

'We're talking about gentrifying here....'



Charlotte Housing Authority

Money to renew public housing across I-277 from uptown will come in part from new upscale redevelopment nearby. Story, Page 6.

'Headache'

State school board leader sees crisis in N.C. high schools

North Carolina faces a crisis of underachievement among high school students, North Carolina's top education leader told a Charlotte audience Wednesday.

"That's the biggest headache I have," said Howard Lee, chairman of the State Board of Education, at a meeting of a Charlotte Chamber group.



Lee

High schools are "much too big... kids become numbers.... The board has been talking about how we can take a different approach." On the composite score for high school end-of-grade subject tests, N.C. high schools reported 68.9% of their students on or above grade level, up from 66.2% the previous year.

Only about 28% of North Carolina and about 20% of CMS high schools recorded acceptable progress last spring under No Child Left Behind guidelines. Only 4% of the high schools with 61% or more of their students on subsidized lunch made the cut.

The No Child bar rises next year, and increasingly onerous sanctions are about to kick in. CMS Supt. Jim Pughsley read the riot act to his high school principals last fall, ordering them to deliver 75% of their students on grade level this spring.

High school principals, Lee said, "are in a different world" from their peers in elementary and middle schools. Lee said he hoped to meet with them for their

Tough coaching assignment: White takes on school board

As the Panthers were kicking off Sunday night, Joe White was speaking on his new coaching assignment.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's new school board chairperson appeared at ease as he stood before friends at the Black Political Caucus in a Sunday School room at Memorial Presbyterian. White brings to such conversations his folksy ways, an insider's knowledge of the ed biz and an instinct for the middle ground.

His moniker, "Coach," was earned sculpting undisciplined kids into teams of fullbacks and quarterbacks who could win in games, and in life. In a district absorbed by the goal of desegregation, White, 68, spent a career making desegregation work, on the field and in the classroom.

A lifetime of friendships across racial and economic lines showed in broad support for White in the

November voting that catapulted him from a seat on City Council to an at-large school board seat.

But White's new team, the Board of Education, has not been known for its team spirit. And the district's difficult challenges may test his skills and patience.

If he leads, it might be chiefly in private. White strikes some as unwilling to predict whether the sun will rise – until after dawn. He often asks: Where are there five votes?

Such skills may play a central role in healing some rifts with



White

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Help sought for research on CMS desegregation

The writer, a CMS graduate, is a senior at Vassar College.

I have completed a draft of my my senior thesis on Charlotte-Mecklenburg school desegregation, and in the process some questions have come up. I am hoping *Educate!* readers could send me at the e-mail address below whatever information you have that might be useful in relation to the following:

– Black activism in relation to school desegregation. I have come across some superficial accounts of the NAACP youth council appearing at school board meetings, and I have heard a little about the role of black (and white) ministers in the schools, but I wanted to make sure that I don't leave out this perspective. Were there organized black activists in Charlotte during this period (1969-75), and if so who

were they and what did they do/say/think?

– What did the Interested Citizens Association do to “encourage the Board to implement the Finger plan”?

– For those of you who know Sam Haywood and/or Kat Crosby, why exactly would you say they were particularly successful principals during desegregation? What qualities did unsuccessful principals at this time lack? Did some principals ignore the race issue, and if so, what impact did this have?

– Were groups like the Classroom Teachers Association, the Teacher Advisory Council, or the League of Women Voters important enough to school desegregation to merit my further investigation?

– Did a group of black students take the initiative to go before the school board in protest of unfair

suspensions? What actions exactly were being taken to stop this practice? Was that effort led by the NAACP?

– Does anyone remember this happening: a student council somewhere (presumably a high school) called a press conference to refute rumors that had been circulating about black students harassing white students. Can anyone give me details?

Thanks for all your help!

Nora Carroll
nocarroll@vassar.edu

Calendar

JANUARY

- 22 School board Personnel Committee, 2:15 p.m., Board Conference Room, Education Center.
- 22 School board Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m. Board Conference Room.
- 23 Equity Committee, 8 a.m., Board Room.
- 23 School board's two-day retreat begins at 9 a.m. at Hidden Crystal Inn, Hiddenite, N.C.
- 26-28 North Carolina character education conference, Renaissance Suites Hotel, 2800 Coliseum Centre Dr. Download details and forms at www.ncpublicschools.org/charactereducation.
- 27 School board's Curriculum Committee, Board Conference Room, Education Center.
- 27 School board meeting, 6 p.m., Education Center.
- 28 Joint meeting, School Board and Board of County

Commissioners, 1 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.

