

## Forbes' 'Best Education in the Biggest Cities'

*CMS this week placed on its Web site a reference to a Forbes Magazine story, "The Best Education in the Biggest Cities," which looked at public education in the nation's urban areas. The ranking of educational resources took into account community assets like museums, not the public schools themselves. The list confers bragging rights, and may well be used in economic development activities. Supt. Jim Pughsley was handing copies out to business leaders Wednesday morning. See story below.*

City	High school graduation rate	Median home price	Rank by ed. resources
1. Boston	82%	\$432,700	2
2. Salt Lake City	79%	\$152,700	67
3. Raleigh	67%	\$180,900	1
4. Baltimore	79%	\$220,200	12
5. New Orleans	70%	\$136,900	89
6. Philadelphia	70%	\$181,800	37
7. Atlanta	69%	\$157,500	62
8. Austin	59%	\$157,900	7
9. Charlotte	63%	\$161,600	59
10. San Diego	62%	\$436,500	73

Source: www.forbes.com

# Principals

## Recent events, study may spark review of their role in academic achievement

A principal might just ask which way the wind is blowing.

Once the community decides this spring whether it intends to foot the bill for improving children's education, a discussion about principal leadership might be a valuable activity.

The week opened with the removal of the principal from CMS's largest middle school. The reasons for Homer Townsend's reassignment from Martin Middle were shrouded in "personnel" privacy, but Martin's test scores lag, and complaints about campus safety prompted the dispatch of a posse of security personnel a year ago.

CMS officials say conditions have improved since last year, but Supt. Jim Pughsley told The Charlotte Observer "the school is not where I want it to be."

Principals are edgy as expectations rise. The tension is particularly high at high schools.

Last fall, Pughsley ordered his high school principals to have 75% or more of students on or above grade level this spring. At the time, no consequences for failure were announced, adding to the pressure. Only one school met that standard last year, and eight schools were below 60%.

The week also brought two Observer interviews with principals, with one saying, "You've got to have people to buck the system to make it improve."

The newspaper's interviews were prompted by a report by Charlotte Advocates for Education, which sought to

# Business execs explore erosion of public support for schools

An outburst of candor fired up a Government Center meeting Wednesday in which business leaders were plotting how to raise the money that the community's public schools need to educate all children.

"The bottom line," said Education Budget Advisory Committee member Anthony Foxx, "is the community doesn't buy into CMS the way it used to."

"When I was in school there was a buy-in in Eastover and there was a buy-in on the west side. Today, it just isn't there."

Geoffrey Curme said he had recently found himself working in a downtown tower with a lot of young bankers. "There's maybe 2% or 3% that think about some-

thing other than how much money they can make for themselves, or for the bank.... They don't give a rat's rear end about schools. They don't even think about it."

The reason they give to the Arts & Science Council fund drive, he asserted, is because "bigger fish come around and break their arm if they don't make a contribution."

"If people really knew where the school system is going" and the crisis the schools face, "there would be more than a go-along, get-along response," Foxx added.

EBAC has spent years pushing for more transparent budget presentations. It now appears on the verge of pressing the CMS Board

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## Events highlight role of principals

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explore ways principals can create the environment that reduces teacher turnover.

The report did say that “principals who have been more successful in retaining teachers have characteristics of successful entrepreneurs.” But the report focuses mostly on advocating for more principal training.

Indeed, instead of identifying actions principals must take to cut the turnover that the CAE report said cost CMS \$14.2 million last year, the report merely recommends “for future consideration” that someone ought to “develop a list of key successful strategies for creating a working environment conducive to retaining teachers.”

The tempest over the principal’s role in public education is not new and is, in fact, hardly unusual. Every large bureaucracy, whether corporate, governmental, military or religious, faces the potential for conflict between the desire for central control and the need to nurture initiative, risk-taking and local decision-making.

Principals’ key role in education is deeply embedded in N.C. law. The statutes confer on them much independence, but also impose far more responsibilities than one human being can carry in today’s huge facilities. Concern about that overload is also raised in the Advocates’ report.

