony continued this week in an S.C. lawsuit challenging the adequacy of state funding for schools, The State in Columbia reported. A rural high school principal said teacher turnover is more than 30% and that some long-term substitutes do not have college degrees. S.C. Sen. John Land criticized the state's money distribution formula as "flawed" and said the legislature routinely fails to appropriate enough money.

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

**Backsliding:** Wake County has reaped national attention for its assignment plan that reassigns children to prevent racial and socioeconomic imbalances in the district's schools. But according to the News & Observer, the number of schools out of balance has tripled since 1999, rising to 22. Districtwide, 29% of elementary children are on subsidized lunch. Schools above 40% are considered out of balance. School officials said there was no need to take action if a high-poverty school's children were testing well. But most such schools are not. A member of a Wake group that favors choice said the assignment plan's "not giving [parents] a choice of what school to go to is a policy that's not up with the times."

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

**Making gains:** Durham schools say they are reaping results from an expensive literacy program aimed at closing achievement gaps, the News & Observer reported. The Literacy Collaborative trains reading coaches in Massachusetts, then places one in each elementary school. Reading tasks are tailored to each individual student, and children work in groups of as few as two or three. The program is to eventually reach all of Durham's 27 elementaries.

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

**Heavier load:** Raleigh-based Philanthropy Journal surveyed Charlotte nonprofits and found most fielding more requests for service. The Family Center, whose intervention program aids children with behavioral or emotional needs interfering with school-work, reported an 83% jump in referrals from teachers in 16 elementaries.

[www.philanthropyjournal.org](http://www.philanthropyjournal.org)

**School philanthropy:** The Web site that will funnel donations into school projects written up by N.C. teachers expects to be up and running by mid-February, the Charlotte Observer reported. The [www.donorschoosenc.org](http://www.donorschoosenc.org) Web site will focus initially on less than 20 districts, then go statewide by August (Educate!, Oct. 23).

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

**Teaching conditions:** BellSouth will donate \$1 million over several years in North Carolina to finance a study of how to translate teacher-survey complaints over working conditions into corrective measures, the News & Observer reported. The grant is part of a \$10 million effort throughout the company's Southeastern service area.

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

## National Briefs

**Total rewrite:** Georgia is about to release a draft of a new statewide K-12 curriculum, the Journal-Constitution reported. Ideas have been borrowed from other states; the math standards come from Japan. Officials said key concepts of geometry, economics and geography would be introduced before the fourth grade, and the curriculum would detail the concepts to be understood before a student gets credit for a class.

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

**More exercise:** The National

## 'Quality Counts'

Education Week's annual Quality Counts report is now online at [www.edweek.org/sreports/qc04](http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc04)

The theme's special education, but more than 100 measures are tracked. EdWeek grades the states: North Carolina got C's in resource adequacy and resource equity.

The report includes NAEP data. Below are last spring's black and white 8th-grade reading scores, by percent rated proficient or better:

	White	Black	Gap
New York	48	14	34
Connecticut	45	12	33
Wisconsin	41	8	33
Illinois	45	13	32
Massachusetts	49	18	31
New Jersey	46	15	31
Kansas	40	10	30
Minnesota	42	12	30
Missouri	39	10	29
Nebraska	39	10	29
Virginia	44	15	29
Iowa	38	10	28
Arkansas	33	6	27
Colorado	43	16	27
Delaware	40	13	27
Maryland	40	13	27
Michigan	39	12	27
U.S.	39	12	27
Florida	37	11	26
Ohio	39	13	26
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>
Pennsylvania	36	11	25
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
Texas	39	14	25
Georgia	36	12	24
Louisiana	33	9	24
Alaska	36	13	23
Indiana	36	13	23
Mississippi	32	9	23
Tennessee	32	9	23
California	34	12	22
Kentucky	36	14	22
Nevada	29	7	22
Alabama	30	9	21
New Mexico	35	14	21
Oklahoma	34	13	21
Rhode Island	36	15	21
Arizona	36	16	20
Oregon	36	18	18
Washington	36	19	17
West Virginia	25	13	12
D.C.	NA	8	NA
Hawaii	31	NA	NA
Idaho	35	NA	NA
Maine	37	NA	NA
Montana	40	NA	NA
New Hampshire	41	NA	NA
North Dakota	40	NA	NA
South Dakota	41	NA	NA
Utah	35	NA	NA
Vermont	39	NA	NA
Wyoming	36	NA	NA

