

Lost at 9th

Educators want to reach teens, but list of what isn't effective seems very long

The cry for help came out of Rahway, New Jersey:

What is to be done with ninth-graders? What will engage them in learning?

"I'm searching the globe" for answers, says Ed Yergalonis after finding *Educate!* on the Internet. Yergalonis is principal of Rahway High, a 1,000-student school 20 miles from Manhattan, about 600 miles north of Charlotte.

The problem? Students "are coming to us with such a lack of skills. And they come with an attitude of, 'I dare you to teach me.'"

"They have not hooked together hard work and a reason for doing so." For teachers, the ninth grade "feels like a big weight."

Charlotte-Mecklenburg is expanding its ninth-grade academies for underprepared students. The Gates Foundation is pouring millions into smaller high schools. Philadelphia is trying an all-ROTC high school in an effort to give young people stability, structure – and a reason for learning.

"Our kids have no study skills," he says. "Most of them are failing for lack of homework." Those who attend class and "do a little" homework pass. Of his 380 ninth-graders, only 40 were retained last year. As in North Carolina, 16-year-olds can drop out.

And 200 have already failed at least one subject this year.

Yergalonis, a Rahway alum and former teacher, is in his eighth year as principal. He's not giving up on the kids who've given up, but he does sound impatient. He's

Continued on Page 5



Amid charred reminders of a dangerous struggle to outlaw segregation, a Levine Museum exhibit asks:

What challenges still lie ahead?

A report on one group's discussion after seeing "Courage," Page 4.

Magnet grant application stirs school board debate on diversity

The federal grant application in front of the school board Tuesday night sought \$6.4 million for six magnet schools. But the 8-1 approval came only after several members again debated the district's proper role in fostering diversity within its 148 schools.

Said Molly Griffin, "I think many people in this community believe that diversity is a very important part of an education of a child. I am certainly one of those people.... But the day may very well be past where we can mandate diversity in our schools.

"We have worked long and hard to develop a plan that will encourage voluntary diversity at every opportunity we get. To ask for money from the federal govern-

ment that we otherwise wouldn't be able to get for this purpose to me seems like a very very clear path we should take.... I hope we will continue to encourage voluntary diversity."

Vilma Leake said the Charlotte Chamber had long promoted the city as a great place to live with quality, diverse schools:

"Are we or are we not what we say we are? And if we're not, the Chamber needs to stop selling Charlotte as being an integrated community when you have people who come in and try to disrupt this community with this garbage of going back to a segregated school district."

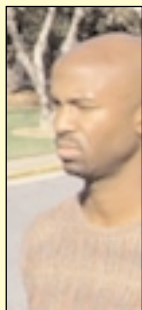
Louise Woods suggested

Continued on Page 6

All in the family

Two excerpts from the Education Week feature this week, part of a series on Brown v. Board, that focused on Charlotte-Mecklenburg:

“You can't sacrifice a child's academic opportunity for diversity,” says Jay Ferguson, an African-American parent of three whose father, James E. Ferguson III, represented the black plaintiffs in the Swann case. A 1988 graduate of an integrated Charlotte high school, Ferguson says parents shouldn't be forced to make that agonizing choice.”



Ferguson III

“The community has lost its will and its way,” asserts James Ferguson, the lawyer who helped represent the black families in the desegregation case. “The community has to stand up for desegregation, or sit on its hands and watch the community become racially isolated.”

— www.edweek.org

Inside little plastic bag is a literacy lesson, and a key to parent involvement in school

North Carolina's Warren County Schools is a six-school rural district. At Vaughan Elementary, one of four elementaries in the district, Raegan Ross is one of two kindergarten teachers. This handout was distributed at last week's Teacher Education Summit at N.C. Central University in Durham. The school used federal Title I funds for the project described.

Vaughan Elementary's 293 students made all of their No Child AYP goals last year. The school had 85.9% of its children at or above grade level. And here is one of the reasons why.

By RAEGAN ROSS

In my class, we have incorporated a learning strategy entitled “Books in Bags,” which has not only assisted young readers with the ability to read and recognize letters and words, but it has also brought about a great deal of parent involvement.