CMS has often changed course on the issue of principal independence, with succeeding superintendents stamping the district with their own philosophy.

The late Jay Robinson, superintendent from 1977 to 1986, moved principals every two years to keep them, he would say, from thinking of a school as their own fiefdom.

Supt. John Murphy, who served from 1991 to 1995, delegated immense power to principals and slashed central staff in an effort

to foster innovation. One perhaps unintended consequence was that children moving from one school to another would, for example, be bounced from one reading instruction method to another.

The district has been mostly recentralizing since Murphy’s departure. Response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 gave further impetus to security and centralized decision-making. The federal No Child Left Behind law has also focused attention on districtwide responses.

Asked Wednesday morning



Pughsley

about the mixed signals and what message he wanted to send both to principals and the public, Pughsley declined to comment for publication – the first time he has done so

with *Educate!* since being named superintendent.

Margaret Carnes’ Charlotte Advocates for Education is an independent nonprofit. Pughsley was briefed on the report in advance. Two school board members, Kit Cramer and Louise Woods, and CMS administrator Frances Haithcock have ex-officio seats on the group’s board.

“Our purpose,” Carnes says, “is to define the issues and advocate for changes required to permanently improve the quality of public education in Mecklenburg County.” The report concludes:

“Outstanding principals, who believe all children can learn and who have the passion and commitment to do whatever it takes to make that happen, are key to the success in our schools and to increasing teacher retention.

“To lead our schools, it is absolutely critical we tap the brightest individuals who think and act with an entrepreneurial spirit.

“Equally important, we must provide appropriate training and support for these individuals so they may be successful in building a school culture that fosters high expectations, high student

achievement, and a strong sense of community. “Then we must hold these individuals accountable and we must provide rewards to and recognition for our effective leaders.

“With the innate ability, appropriate skill set, proper support and feedback, and the desire to be a strong and effective leader, these principals can create an environment where teachers with the same passion and commitment will want to teach and can be successful.

“Only then will job satisfaction and resulting teacher retention rates increase.”

—  
*The Observer’s front-page package of stories on principals is archived at [www.charlotte.com](http://www.charlotte.com)*

*The report may be downloaded at [www.advocatesfored.org](http://www.advocatesfored.org)*

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## Candor breaks out over school backing

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of Education and Supt. Jim Pughsley to say exactly what academic gains CMS can deliver for any additional money it seeks. And while CMS should celebrate its successes, it must make plain its needs.

"We have been our own worst enemy," said member Howard Haworth, "because we have a 40-50% group of kids who are in serious condition, some serious to intensive care.... I don't know how you create urgency unless you are willing to talk about those underserved children. We've got to reach a balance because we're pulling the run out from under ourselves when we don't let the public see" those needs.

"There really are two Americas," said member Haze Moore.

Pughsley, CMS's first African American superintendent, hammered again, as he did at a November meeting, on the pattern of declining support for schools facing demographic change.

"The challenge that lies before us," he said, "is one that is even greater than it has been in the past. We're also talking about there being fewer resources available.

"One of the realities is that, historically, the browner the school system becomes, people step away from it rather than going to it....

"For the first time this year we are a majority-minority school district. It is going to be even more of a challenge than it has been."

During Wednesday's meeting, the county- and school board-appointed group, which is dominated by business leaders, reviewed the proposals CMS laid out earlier for a funding formula that would cap total county school expenditures at about 47% of the county's budget.

Committee member Chip

## Sculpt 9th grade to fit 9th-graders

"According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), ninth-grade-only schools, often housed on a separate campus, are catching on, especially in urban school districts. Some 128 separate ninth-grade schools were operating in 2000, NCES says, with more in the planning stages.

"Four of those schools, each with about 850 students, are in the Aldine Independent School District in Houston. The 53,000-student district decided to do its ninth-graders a favor by withdrawing them from large high schools with over 2,000 students and placing them in small centers. The centers, which opened in 1998 and 1999, were built at a cost of \$10 million each.