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) concurrent meetings to hear parents' education concerns. Times and places to be announced.

MARCH

- 5 Urban League Annual Whitney M. Young Jr. Award Dinner, 6 p.m., Adam's Mark Hotel, \$125 for league members, \$150 for non-members. Call Robin Brown at 704-373-2256 ext. 203 for tickets or order online at www.urbanleaguecc.org.

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Lee: High schools biggest 'headache'

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advice. He did not elaborate.

A Gates Foundation-funded study of N.C. high schools may help identify reform models, "but we can't wait for that to occur," Lee said. "There are other models across the country."

The agenda for the CMS board's retreat this weekend includes a presentation and discussion of a "high school update."

Lee, a Georgia native, earned a master's in social work at UNC Chapel Hill in 1966, was Chapel Hill's mayor 1969-75, served in Gov. Jim Hunt's cabinet 1977-82, was appointed to the N.C. Senate in 1990 and was returned in four succeeding elections. He was appointed by Gov. Mike Easley to lead the State Board of Education last May to a term ending next March.

Lee is a poised and articulate speaker and was warmly received by the business leaders and five members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board.

His only puzzling metaphor was when, arguing for assessing education results not by teacher training but by student achievement, he said no one cares about the manufacturing process but only the quality of the finished product. "It's like manufacturing widgets."

Among the board chairman's other comments, some in answer to questions:

Supporting teachers: "Getting teachers is one thing; keeping them is another.... We spend a lot on staff development," but he said he wasn't convinced the money was being spent wisely. "We cannot allow ourselves to be caught in this box of continuing to do things how we've always done it."

Teacher turnover: There is a challenge keeping teachers in urban classrooms, "but we have a bigger challenge" in rural areas,

"Over the last 20 years, [SAS Institute's William] Sanders and his colleagues have developed... a methodology to measure the influence that school systems, schools and teachers have on the academic progress of students.... Sanders has demonstrated that both accelerators and impediments to sustained academic growth can be measured.... His value-added approach... can also be used as the basis for district or state accountability models."



Sanders

— www.sas.com/govedu

Lee said. He suggested one interesting incentive: guaranteeing teachers' children free tuition at UNC system campuses.

Teacher assessment: The state board, Lee said, is committed to using a system created by Bill Sanders, now at SAS Institute (see box), to assess teachers based not on their degrees or experience, but how their students perform. "People in Mecklenburg County should be able to look at the data and decide whether a classroom is successful."

No Child Left Behind: Lee supported the law's intent. But the standards are "too demanding in terms of perfection." And the relentless focus on subgroups taints, for example, all blacks. The children of educated blacks like him are doing fine, he said, "but there are so few of those kids it drags the whole group down."

Legislative mood: The state board acted quickly to accept out-of-state credentials because the General Assembly is "in an eliminating mood.... I do not plan under my watch to lose control or let the ABCs program or standards... erode and take us backwards."

Lateral entry: North Carolinians should be "ashamed of ourselves" for failing to ease experts into the classroom. "Don't tell me we are not smart enough to take people who are qualified in their subject field and teach them how to be a teacher." Classroom management must be learned, but it can be taught, he said.

Testing load: Lee predicted that the load of practice tests would soon ease. "If we continue to test too much we will teach too little."

National certification: Lee defended the state's 12% raise for all teachers who survive the grueling National Board Certification process. "We think it is well spent, but we can't prove it.... Are they better teachers because they went through that? I cannot answer you, but we will, I assure you."

Suspensions: Lee agreed that the state is using suspension too broadly as a punishment. "We need to find ways to respond to the problems other than kicking kids out or sending them to alternative schools" from which too many drop out.

Suspensions were mandated by the General Assembly. "We passed the zero tolerance," the former state senator said. "You put something in statute and you're locked in...."

After several members of the audience pledged to lobby legislators hard for money and reform, Lee gently turned about:

"I am grateful that the legislature has stepped up to the plate," he said. Schools had to take some cuts, he noted, but "what our legislators expect from us is to be above being concerned about political correctness by telling them the truth about what the needs are." They may not like what they hear, but they want to be told, he said.

Amid an economic downturn, he concluded, "We know this is the time when education becomes an absolutely crucial part of getting us out of this mess."

White impatient, but pragmatic at the core

Continued from Page 1

parents and citizens.