Students are given a “book in a bag,” which is literally what it sounds like – a book in a Ziploc bag. These books go home with the students Monday through Wednesday nights as a supplement to their homework.

Parents are expected to read the book to their child, ask questions about the story to check comprehension, and sign a reading log

that is also placed in the bag after completing the book.

This takes place for the beginning two-thirds of the school year.

The state of North Carolina expects kindergarten students to be reading by the time their kindergarten school year is complete, therefore, throughout the final third of the school year, the books sent home in the bags will be books on a level that the students read to the parent....

By implementing the “Books in Bags” series within my classroom as well as other kindergarten classrooms at Vaughan Elementary School, parent involvement has increased a great deal....”

Educate! is a journal on public education focusing on Charlotte-Mecklenburg and N.C. Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen.

Finances: *Educate!* is made possible by individual, corporate and foundation donors, including a grant from the Knight Foundation. To make a tax-deductible donation, send your check to The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204 or, at www.networkforgood.org, use the keyword Swann Fellowship to make a secure donation.

Publisher is The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204; 704-342-4330; swannfello@aol.com. The Fellowship, named for missionaries Darius and Vera Swann, was formed in 1997 out of several Charlotte congregations to be a witness to the value of diversity in public education and to educate the public on school issues as they relate to this and allied subjects. The Fellowship is a non-profit organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code 56-2106776. Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

Editions: The Internet edition is free to e-mail recipients, or may be downloaded at www.educateclt.org. To be removed, message swannfello@aol.com. Subscribe at www.educateclt.org. Call 704-342-4330 for rates on the mailed edition. First published September 2000; 6-week avg. circulation through last issue: 2,964.

People: Fellowship officers and staff: Leonard R. (Deacon) Jones, president; Lucy Bush Carter, vice president; Steve Johnston, executive director and *Educate!* editor; Beth Kinny, outreach director. Assisting with this edition: Kathleen McClain, Stephanie Southworth.

Staffing advantage not uniform in suburbs

Although it seems that most of the “red” and “blue” closed zones lie in southern and western Mecklenburg County, the headline of “Suburban advantage” is used in the article on teacher stability (*Educate!*, Feb. 20). Looking at all three maps, only the Davidson Elementary school attendance zone is highlighted north of I-85.

Perhaps a more accurate head-

line would be “Northern Suburban Disadvantage” or “the Southern and Western Advantage.”

The county continues for 17 miles north of the I-77 and I-85 junction and encompasses three northern suburbs as well as the entire University City area.

Let us not foster this notion of suburban advantage in school staffing when it is not reflective of the data.

Rhonda Lennon

**From
Readers**

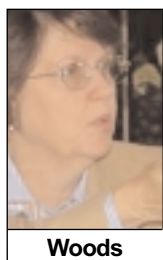
We must halt schools' sliding into poverty

After the last school board election, Educate! invited all members of the school board to write about their plans for CMS and how they would pursue them. The writer, who had to delay typing because of a wrist injury, represents District 4.

By LOUISE WOODS

There is so much that I know in my heart needs to be done. I know one article can't speak to it all. However, I'm going to lift some issues that I plan to particularly focus on this year, knowing it is far from comprehensive.

(1) Create an environment where CMS, and every school in CMS, is the school of choice for quality teachers. For our students to succeed in every school, we need a balance of new and experienced teachers in each school who energize classrooms, integrate curriculum and motivate students with high expectations for all students. Yet while we have improved, only 6 of 52 Equity Plus II schools this year met all of our own standards.



Woods

Furthermore, only 12 elementaries, 5 middle and zero high schools met the standard of 5+ years of experience. Creating, following, and adequately resourcing a comprehensive plan to address these matters must be top priority.

(2) Work aggressively to fulfill our commitment to Equity Plus II schools in materials, facilities, staffing, and all areas necessary for success of students.

(3) Stem the tide toward racial and economic isolation in schools. We must begin by bringing resources necessary for success to all schools above 40% Free and Reduced lunch. Presently, many of our most diverse schools are rapidly moving toward high poverty and decreased diversity. We must acknowledge this and

stop it!

This will take bringing differentiated resources and other attractors to these diverse schools, as well as to our Equity Plus II schools.