"Supt. Nadine Kujawa says the new schools have helped reduce dropout rates, increase attendance, raise test scores, improve behavior, and increase the number of promotions to 10th grade. These improvements have paid off by helping the district win a high accountability rating from the Texas Education Agency, she says.

"In the 6,000-student Rush-Henrietta Central School District outside Rochester, N.Y., ninth-graders also attend a separate facility. The separate school gives ninth-graders 'an environment that addresses their unique needs,' says Supt. Kenneth Graham. As he puts it, ninth grade should fit ninth-graders – not the other way around."

– Susan Black in "The Pivotal Year," [www.asbj.com/current/research.html](http://www.asbj.com/current/research.html)

Boorman, the group's most incisive numbers-cruncher, said the documentation "shows that this particular framework doesn't work."

With debt-servicing costs increasing to pay for recent school construction projects, the models projected that the share of county funding available for operations would drop to as low as 69%, down from a recent high of 84%. Pughsley has said he wants to be guaranteed that 80% of county dollars will be available for operations.

Asked Wednesday if CMS can meet its academic achievement goals under a cap, Pughsley said, "Not with a declining percentage, no."

Deputy County Manager Russ Crider said staff knew "the 47% wasn't going to be adequate as the debt service cost grew and the operating went down." The result would be "building a seat for each kid, but not hiring a teacher."

Crider said staff was looking at restating the schools' financial

needs in terms of the number of pennies on the tax rate required to raise the money. "That would put the onus on the Board of Education" to make the case to the Board of County Commissioners to approve that tax rate, he said.

Haworth said such a plan, if imposed on all agencies that depend on county funding, would keep the agencies competing with one another. "I suspect that the will is not going to be embedded in the county commissioners to raise the tax rate to meet the logical needs of each of these agencies."

Pughsley has said CMS needs a third more county money, or an additional \$90 million. If the schools are to succeed with such a request, "the accountability has got to be sharpened up at the time of the ask," Haworth said.

"We need ... a very clear statement of what the public is going to get in terms of academic outcome that first year. If we fail to

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## Symptoms of nationwide academic failure at the high school level

### “Most high school graduates need remedial help in college.

More than 70 percent of graduates quickly take the next step into two- and four-year colleges, but at least 28 percent of those students immediately take remedial English or math courses. Transcripts show that during their college careers, 53 percent of students take at least one remedial English or math class. The California State University system found that 59 percent of its entering students were placed into remedial English or math in 2002. The need for remedial help is undoubtedly surprising to many graduates and their parents – costly, too, as they pay for course work that yields no college credit.

### “Most college students never attain a degree.

While a majority of high school graduates enter college, fewer than half leave with a degree. Significantly fewer blacks and Hispanics than whites attain bachelor’s degrees. Many factors influence this attrition, but the preparation students receive in high school has been found to be the greatest predictor of bachelor’s degree attainment. The courses students take in high school are more predictive of success than family income and race. In fact, the gap in degree attainment is cut in half when white and minority students all enter college having completed a strong high school curriculum.

### “Most employers say high school graduates lack basic skills.

More than 60 percent of employers question whether a high school diploma means that a typical student has learned even the basics, and they rate graduates’ skills in grammar, spelling, writing and basic math as only “fair” or “poor.” Employers are paying a stiff price for the lack of academic preparation among workers. One study estimated the cost of remedial training in reading, writing and mathematics to a single state’s employers at nearly \$440 million a year.”

– From “Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts,” published by The American Diploma Project, sponsored by Achieve Inc., The Education Trust and the Fordham Foundation. Downloadable from [www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org).

## Candor breaks out over school backing

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do that we will set ourselves up to get shorted considerably.”

Moore, an ex-principal, called education “the magic bullet.”