Continued on Page 11

Association for Sports and Physical Education has doubled, to 60 minutes, its recommendation of children's daily physical activity, the Arizona Republic reported. It said the 30-minute standard "has proven ineffective in the battle against the bulge among youngsters 5 to 12."  
[www.azcentral.com](http://www.azcentral.com)

**No Child loophole:** Chicago-area schools are raising test results by not testing those juniors who did not have enough credits to graduate in another year, the Tribune reported. In some districts, 20% of the lowest-performing students weren't tested, artificially inflating results.  
[www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

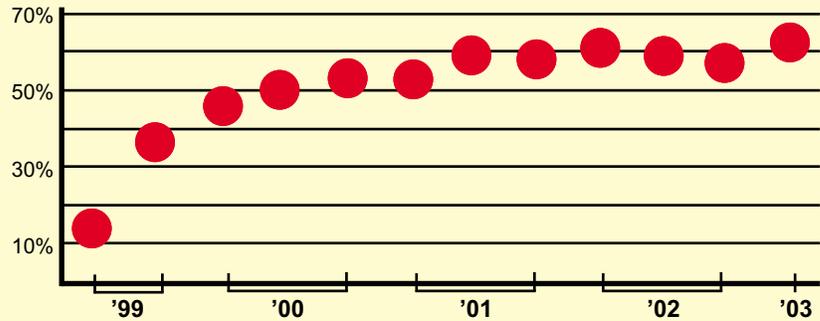
## Calendar

For events commemorating the Brown v Board case, see Page 4.

### JANUARY

- 9** Equity Committee, 8 a.m., Board Room.
- 13** School board meeting, 6 p.m., Education Center.
- 13** Coalition for Justice Not Just Us in Education, 7 p.m., St. Martin's Church, 1510 E. 7th St.
- 21** State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee, board members John Tate, Jane Norwood discuss lateral-entry teacher training and teacher recruitment, 8 a.m., Charlotte Chamber.
- 21** Urban League membership campaign planning meeting, 6:30 p.m., 740 W. 5th St. RSVP requested to [sbyoung@urban-league.org](mailto:sbyoung@urban-league.org).
- 26-28** North Carolina character education conference, Renaissance Suites Hotel, 2800 Coliseum Centre Dr. Download details and registration forms from pink box at [www.ncpublic-schools.org/charactereducation](http://www.ncpublic-schools.org/charactereducation).
- 27** School board meeting, 6 p.m., Education Center.

## Percent of Americans online



## What we do (or say we do) online

Three days before Christmas, the Pew Internet & American Life Project issued a report that said the growth in Internet use is slowing (above). The report also listed the data below: Based on a survey taken in late 2002, what American adults say they do online, and how many millions do it on a typical day, and the increase since the survey was last taken in March 2000. E-mail continues to be, by far, the domain's top use.

Activity	Millions daily March '00	Millions daily Late '02	Percent Change
Send or read e-mail	45	54	20
Get news	19	29	53
Surf the Web for fun	18	26	44
Research for your job	14	22	57
Look for info on a hobby or interest	15	22	47
Search to answer a question	16	22	38
Research a product or service	12	21	75
Look for political news or info	9	15	67
Check sports scores or info	7	14	100
Send an instant message	10	13	30
Look for info from a government site	6	12	100
Research for school or training	9	12	33
Get financial info	13	12	-8
Bank online	4	8	100
Play a game	5	8	60
Look for health or medical info	6	7	17
Buy a Product	3	6	100
Download music files to your computer	3	6	100
Look for religious or spiritual info	3	5	67
Participate in a chat room or discussion	4	5	25
Participate in an online auction	3	4	33
Buy or make a reservation for travel	1	1	0
Buy or sell stocks	3	1	-67

– Download the full report at [www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?Report=106](http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?Report=106)

### FEBRUARY

- 19** Tony Habit, head of N.C. High School Project funded by Gates Foundation, 8 a.m., Charlotte Chamber.
- 26** Public School Forum of N.C. head John Dornan on impact of No Child Left Behind, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 200 W. Trade St. Sponsor: League of Women Voters.
- 29** H.E.L.P. (Helping Empower Local People) town meeting on education for 2,500 people, time and place to be determined.