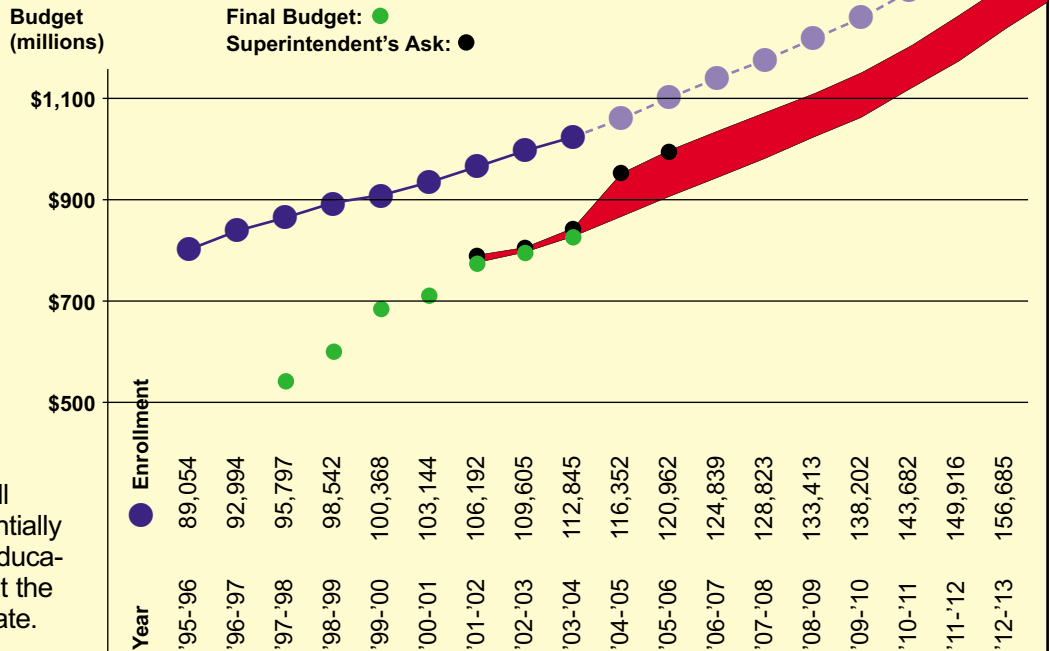


Funding gap

For three years, final funding has been shy of Supt. Jim Pughsley's initial request, creating the left end of the red budget gap. Tuesday's proposal seeks a \$25 million hike in local funding. But last May Pughsley forecast a need for \$96 million for '04-'05, widening the gap. If, in the future, requests and approvals both track projected enrollments, CMS will face a permanent and potentially mortal gap between what educators say is needed and what the county is willing to appropriate.



Will CMS find its way?

Pitch for money muted; bond review is risky; whites continue flight

A school district that says it has only three to five years to heal itself appears on indicator after indicator to be on the critical list.

– After agreeing last spring to forecast the money it will take to educate all children to the community's expectations, the administration of Supt. Jim Pughsley this week sought only a third of the needed additional local funds.

– A school board intent on allowing parents to send their children to schools close to their largely segregated neighborhoods has failed to act on their superintendent's warning last October that they are putting at academic risk every child assigned to the third or more of CMS campuses that their assignments have turned into high-poverty schools.

– By an 8-1 vote Tuesday, members put the school board's word in jeopardy by ordering a review

designed to set the stage for reallocation of bonds, from projects for which voters approved the money, to other projects.

– Pughsley's budget puts another \$1 million into equitable resources for all schools. But the school board's 1999 commitment remains underfunded by about \$20 million.

– And parents, exercising their assignment options in a lottery, again voted with their feet in favor of ever-more resegregated schools.

Redirecting bonds

Kaye McGarry, who took the lead Tuesday on the bond review initiative, has been outspoken that construction funds are not going where the greatest needs are.

Seven of the nine board members were present when a com-

mittee hashed out the details. And new chairperson Joe White was ready to use parliamentary procedure to order the review without even a vote of the board. But after George Dunlap objected, the 8-1 vote was cast, with Larry Gauvreau dissenting on grounds that outside experts should instead be called in.

Dissenters to the notion of further delaying promised construction and renovations were in the audience at the Education Center Tuesday night.