“We know that lack of education is the thing that feeds social services and law enforcement needs. When we look at who’s using these services, it’s usually based on lack of education,” he said.

Crider said the county board’s “priorities that have been in place are to reduce taxes.” Last year, schools got no funding increase despite 4,200 more children. County agencies took cuts. “It doesn’t look any better this year,” he said.

Pughsley said, “We simply can’t get where we need to go without somebody putting more money in the pot. We simply can’t do it.”

County Finance Director Harry Weatherly said commissioners had set their priorities during recent meetings, but no costs had been attached. When the numbers are added, he said, “there might be some sticker shock.

“Things are going to cost more money. And that’s to keep them running where they are today.”

Other notes and comments from Wednesday’s meeting:

– Weatherly, who had been busy with his computer calendar, piped up at one point to note that the delay of North Carolina primaries from April to July meant that commissioners will be actively electioneering during the annual budget debate. “We’ll have a political animal we haven’t had to deal with before,” he mused.

– Pughsley remarked that CMS had contracted with an individual at UNCC to conduct cost-benefit analyses of individual CMS programs. “That will be a great benefit to us,” he said.

– The preparation of funding formulas is a pile of work that falls on top of the regular annual

crunch of budget work. Crider said of CMS Finance Officer Sheila Shirley’s situation, “If she can’t get her work done in 24 hours, she’s going to have to start working nights.” Initial budget presentations are scheduled before the Board of Education on March 9.

– During the meeting, Pughsley handed out copies of a Forbes Magazine article rating urban areas by where parents can get the best public school education for their children. Charlotte was ranked 9th (box, Page 1).

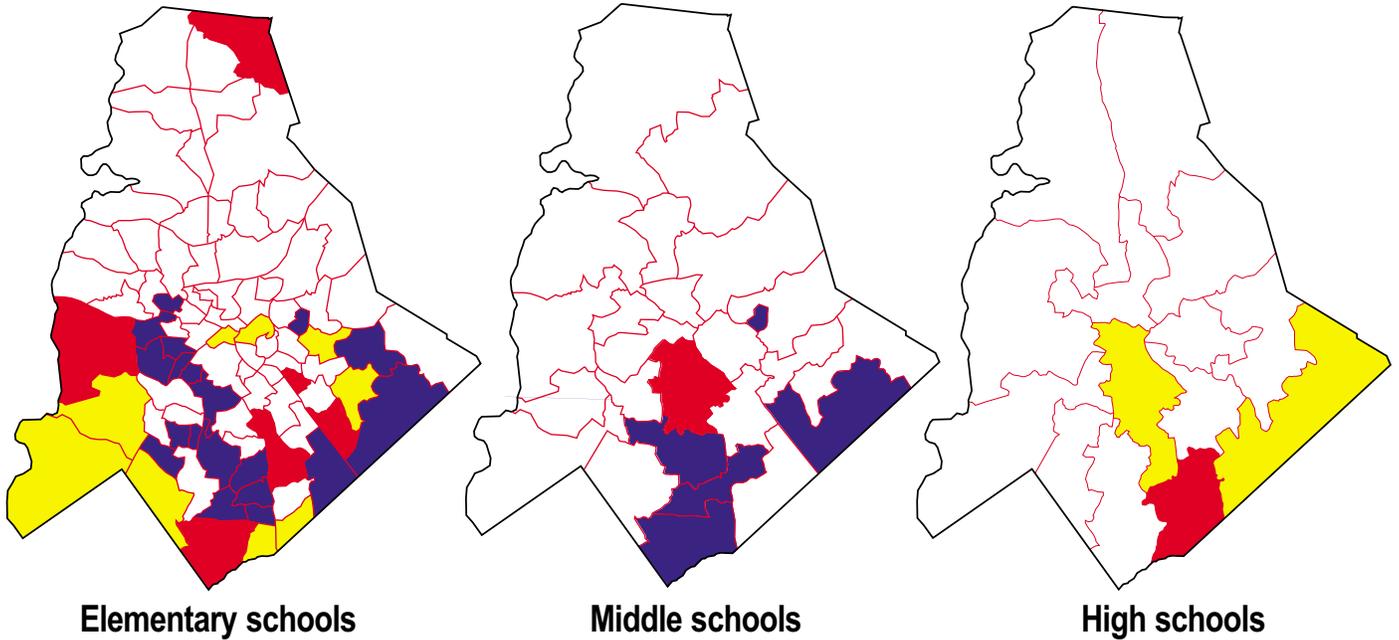
A recent pilot program by NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Project, covered some of the same cities.