(4) Face racial as well as economic gaps in performance. Develop, with community input, a comprehensive plan of addressing the inadequate performance, including that of African Americans not on free and reduced lunch. We must identify those schools that are being successful and replicate the programs/ resources/ parent involvement initiatives/ high expectations necessary to conquer this national problem at least here in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

(5) Work to create a fairer system of ABC's (state) and No Child Left Behind (federal) so these programs don't actually work against attracting and retaining strong staff to these schools.

(6) Create high expectations for parents, and put in place resources necessary to involve all parents.

For example, we must communicate to parents the actions they must take at home to help their children succeed in school.

And, we must hold parents accountable, whether it is for stu-

dent's low attendance, students bringing guns to school, or other signs of neglect.

(7) Work to create a community, including churches and faith groups, focused on accepting no less than a "sound, basic education" where all students develop their potential – and be willing to pay for it. Successful schools take total community involvement.

I will work tirelessly with the Board and community groups and will go anywhere to advance these issues. However, there is only so much that I, and even the Board, can do. Thus, I will encourage individual and community groups to resist a focus on blame, and instead to work together to create solutions.

What part do we each play in accomplishing the goals?

The Swann Fellowship can be key in helping to create the solution. Let's have an honest conversation about what success is, and what we as a community are realistically willing to do to create successful schools in every community.

And let's extend this conversation not only to CMS but also to housing and funding policies and actions of businesses, churches and individuals that are necessary for success.

NAEP scores linked to race, poverty

CMS average scale scores, spring 2003, on National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP.

	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	math	reading	math	reading
Whites not on subsidized lunch	259	240	303	280
Whites on subsidized lunch	245	216	NA	258
Blacks not on subsidized lunch	236	220	269	255
Blacks on subsidized lunch	226	198	252	243

Source: CMS

A Carolina Struggle

That historic Supreme Court case began right here in the Carolinas, when a country preacher named Rev. J. A. De Laine helped his neighbors file a lawsuit for equal schools.

This is their story.



Sadness, anger – and hope

Exhibit on S.C. school equality struggle inspires visitors

A diverse group of Charlotte-Mecklenburg citizens toured the Levine Museum’s “Courage” exhibit Tuesday. They said they wished you’d come see it.

They fear you won’t.

The 20 or so adults, black and white, lingered at each turn of the exhibit, silently soaking up the story of how a small group of Clarendon County, S.C. citizens, including young children, stood up in the ’40s and ’50s to fight for an end to segregated, unequal schools.

Their challenge of white power brought swift response. Leader J.A. DeLaine’s church was torched. The DeLaines’ home was burned to the ground. Shots were fired. Plaintiffs lost their jobs. Mortgages were abruptly called in. Through words and artifacts and video clips, the “Courage” exhibit tells the Clarendon story.

Tuesday’s visitors had much to say in response.

– “It brings back a lot of memories. Hopefully I can leave here with more courage to work harder on these issues.”

– “The people who need to care are not going to come. And the people who do come are not going to act.”

– “Until I talked to [someone]

from elsewhere in the state I felt that these problems were not systemic.”

– “I hope we can move forward and do some positive things.”

– “We must bring more people to see this exhibit.”

– “Sadness.”

– “Sadness doesn’t do it for me. Anger is closer.... Some people say, ‘You’re bitter.’ No, I remember.”

– “A lot of people don’t know this is still being played out today in the schools. There are teachers who won’t call on [black children], who grade on racist attitudes.”

– “We live on a stage where Jim Crow racism is still being played out.”

– “The only thing that has changed is the ‘stuff’ [black people are not as poor].”

– “Overwhelming sadness – or sadness of ‘here we go again.’”

– “There was such anger in the white child’s eyes.”

– The struggle has moved from legal challenges to the struggle for economic parity with whites. “I’ve got a funny feeling that we’ll go through the economic inclusion thing and find that’s not the answer either.”

– “I can’t imagine today that a child would be in the position of

signing a petition that might end in their death.”

– “Trust has to be built in a very personal way.” Black children willing to attend majority-white schools “are teaching the majority kids things they won’t learn any other way.”

– “We need to take this conversation out of this room and into the community.”

– “What we need is to bring the county commissioners and school board members to view this together.”