"No more will we sit back for business as usual, because it's time to make the last first," said De Shauna McLamb, local preacher at Greenville AME Zion Church.

The desire to break promises "always exposes its ugly head when it is proposed to shift voter-

Continued on Page 2

approved bond money from projects that are relative to renovation TO projects that are relative to growth and or suburban areas,” said Dwayne Collins.

Collins promised “more persistent and creative ways” to protest the board’s direction.

“Justice demands that those schools that have delayed, sorely needed renovations once and for all be moved up on the priority list to No. 1 in the list of priorities..... Justice delayed will always be justice denied.”

Former teacher Richard McElrath rose to argue an even wider agenda:

“It is my hope,” he said, “that the county commissioners will say to this board of education, ‘We will NOT continue to fund an assignment plan that isolates children of color and children from low-income families.’ This board of education has a legal, moral and ethical responsibility to provide a basic education for all children. Isolating children of color and children from low-income families is the least effective and most expensive way to educate children.

“It is my hope that the county commissioners will say to this board of education, ‘We will NOT build any school until this board of education provides Charlotte and Mecklenburg with an assignment plan that fully utilizes all the schools that the taxpayers have already provided.... We must concentrate our limited resources on the real needs of all our citizens rather than the convenience of a few.’”

Assignment results

The district’s review of the first round of lottery assignments for next fall showed relative stability, with roughly the same percentages of parents getting their first or second choices, and relatively similar numbers of low- and high-poverty schools and low- and high-minority schools.

But as charts on Page 4 indicate, large numbers of schools continue to see their white enrollment percentages drop, with the

hemorrhaging worst in elementaries that are less than half white.

This is the third year of what was once called the Family Choice Plan. Officials dropped the word “choice” in December when it became clear that overcrowded schools would severely limit the choices of those not wanting their home-school guarantee.

About 18% of current students did not participate in the first lottery. Their presence later will change the results at some schools. Some children counted in the numbers may now be enrolled in private schools, and may ultimately decide to stay put. That said:

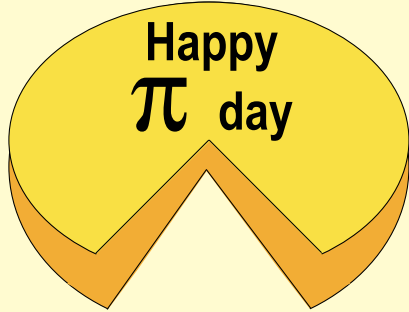
“Our success continues,” announced student placement director Scott McCully.

In a system of 112,000 students, only 23,197 were required to apply. About 18,900 of those participated in the January lottery. Those who had to participate were students who next fall will be in kindergarten, sixth or ninth grade. Some other students participated voluntarily, bringing the total to more than 25,000.

About 76% of students in the first lottery got their first choice, roughly the same as last year’s 78%.

But of the 6,089 who were after seats they weren’t already guaranteed, 31% got none of their three choices.

Recombining data on students’ first options in the lottery offers a



Happy
 π day

In an era of sitcom repeats, take time Sunday, 3.14, to contemplate that which, according to scientists, never repeats:

3.14159265358979323846

Pi is the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter. The number stays the same, no matter how big the pie, or even if somebody eats a piece.

“get-me-outta-here” index, composed of all students seeking to be assigned away from their home school or their current program. The percentages for this dissatisfaction index: whites, 39%; Hispanics, 46%; Asians, 51%; African Americans, 66%.

About 81% of whites received their first choice; about 71% of blacks did.

Budget presented

“If for the third year we are at level funding,” Pughsley said Tuesday night, the district will be

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 nonprofit 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.

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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.

near the point where “you’ve stretched the rubber band to the breaking point.”

Bowing to intense pressure from a Board of County Commissioners majority hostile to new claims on the taxpayer’s dollars, Pughsley whittled \$9.1 million from current programs to bring projected additional revenue from county coffers to \$24.9 million. Overall, the current \$825.4 million schools budget would rise to \$903.1 million.

The decision didn’t play well. Commissioners determined to avoid a tax increase thought it too high. Those who had asked Pughsley last year to identify the resources the district really needs were disappointed.

Only last May, Pughsley said the system would need to ask the county for \$96 million.