“Boston and Atlanta and San Diego were in that NAEP study and we outperformed all of them,” Pughsley said, adding later: “I am happy when, no matter what the criteria, that Charlotte-Mecklenburg shows up.”

Committee member Sue Breckenridge predicted that the Forbes article would “help with economic development.”



Crider



## Suburban advantage

For the second year, CMS has placed some schools off-limits to internal teacher transfers. The schools that are off-limits already have a cadre of experienced teachers. The aim is to encourage experienced teachers to stay where they're needed most.

Teaching positions at the closed schools must be filled by teachers new to the district. That might mean that first-time teachers are filling those positions. But it could also mean that the closed schools, mostly in the suburbs, are hiring veteran teachers entering the district for the first time. The CMS Equity Committee has been rebuffed in requests for such information.

In another measure of the concern for the health of high schools, two of the three high schools closed to transfers last year, Butler and Myers Park, are now open – meaning that experience levels at even those privileged schools are down. (Related chart, Page 6.)

The number of closed schools rose from 26 last year to 33 this year. Of the 33, 11 are Equity Plus schools, up from five Equity Plus schools last year. CMS has concentrated its highest-needs and lowest-performing students at the Equity Plus schools. Teachers at those schools are eligible for pay bonuses and have smaller classes. Supply budgets are about 30% above normal.

Magnet schools closed to transfers but not shown on the maps include Morehead and Myers Park

## Color key:

-  Open to transfers after being closed last year, meaning teacher experience levels have eroded since 2003.
-  Closed to transfers for the first time this year, meaning teacher experience levels have improved since 2003.
-  Closed to transfers for the second year in a row.

Traditional elementaries and Piedmont Open Middle.

Elementary schools closed to transfers include Bain, Barringer, Berryhill, Beverly Woods, Crown Point, Davidson, Devonshire, Elizabeth Lane, J.H. Gunn, Hawk Ridge, Huntingtowne Farms, Idlewild, Lansdowne, Matthews, McAlpine, Morehead, Myers Park Traditional, Olde Providence, Reid Park, Sedgefield, Selwyn, Sterling, Thomasboro and Westerly Hills.

Middle schools closed to teacher transfers are Carmel, Cochrane, Davidson IB, Alexander Graham, Mint Hill, Piedmont, Jay Robinson and South Charlotte.

Providence is the only closed high school.



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## Board room art

Sydney Cadle  
4th grade,  
Matthews  
Elementary



## Equity: Achieving the teacher standards

*Providing equitable resources has many facets. All those elements are embedded in an “instructional template” that sets standards designed to get all children on grade level. Arguably the most fundamental equity standards – and the ones most difficult and costly to achieve – deal with the experience and quality of the teaching staff.*

*Standards for the teaching staff below were based on the average of the previous two years’ worth of data at schools honored under the N.C. ABCs program as Schools of Excellence, Distinction and Exemplary Growth. The list included 56 elementaries, 16 middle schools and three high schools. A number of Equity Plus II schools were on the list creating the standard, because the weak ABCs standards made them high-achieving schools.*

*Here’s how the Equity Plus II schools have fared the last two years against the standards. Green in the right-most column represents improvement from the previous year.*