– “If we don’t get things to change in homes, we’re not going to get anywhere.”

– “We need to call on various groups to have the courage that these people had 30 years ago. We

Continued on Page 5

Principal looks for ways to reach teens

Continued from Page 1

out looking for new ideas because so many he's already tried came up short.

Cut class size? It helps, he says, if only in reducing stress on faculty. "Fifteen in a class is at least more manageable," but most classes are much larger. "The staff are teaching their butts off at 25 and with 28 they just can't do it." And budget cuts loom.

Volunteers? Yergalonis said the experience was "not good.... We spent more time cleaning up their mess."

Mentors? Yergalonis brought from The Citadel Wendell

Rodgers, an accomplished program director, consultant and former substance abuse program leader in Newark. Rodgers took one look, then decided first "to weed out the knuckleheads" that he knew he wouldn't reach.

Parents? "The parents have disengaged, obviously."

Churches? The kids active in church aren't the problem.

Scared straight? Rahway's state prison is home of the program designed to get kids' attention by confronting them with loss of freedom. Yergalonis says he's tried that too. He finds the tour "frightening and imposing." His students just say, "Well, I know I'm going to be there someday."

"I'm not dealing with thugs or gangsters," he says. And while gangs are present, that "in general is not the problem.

"If I ask a kid to take a box to my car, he's fine with that.... If I ask him if he's done his homework, I've crossed a line."

What do the youth themselves say is the answer? Yergalonis says he's asked:

"If you ask about work, they just look at you."



'Courage' exhibit stirs up emotions

Continued from Page 4

need that courage as much today."

After the tour, two African-Americans who lived through the era portrayed in "Courage" were asked if they would encourage blacks to see the exhibit.

One said he would. The other said no: "They know all this – and they know it's not changed."

Indeed, the exhibit does what museum exhibits do best: inform the uninformed.

A number of visitors who were seeing the exhibit the second time said they read more of the materials on their second visit, or saw things they missed the first time.

One of the exhibits that pulled the most punch was a blown-up version of the petition signed by Clarendon County adults – and children. The words were paired with photos of the young children.

One visitor was most affected by the photo covering one wall showing the DeLaine family standing in the ruins of their burned-down house.

Another visitor said he learned a great deal about the era, even though he had known the DeLaine family in the 1960s. The

family, he said, had chosen not to dwell on their horrific experiences, but to look to the future.

On many minds, naturally, was the future of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which in the '70s was a reluctant standard-bearer for the desegregation effort. While *Brown v Board* established the legal standard that segregated schools were unequal and illegal, it was cases like *Swann v Mecklenburg*, which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld in 1971, that gave effect to *Brown*. The Swann case allowed lower courts to order busing to end patterns of state-mandated school segregation. In 2002, CMS was declared unitary and court supervision ended.

The final stop in the exhibit confronts visitors with questions about whether "courage" is needed today, not only in emerging patterns of resegregation but in a broader array of civil rights matters. Students have left their Post-It notes with their answers.

Adults may be inspired by the exhibit to act on their answers once they leave the Seventh Street museum.

—
B.B. DeLaine, son of Rev. J.A. DeLaine, is a board member of The Swann Fellowship, which publishes this journal.



Rodgers

Magnet grant stirs new diversity debate

Continued from Page 1

increasing the grant request next year, not to bus children over distance but to draw parents back to struggling neighborhood schools:

“One example is Shamrock Gardens Elementary. I believe that if we can have a strong magnet there we could have a diverse population right there... it makes a school more attractive to those who live there.”

Kaye McGarry, referring to a Georgian with Down Syndrome, said her definition of diversity “is not just skin tone. It is based on color, creed, nationality. We are all different and we really need to look at educating all children. To me that is what diversity is, and education is what should matter in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.”

Kit Cramer recounted her family’s long participation in magnet schools, and said she supported the program:

“They voluntarily provide diversity in the school district, which I think is very important.

“It’s a competitive response, and a way of attracting parents, keeping parents and children in our public schools, and I want ’em here. So my hat’s off to creators of magnets, and if anything I want to look for more meaty, unique, wonderful curriculum opportunities that we can continue to build to attract and keep more parents and kids...”