But experts nationwide will be watching to see how White handles the seismic challenges that this district faces: No Child's insistence that by 2014 all children must be on grade level; a growing number of high-cost students; soft loyalty among parents economically able to opt out; and nowhere to go for the money to make improvements happen.

Below is an essentially verbatim transcript of the Sunday night conversation with about 25 members of the Black Political Caucus.

Serving all children well

"I would say to you that there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that over the years, those people that have preceded me have done an excellent job and that we indeed have done a good job of educating the kids in this community.

"Unfortunately, we have not done a good job of educating a group of kids who need our help more than any other group of kids, and that indeed is the challenge, to see that we can do that better than those that have preceded us have done. That's what we will be working on.

"There are a lot of people, particularly in this community, who were concerned that we would forget about the equity program, that we would forget about those children that need more to get to the level playing field. I can assure that I will not do that, and I will do my best to make sure that this board does not do that....

Pushing for right budget

"If I were in a utopia where on Tuesday morning I could walk into Dr. Pughley's office and say to Dr. Pughley, 'You put on our table... those programs that you need that I can go forward to the community and say this is what

Chairman Joe White

you can expect in three years, this is where we are today, look at the test scores, look at any criteria you want, but this is where we want to be in three years.

"But unfortunately we are not in a utopian situation. We have got to work with that budget and that funding source....

"We're now in the process of meeting with the Board of County Commissioners. We have started doing it in small groups. We've put [issues] on the table so that when we get to the public it is not an adversarial relationship, is what I think all of us would like.

"I, probably better than anybody else that has been in this position in a long time, understand the issues that other elected officials have in other capacities, and the restriction that they may be confronted with in terms of providing all the resources we need.

"What we're trying to work on is some type of funding formula that makes it easier for them, and easier for us.

"That funding formula has got to be sustainable, something's that's going to stay there.

"That funding formula has got to be dependable, so that we know what programs we can put in place and what's going to be supported.

"But it's also got to be something that the Board of County Commissioners can support.... We're working on that....

"Can I look you in the eye and tell you we're going to get all the money we need to put every program that we need in place? That probably would not be truthful.

"Am I discouraged to think that we are not going to get money enough to address some of the things that we need to address to make progress? I am absolutely positive and optimistic.... I simply think there are enough people in this community interested in doing right that it will get done.

Assignment

"Most everybody's interested in attendance, whatever you want to

call it. Some people call it a choice plan, but the further and further we get into it, the truth is, probably the least amount of choice there is in that plan because there get to be certain restrictions.

"As most of you know, that plan was not Joe White's choice. That plan was a compromise plan that came to this community as a result of a whole process that many of you participated in and sat through court sessions and the whole shebang.

"So when it came to us it was not a utopia. It was not what all of us wanted. However, as an old coach, I say there comes a time when you to have to play with what personnel you have. And you have to try to put something together that can win with what you have on the table.

Support for Pughley

"So I have said publicly that my goal is to tweak or play with this, with whatever recommendations the superintendent [makes].

"And you will find that I am very supportive of the superintendent. People in this room got mad at me that I wouldn't sign a statement that I would support the superintendent. I won't sign things like that, but I tell you I support the staff. I am a professional educator but I support those people that we employ as professional educators.

"Does that mean that I'm not going to ever argue with people?... Absolutely not. I have no intention of being a 'yes' person....

"As we get through this budget process and we look at what's on the table, we've got to find a way within this [assignment] plan to address those things that are a concern to all of us.

"I'm concerned, and there's a note in today's paper, there's a trend across this nation that we're moving backwards in terms



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White impatient, but pragmatic at the core

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of being integrated at school.... The problem is we're moving back toward being a segregated school system.

"You can make games with that and talk about whether it be black or white, or whether it be wealthy and poor, or whatever.

"We've got to find, and we've said to Dr. Pughsley – I have said to Dr. Pughsley – that we need to find ways to make all the schools in this school system more attractive to all the people so that we don't have people not wanting to go to school at this particular school or that particular school.

New schools needed

"The other thing that this attendance thing has done: As we speak we have about 12,000 children who go school in mobile classrooms.... We have another 8,000 children in what I call unacceptable seats, because they're in the backs of cafeterias or parts of libraries that have been partitioned off. So right now today we have 20,000 students who are not within brick-and-mortar classrooms.

"If we decided on Tuesday that we would redistribute those kids and fill the seats of those [schools] that are underutilized, we would still not have enough seats for all of those children in seats that I don't consider appropriate.