	'03 standard	Met goal '03	'04 standard	Met goal '04
<b>Elementary</b>				
Clear licensure	93%	10 of 33	93%	21 of 32
Advanced degrees	32%	12 of 33	31%	11 of 32
New to teaching	8%	10 of 33	7%	17 of 32
Avg. experience in years	11.4	12 of 33	10.7	11 of 32
National Board certified	5%	9 of 33	6%	12 of 32
5 years or more experience	67%	9 of 33	65%	12 of 32
<b>Middle</b>				
Clear licensure	88%	0 of 14	87%	9 of 14
Advanced degrees	30%	2 of 14	29%	3 of 14
New to teaching	10%	2 of 14	10%	5 of 14
Avg. experience in years	9.5	3 of 14	9.4	4 of 14
National Board certified	5%	2 of 14	6%	2 of 14
5 years or more experience	56%	3 of 14	56%	5 of 14
<b>High</b>				
Clear licensure	91%	1 of 7	93%	0 of 6
Advanced degrees	35%	2 of 7	38%	1 of 6
New to teaching	7%	1 of 7	6%	0 of 6
Avg. experience in years	14.2	1 of 7	14.4	0 of 6
National Board certified	4%	3 of 7	6%	2 of 6
5 years or more experience	72%	2 of 7	73%	0 of 6

– Source: CMS Equity Status Report, January, 2004

## Briefly

### ... in the Nation

**Assignment values:** In the San Francisco area, sale prices of comparable homes can vary by 25% to 30%, depending on the perceived strength of the school district to which the house is assigned, the Chronicle reported.

**High school overhaul:** British authorities announced a 15-year plan to rebuild or renovate every secondary school in Britain, the Guardian reported. Tony Blair said the plan would be “reversing a generation of under-investment in our schools.”

[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

**Suspension rates:** New Kentucky data shows that although blacks comprise 10.4% of the population, they represented 22.3% of the suspensions in the 2002-2003 school year, the Lexington-Herald Leader reported. This was about a 9% increase in black suspensions from the previous year.

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

**Spirited, but behaved:** A once dangerous school in the Bronx has been tamed, reported the New York Times. A new principal, Anthony Rotunno, determined to improve the school, cracked down on unruly students and added fun and school spirit to the mix. “I feel a lot safer.... I was very afraid,” a teacher reported.

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

**Mandated texts:** In order to receive federal funding under No Child Left Behind, Michigan school districts must choose from five approved commercial reading programs, Education Week reported. These programs are standardized and explicit and are identified as meeting “research-based” materials and instruction guidelines.

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

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## Fix family problems behind underachievement

“I do not claim that there are any quick fixes for the family conditions such as teen pregnancies and single-parent families that have adverse effects on children’s IQ.

“But I believe our best opportunity for improving black achievement is to tackle the family problems that cause the achievement gap in the first place, such as some of the pro-family initiatives growing out of welfare reform.

“By ignoring the causes of lower achievement, and by continuing to put most of our resources into school remedies that are likely to fail because they ignore the family, I believe we put unrealistic and unfair burdens on school systems.

“Moreover, if my thesis about the role of the family is correct, we will only put off the day when we can truly start closing the racial gap in learning.”

– David J. Armor of George Mason University’s School of Public Policy, in “No Excuses: Simplistic Solution for the Achievement Gap,” at [www.tcrecord.org](http://www.tcrecord.org)

## Calendar

### FEBRUARY

- 19** Tony Habit, head of N.C. High School Project funded by Gates Foundation, 8 a.m., Charlotte Chamber.
- 23** School board Policy Committee, 3:30 a.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 24** School board Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Board Conference Room.
- 24** School board meeting, 6 p.m., Education Center.
- 24** “Lessons from the Lunch Counter,” a civil rights documentary produced by Steve Crump with music by Thomas Moore, 8 p.m., WTVI.
- 26** Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 26** Public School Forum of N.C. President and Executive Director 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. meets to hear parents’ education issues, 4 p.m. Sites: Advent Lutheran, 8840 University City Blvd.; St. Paul Baptist, 1401 N. Allen St.; Mount Carmel Baptist, 3201 Tuckseegee Road, Antioch Baptist, 232 Skyland Ave.