“I wish he had gone for a higher number,” said one observer. “If you went for \$50 million, you might get \$30 million.”

The schools will never get the funding they need “if we ask for the best that we can expect versus what we need.”

Projected growth of 3,700 students will stretch resources, and Pughsley said he had just ordered up to 70 mobile classrooms for use this fall.

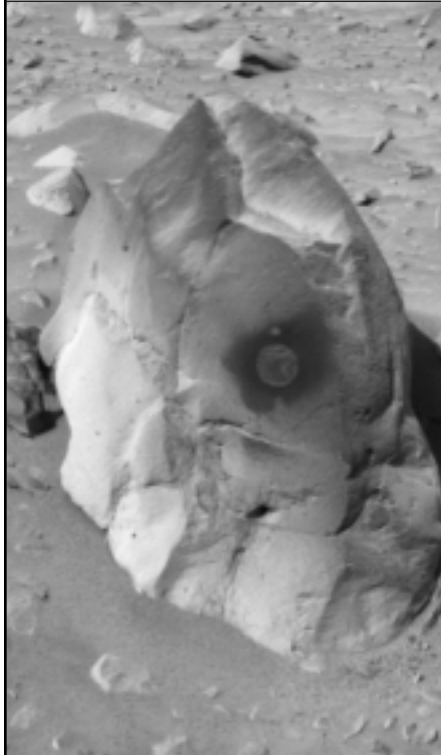
Among the larger increases is nearly \$5 million for personnel and supplies to handle the new students.

Among the costliest new initiatives is \$3.6 million to expand ninth-grade academies to all at-risk students. The initiative is designed to lower class size, increase counseling, and to focus on remediation for those leaving eighth grade without grade-level skills. Those students are likeliest to drop out before graduation.

From Pughsley’s budget, here are the top “program expansions and new initiatives:

- \$3.7 million to implement a 9th grade initiative that will provide intensive academic/instructional intervention to students in the 8th grade who did not meet the competency or computer skills requirements. This intensive intervention will help students become success-

High school needed



NASA/JPL www.nasa.gov

The Mars rover Spirit drilled into “Humphrey” last week, finding evidence that water was once present. There was no evidence that the 23-inch rock had been adopted by a high school – not even a new “small” high school.

ful in high school.

- \$1.2 million to introduce a program for performance-based pay in pilot schools. As a leader in urban education, CMS is recognized for linking student achievement to bonus pay initiatives, including the Local Accountability Bonus and the Annual Retention incentive in EquityPlus II schools for master teachers. This pilot program will involve most positions within a school and will offer a performance based compensation package based on elements such as student achievement, attendance and professional development.

- \$587,063 to bring the quality of books in EquityPlus II media centers up to standard. CMS media centers have three areas of standards including personnel, quantity and quality. Although the district has met the standards in personnel

and quantity, quality standards have not been met.

- \$510,000 to expand the SAT preparation class to all high schools. Currently, the pilot program is offered in eight high schools and addresses professional development for teachers and support for students in preparing for the SAT. Since the SAT will be changing next year, this program will provide necessary support to staff and students.

- \$446,448 to bring all EquityPlus II schools up to standard in Exceptional Children instructional materials. Currently, 46 of the 52 EquityPlus II schools do not meet standard.

- \$391,132 to provide local resources for opening two new magnet programs with distinct, innovative and rigorous themes. These new programs include the Early College program at E.E. Waddell High School and the Foreign Language Immersion program at Oaklawn (K-2 French and Spanish).

- \$255,000 to provide additional bus driver hours based on the adjusted bell schedule adopted for 2004-2005.

- \$230,000 to subsidize an incentive program for the After School Enrichment program at certain elementary schools. This funding will provide an incentive of free After School Enrichment services to students during the 2004-2005 school year at four under enrolled elementary schools in the inner-city area.

- \$213,496 to support four Spanish Foreign Language programs at the elementary schools. Funding will support four foreign language teacher positions.

- \$27,574 to provide for one additional co-curricular stipend at each high school.