"By the most conservative estimate, over the next 10 years... we must build about 30, at least 30, new schools. So that issue is not going to go away. We're going to continue to grow, and most of us hope we continue to grow because if we don't continue to grow, then we have to be funded for those challenges or issues about dying. And I assure you the challenges created by growth are much more pleasant than those created by dying.

"If we continue to grow by 3,000

students a year, then we'll need about 30 schools over the next 10 years.

"What is this particular board going to do over the next year? Over the next year we will review and evaluate the present plan. Dr. Pughsley and his staff will look at it closely. They will come back with recommendations. And to tell that I know exactly what's going to happen, well, I don't. Because it's got to be five people raise their hands and who knows what will come out of it?"

'Complete education'

White was asked for his own views on resegregation.

"I come from a history that coached the first two black youngsters that played at North Mecklenburg High School, kids that came from old Torrence-Lytle [the only pre-desegregation high school for north Mecklenburg blacks, opened in the 1930s in Huntersville and closed in 1966].

"I have 12 grandchildren, 11 of them in the public schools. My vision is that I would much rather have them get what I call a complete quality education by getting that education in an environment that exposes them to people different from what they are; people who may not worship the same way, people who certainly may not have the same color skin, people who may speak differently, whatever it is.

"So if you are asking me for my personal opinion, my goal is always that we have an integrated school system.

"If you're asking me as the chair of the school board how I address that, I don't know. But I am willing to work with this entire community, because it is an issue that does not just confront us here in this community, it is across the country. So if I had a good answer as to how we address that I would making great big money... working as a consultant....

Home school guarantee

"As long as you have a guaranteed home school, you are proba-

bly not going to address the issues that you and I would like to see us address.

"Are there five votes on this board to do away with it? And I would struggle with that....

"This plan promised people a certain amount of stability. Folks, I get amazed at how important stability suddenly becomes to people who are people who just moved to Charlotte and created the problem....

"I was at some zoning forum and a group of people were raising sand about not wanting something to occur in their community. And finally an old gentleman who had set there through all this, wearing a pair of bib overalls, stood up and said, 'I want to tell you what the problem is. The problem is y'all. I was here before any of y'all's out there and y'all are the ones who created the problem.'

"So one issue is we have so many new people in Charlotte.

"The other thing is we have reached the point, this last election literally almost became a contest between the suburbs and the inner city. And we don't want that for this city.

Supports magnets

"I don't have an answer. I can tell you as long as [the home school guarantee] is the foundation for our plan, we will likely not get it done. Now how are we trying to get at it right now? And I talked with Dr. Pughsley, the best idea out there right now is to make whatever program it is – I know [school board member] Vilma [Leake] is interested in a military school. And indeed if we're going to make a military-type curriculum, whatever it is, we need to put that at a school that would be underutilized and use it as a carrot to attract people from other parts of the community that might not come to that part of the community. You are literally talking about various magnet programs.

"I am open to try any type of

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White impatient, but pragmatic at the core

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magnet – I am speaking for me; I can't speak for the board – I am open to trying any kind of program that meets the needs of any group of children and their parents that might give us a chance to pull more kids back into those underutilized schools.

“Not a good answer, I understand, but that's the best I can do because, if you are asking me at this point to unravel that [home school guarantee], it would be very difficult for me at this point....

“Hopefully we will listen to the public, and hopefully we will use magnets to create schools that, for whatever reason are not attractive to the general public, to

Chairman Joe White

become more attractive to the general public....

‘I walk the walk’

“Sometimes people say, when you talk the talk, do you walk the walk? I'll tell you I walk the walk. You hear me, you heard me say it. We just moved one of my grandsons from Myers Park, over Christmas, to West Mecklenburg. I know that's an unusual situation.... His daddy's also head coach, he's not a football player, but he is a kid that had some problems. I simply think he needed a new chance, a new environment, and a chance to do some things differently.

“So when people say, ‘Well, are you asking me to do this with my child?’ I can look and say to you I am willing to do it with my most precious possessions at this point, my grandchildren....

Achievement gap

“The achievement gap, regardless of what we do with attendance, is an entirely separate issue, because we need to ensure that every child reaches that level that they have been equipped with those tools that they need to be successful in society, and walk out of our doors so they have those tools that give them an option in life.

“If they walk of our doors without those tools the options they have [are limited].

“How we do that? It's through, for me, the best way to get at is through the equity program.