Larry Gauvreau agreed the system should have “meatier magnet schools” but added:

“We’ve got too many themes that are just there to lure parents. And I just don’t believe we should be social engineers, especially now when it is illegal to do so.

“The magnitude of our magnet program is so large that you can’t possibly call it a voluntary desegregation program. It’s a third of our school district. We have entrenched policy from the past,

2-year-olds imitate what’s on TV, research finds

Andrew N. Meltzoff is a professor of psychology at the University of Washington.

“You know, parents are very concerned, and I personally am concerned about what children, even young children, get from observing television. So some of my research is to show young children actions on television without a verbal channel on the TV— to see if [after] they observe novel acts on television, whether they’ll repeat them in the real world.



Meltzoff

“And we were able to demonstrate a very, very powerful impact of television. Of course, 3- and 4-year-olds are impacted by television, but some of the stunning and surprising research showed that even 2-year-olds – if they see a particular television show where the person does actions, novel actions – new ones, that the child never saw before – with novel objects, that the child, if they’re given those objects in their living room, will then repeat the action that they saw on television. So this was an empirical demonstration that showed the power of television for very young babies, and it was ... really very impressive.”

– www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=2327

and I simply recommend to this board is that we stop doing so, stop taking federal money so we don’t unwittingly continue to wind this thing up tighter than it is.

“It is time for neighborhood schools, whether anyone likes to hear it or not on this board, in this county. You can’t possibly continue to roll out such an expensive, costly education program when the results don’t really change.

“We’ve got data that shows that very little difference in outcome happens with our magnet schools, although there is some. And I will support limited magnet schools in this school district, always have. But we’ve gone too far.

“And each time we go out and ask for more money, and don’t revamp and retool, we keep getting further and further on the ledge and making it worse....

“I would almost guess that we are probably spending 10 to 15% more in this school district because we do have a magnet school program. And its purpose: desegregation. That is just simply wrong....

“I know this board’s not going to

do it. But we are making another huge mistake by continuing to go down that road, and not instead taking the time to say, as [former school board member Lindalyn] Kakadelis did back in 2000, I think it was. She said, why are we going to the federal government for, at the time I think it was \$12 million.

“She asked the right question. I’m trying to do the same thing tonight, to persuade this board to rethink this at a minimum.

“Just to rubber-stamp another \$6 million magnet school grant from the federal government, and then try to beef it up even more, is just going to bus more kids and not change the outcome. It is going to cost more money than we can afford.

“And it’s time for neighborhood schools. Why would we do anything else other than that? I just, I can’t understand it....”

Magnets in the grant include a center for leadership at Winding Springs Elementary; communication arts at Hornets Nest Elementary and J.T. Williams Middle; and pre-IB at Huntingtowne Farms, Irwin Avenue and Statesville Road elementaries.

Superintendent of the year is Wake's McNeal

He began as a social studies teacher at Wake County's Carroll Jr. High in 1974. Last week, Bill McNeal was named 2004 Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators.

Appointed Wake County superintendent in 2000, McNeal was behind the district's 1998 adoption of Goals 2003 – that 95% of the 3rd- and 8th-graders be at or above grade level. With the attention focused on achievement that resulted, the district nearly made the goal, which was considered “wildly unrealistic” at the time.

The award carries a \$2,000 honorarium, some bragging rights and a \$10,000 student scholarship given in the recipient's name. The annual award is sponsored by Aramark ServiceMaster, a food service provider in more than 300 school districts nationwide.



McNeal

Briefly

... in the Carolinas

Rising in the ranks: CMS rose from 9th to 7th on the Forbes.com “Best Education in the Biggest Cities” list (*Educate!*, Feb. 20) when two cities erroneously listed were tossed out of the top 10.
www.forbes.com

ABC-AYP: The N.C. State Board of Education wants a new category under its testing program to honor schools meeting the old N.C. standards and new requirements under No Child Left Behind. Names under consideration for the honor include Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Merit, and Schools of Excellence Plus.
www.guilford.k12.nc.us

... in the Nation

Amendment: Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr., D-Ill., introduced a proposed constitutional amendment, House Joint Resolution 29, in 2001 to try to guarantee every American the right to a public education of equal, high quality.