### 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.urban-leaguecc.org](http://www.urban-leaguecc.org).

**17** Marian Wright Edelman, “Coming of Age in the Segregated South,” followed by a conversation with fellow Bennettsville, S.C. native Hugh McColl; 7:30 p.m., Spirit Square. Tickets \$15 at Blumenthal Performing Arts Center box office, 704-372-1000.

## Brown calendar

— Compiled by UNCC College of Education

### ONGOING

"Courage: The Carolina Story that Changed America," about a Clarendon County, S.C. case that became part of *Brown v. Board*. Levine Museum of the New South. Through Aug. 15.

### FEBRUARY

**23** Lecture, "Issues Facing African Diaspora and Education," Harvard's Prudence Carter, Myers Park High.

**26** Mary Dillard, Sarah Lawrence College on "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, "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, Cheryl Brown Henderson, 7 p.m., UNCC.

### 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.

**14** Book discussion, "Mixed Emotions: As Racial Barriers Fell, a University President Remembers" by former UNCC

Chancellor Dean Colvard, 4-6 p.m., UNCC Library.

**20** Panel of photojournalists James Peeler, Bruce Roberts, Don Sturkey and Cecil Williams explaining their work in "Focus on Justice: Carolina Photographers and the Civil Rights Movement," Levine Museum.

### MAY

**13** Film, "With All Deliberate Speed: The Legacy of Brown v Board of Education," 6 p.m., Levine Museum.

**16** Drama, dance, music and art related to "Courage" exhibit, by Northwest School of the Arts students, Levine Museum.

**17** Anniversary of Brown decision. Levine Museum open.

### JUNE

**10** Conference, "Through the Eyes of the Law": Lawyers and historians examine case's impact on education and civil rights, all day, Levine Museum.

## Briefly

Continued from Page 7

**On the other hand:** Some districts are choosing to forego the federal money in order to implement programs they feel work better, Education Week reported. Boston's schools have been denied federal funds because, rather than adopting a reading program off a state-mandated list, the district tried to retain a program it had developed over the last several years that incorporates children's literature and writing workshops, in addition to skills instruction.

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

**No. 1 by a fraction:** Class rankings are far more widespread in public schools than in parochial or independent high schools, the Boston Globe reported. A report by the National Association for College Admission Counseling found 78% of public high schools give seniors class ranks, while only 10% of independent schools and 44% of parochial schools do. Minute differences in percentages

often separate top members of a class, and some say top students are fashioning their coursework around maximizing grade points.

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

**Rethinking NCLB:** After voting for No Child Left Behind, two years ago, presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry said recently that implementation of the federal legislation is "unfair, unwise, and unacceptable," the Washington Post reported.

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

**Permission to paddle:** More than 2,900 parents in Dallas, Texas, signed forms giving school administrators permission to paddle their children, the Dallas News reported. School trustee Robert Price says paddling could be "an alternative to suspension."

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

**Just Say Off:** Starpoint Central School District saved \$221,602 in 23 months by turning out lights when not in use, the Buffalo News reported. The director of administrative services said, "It boils down to common sense.... If everyone makes sure that our energy sources are only

used when they're needed on a consistent basis, it makes a big difference."

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

**Grant king:** Additional staff, computerized reading labs and summer school programs are just a few of the tools Leonard Golunchick uses to improve the grades of his students, The New York Times reported. The principal of PS 20, one of New York City's poorest schools, is "a wizard at finding buried grant money," which gives him the resources to help all of his students.

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

**Big bonuses:** In Alabama, the Mobile schools will pay teachers bonuses of up to \$16,000 to transfer the five low-performing schools, the Mobile Register reported.

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

## Correction

The Sept. 12, 2002 edition of *Educate!* should have said the total cost of growth and baseline standards construction then scheduled at Sharon Elementary was \$8,866,000, not \$9,866,000.