“You get at it through student-teacher ratios. You get at it through quality teachers. You get at it through quality principals.

“The toughest thing out there right now for me in my opinion and I say this to Dr. Pughsley all

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Belmont renewal relies on drawing mixed incomes

The renovation of Piedmont Courts public housing near uptown, if it occurs, will take mixed-income redevelopment to the next level.

A county awash in troubled schools whose student profiles are now hostage to the community's residential segregation by race and economics might take note.

Unlike like recent public housing renewals:

- More, now fewer, homes for low-income residents will result.
- Relocation options within the neighborhood will be built before, not after, low-income tenants' apartments are bulldozed.
- All land, rezonings and financing will be in hand before the work begins, not after (or never at all).

Charlotte's City Council approved the deal last week. The decision now lies with federal officials. But Charles Woodyard, executive director of the Charlotte Housing Authority, said Tuesday morning he was confident the

project would be approved.

The grant is another Hope VI request. The same program replaced First Ward's Earle Village, rebuilt most of the old Dalton Village off West Boulevard, and also financed the replacement of Fairview Homes off Oaklawn Avenue.

But with federal grants dwindling in size, the grant request is for \$20 million, less than earlier grants, while more is to be done.

Financing of the Piedmont Courts replacement therefore involves more city money, and more market-rate housing – mostly condominiums in 70-foot-tall buildings with the best views of the Charlotte skyline. Buyers will likely need \$50,000 annual incomes to afford the mortgages.

“There will be some gentrification. I'd like to think of it as stabilization,” Woodyard told the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum.

No questions arose Tuesday about school impacts. But the

redevelopment of the Courts, and a number of sites in nearby surrounding Belmont could reshape nearby high-poverty elementary schools.

For example, while the market-rate one- and two-bedroom condos won't draw large families, elementary children living in the first units built could walk two blocks to First Ward Elementary.

The Belmont project involves 930 units: 297 subsidized (replacing Piedmont Courts' 242), the rest at market rate.

Asked if that will meet the city's needs for subsidized housing, Woodyard cited a city study identifying 6,900 families needing housing affordable on their salaries that are less than 50% of the city's medium income.

“To require all those units would require hundreds of millions of dollars,” Woodyard said. “HUD is getting out of the business of public housing. Somebody is going to have to step up to the plate.”

White impatient, but pragmatic at the core

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the time is for [Pughsley] to find the right kind of person for building principal to do the right job at this school.... Why do I think that's so important? That principal may have the greatest impact on the attitude of the teachers in his school or her school. The teachers are some of the most important persons because they have daily contact with the child....

Identify learning styles

"We in education have a real tendency not to change: We want to teach the same way we were taught and our grandmothers were taught. You've got to understand that every child out there does not learn the same way. I think it's a shame that we don't do more to find some way to identify what is the learning style of this child.

"Long ago we went to the 'open' school concept and the 'traditional' concept. We had kids stuck in those schools because of the philosophy of their parents, not because that child learned better in a traditional concept or an open concept....

"We won't change that overnight, but I promise you I will harp on that enough that [cell phone interrupts].

"But I'm ornery enough... that I will have an impact on some of these things as we work forward through them.

Pughsley's record

"I would say to you... I know Jim Pughsley well. I like him. I think he is an excellent professional educator. And I'm generally going to support those things that he puts on the table that move us forward. He's sincere about it.

"Now, we've talked about the things that the press said, that he got grief about. We are going to work on communication and all of

Chairman Joe White

those things. But as a professional educator, I think he's a good one, I think we're fortunate to have him, and I'm pleased with the direction that he's taken us.

"Now folks, you've got to admit, when you look at what he's done in the short time that he has been our leader, and I don't know what you want to judge it by, but test scores or whatever – closing the gap – not pretty but if you look at it, he's done that: It's not as bad as it was before he took over.

"So the gentleman is making progress. We are moving in the right direction. Are we moving as quickly as most of us, particularly an impatient guy like me, wants us to go? No. But it's important to continue to work with him.

Improving district's image

"One of the things that I'm concerned about has been the overall image of our school board and our school system. Because when I decided not to run for City Council to run for school board, people said 'Why are you stepping down?' I said, 'Folks, I'm not stepping down. I'm stepping up to the most important job in this community, the thing that will have the most impact in this community 50 years from now, and that's our children.'

"One of the things I'm working on is moving our regular meetings across the street in the same place that Miss Valerie [Woodard, in the audience] meets now with the county commission and that I met with the school board – I mean the City Council.