So far, 180 lawmakers – 179 Democrats and one Independent – have co-sponsored, Education Week reported.

www.edweek.org

Fewer charters: The 2003-04 school year saw the fewest number of new charter schools nationwide since 1997, Education Week reported. The decrease is possibly due to teachers unions lobbying against charter schools.

www.edweek.org

Teacher salaries: If total education spending increased 6%, all teacher salaries could rise 10%, the Washington Post reported.

www.washingtonpost.com

Teacher turnover: Teach for America brings young college graduates into inner city schools. In Philadelphia, the Inquirer reported, their turnover is twice that of regular Philadelphia teachers.

www.philly.com

Laptops: A Maine program that assigns seventh- and eighth-grade students laptop computers appears successful, the Boston Globe reported. “More than four out of five teachers surveyed reported that students are more engaged in their learning, more actively involved in their own learning, and produce better quality work.”

www.bostonglobe.com

High expectations: Houston schools will place all sixth-graders in pre-AP classes starting next year, the Houston Chronicle reported. Pre-AP teachers will be required to complete certification and parent permission will be required for children to opt out of the program.

www.chron.com

Autism boom: 689 students with autism are being served in Gwinnett County schools, a more than 10-fold increase since the early 1990s, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Calendar

FEBRUARY

26 Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.

26 Public School Forum of N.C.'s John Poteat on impact of No Child Left Behind, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 200 W. Trade St. Sponsor: League of Women Voters.

29 Gospel Extravaganza, at which Dr. Reginald A. Hawkins and the late Kelly M. Alexander Sr. will be honored for their civil rights work, 6 p.m., United House of Prayer for All People, 2321 Beatties Ford Rd.

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.

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

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., Cone Center, McKnight Hall, 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.

No Child: Teacher views

They asked about No Child’s impact on teacher training and the intended beneficiaries said “yuck.”

A new National Staff Development Council survey found 57% of respondents saying No Child has, overall, had a negative impact. And an expected increase in teacher training has not materialized.

“Given the NCLB challenges educators are facing, high-quality professional development is essential, but it does not appear that most school systems are effectively using the law towards that end,” said Hayes Mizell of the development council.

“We don’t know how informed all the respondents are about the NCLB and its provisions,” Mizell said, “and this certainly was not a ‘scientific’ survey, but the results suggest that a great deal of work remains to be done for the law’s professional development provisions to foster the teacher quality necessary for all students to perform proficiently by 2014.” Among the teachers’ comments:

– “Professional development is great as long as it is not forced on you along with all the other things we need to do as teachers.... Even with all this professional development stuff, [it] doesn’t mean the students are going to learn UNLESS THEY WANT TO!.... Maybe the parents could use professional development along with us.”

– “The quality of professional development is the issue. Teachers need to leave a workshop with useful tools and information that can be implemented in the classroom immediately. So much time and energy is wasted on the wrong thing.”

– “Rather than directing funds at professional development – the money might be better spent in reducing class size or giving stipends to teachers to take coursework that would be in-depth enough to do some good.”

– “My state eliminated any funding for PD this year, making federal monies for this purpose more

No Child’s great leap nowhere

Among the questions in a survey by the National Staff Development Council of more than 2,000 educators, 63% of them teachers, was the following: “Based on the school systems and/or schools that I know best, it appears that to date NCLB-funded professional development is:” Percentages of responses are below:

14.4%: “Improving the quality of teaching”

6.7%: “Increasing the quantity of educators who meet my state’s criteria for ‘highly qualified’

4.7%: “Increasing student learning”

7.0%: “Increasing student test scores”

47.2%: “Having no discernible effect”

20%: “Other”

– <http://tinyurl.com/xvlg>

valuable than ever.”

– “The professional development I have received is scripted, boring, poorly delivered, expensive and meaningless. We are laying off teachers, paras, canceling field trips and rationing paper. Yet paying for substitute teachers, and trainers to tell us less than we already know.”

– “NCLB is causing more scientifically based research to reach teachers. Knowing why things done a certain way get better results is bound to impact the teaching in the classroom.”

– “I do a lot of staff development, and we’re much more conscious of jumping through the assigned hoops now; I’m just not at all convinced those are the right hoops! ‘The pig don’t get fatter by weighing it....’”