"I think the school board ought to sit at the same type of facility, the same quality of facility. And it's much easier for you to get to it. It is a little inconvenience for the staff of the schools."

From April 1998 to February 1999, before he announced his candidacy for the Charlotte City Council, Joe White was a director of the Swann Fellowship, a group that later incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and has published this journal since 2000.

Briefly...

... in the nation

Everybody gains: At one time, 20% of Portland's David Douglas High school students went on to college. In order to better prepare students to go directly from school to work, the school added research papers and graduation requirements. The result, according to The Oregonian, was that by preparing students for work, they increased the grades of their college-bound students as well. Graduates average B's in Oregon public universities while other metro-area high school graduates average C's.

www.theoregonian.com

Dump underperformers: More than 17% of students in Chicago public schools dropped out in the 2001-2002 school year, the Sun-Times reported. And Illinois Supt. Robert Schiller blames No Child Left Behind, which he says places pressure on districts to encourage low-performing students to drop out so those students won't keep the district from meeting its achievement goals.

www.suntimes.com

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How CMS assessed NAEP scores

NAEP scores for Charlotte-Mecklenburg were released in December. Here's how the CMS administration summarized the results for the school board Jan. 13:

“– CMS performed very well in comparison to other districts, the states, and the nation.

“– CMS performance was especially strong in 4th grade mathematics.

“– CMS African-American students performed well compared to their peers across the nation.

“– CMS has more work to do to improve performance among free/reduced-price lunch students.”

At right are the results.

NAEP 2003, proficient in	Reading 4th	Reading 8th	4th	Math 8th
All CMS	31%	30%	41%	32%
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%
Poor/not poor gap	34	29	23	36
White-black gap	33	30	28	43
White-Hispanic gap	35	34	24	40

Source: NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment, Reading and Math Highlights

National Briefs

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Taking control: In his State of the State address, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich said he wants to take over the State Board of Education's control of Illinois' schools, citing wasteful spending and illiterate children. Veteran Sen. Kirk Dillar responded by stating that the governor used a speech to “drop an atomic bomb.”
www.stltoday.com

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No Child costs: An Ohio report asserts that \$1.38 billion of the \$1.5 billion that No Child is costing the state goes to afterschool and summer-school programs designed to help children pass the tests, the Plain Dealer reported.
www.cleveland.com

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Motivators: At Parkway Elementary in Sacramento, Calif., grades and test scores are up due to a lunch buddy program, the Bee reported. The lunch volunteers have lunch with, talk to and play games with low-income or neglected children.
www.sacbee.com

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Science “lite”: Schools are not challenging their students in science, Education Week reported. It found that high school science

tests are often based on middle school standards and don't challenge children to think.

www.edweek.org

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Raise pay: In order to attract enough qualified teachers to meet the 2006 No Child deadline for having a qualified teacher in every classroom, the New York Times reported, former IBM Chairman Louis Gerstner believes the U.S. should increase spending \$30 billion to raise teacher pay.
www.nytimes.com

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Lunch program: A new bill in Congress would expand the free lunch program in U.S. schools, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported. Students currently receiving reduced-price lunches would qualify for free lunch under the legislation.
www.startribune.com

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Assessing teachers: A new commission of government, business and education leaders proposes linking teachers' pay to student achievement as one measure of improving teacher quality.

Tom Blanford of the National Education Association disagrees, according to the Teaching Commission.

“Such a plan could ignore performance that won't show up in test scores, such as a teacher who prevents a child from dropping out, or one who inspires excel-

lence in poetry.”

www.theteachingcommission.org

Pledge law: Colorado's Pledge of Allegiance law, ruled unconstitutional last August, will be amended to make recitation voluntary, the Rocky Mountain News reported.

www.rockymountainnews.com

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Quotable: “Art is the heart of education. It's the part that makes them a better person.” — Art teacher Christine Kitzmiller.
www.tennessean.com

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Laptop results: Sixth- and seventh-grade students in a small British Columbia school district were given laptops last year, CNN reported. The result was improved writing and increased confidence in their abilities.
www.cnn.com

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Child care initiative: Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano is asking lawmakers for \$24 million to provide child care for low-income families, The Arizona Republic reported.
www.arizonarepublic.com

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Reading focus: Gov. Jeb Bush is asking the Legislature to fund reading coaches to teach middle school teachers how to integrate reading instruction into other subjects, the Miami Herald reported.
www.miami.com