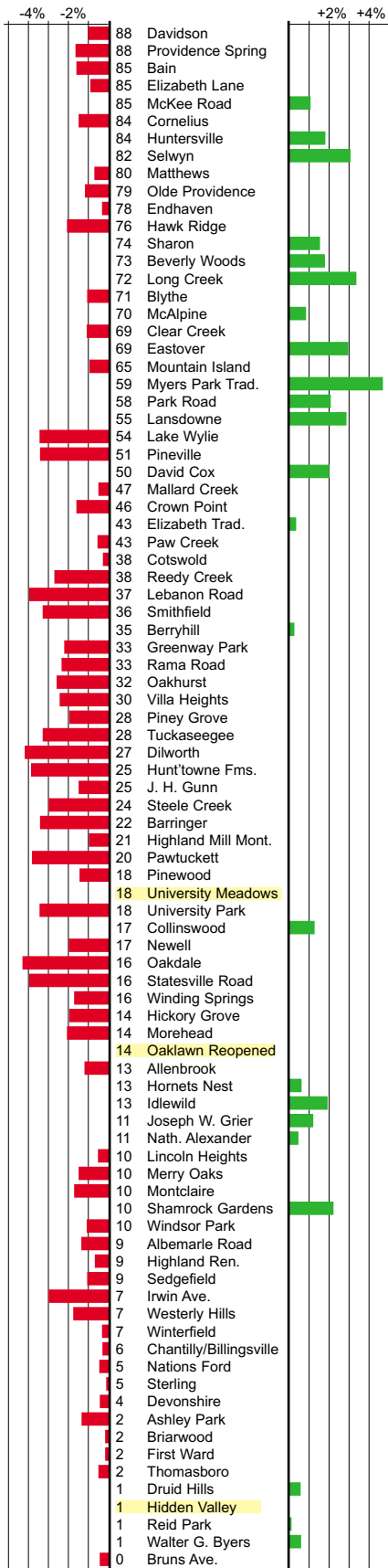
The board will explore more details of Pughsley’s proposals in the coming weeks during budget workshops.

The 10-year outlook

The school board Tuesday also heard the biennial review of the district’s capital project needs.

“I am not,” said Assistant Supt.

Elementary schools



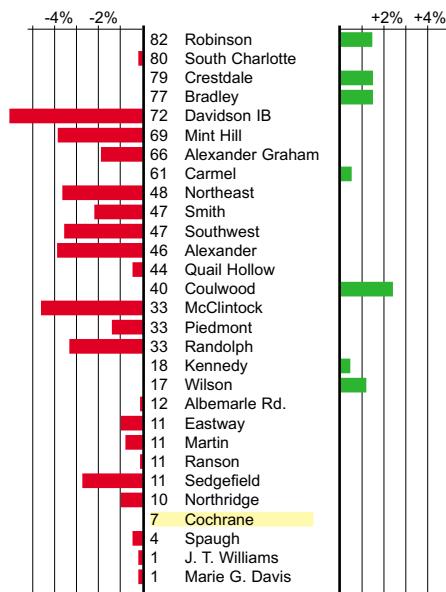
CMS assignment lottery results

An explanation of these charts, using the elementary school chart at left as the example:

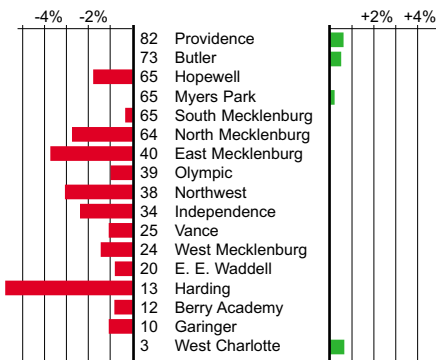
Schools are listed in descending order of projected fall '04 white enrollment. Based on the January lottery, Davidson Elementary will be 88% white next fall, Bruns Avenue 0% white.

Red bars show the projected percentage point decrease in white enrollment since fall 2003. Green bars show the projected percentage increase in white enrollment since fall 2003. Schools highlighted in yellow showed no change from fall 2003.

Middle schools



High schools



Guy Chamberlain, "going to talk about how we fund that, about how much it may cost each year, about what sources of funds might be available. I'm strictly going to state what I believe are the needs of this system."

What he described had a 10-year price tag of \$1.4 billion, separated into four categories of work. Lifecycle replacements include expensive mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning equipment, that must be replaced every 20 years or so. The totals:

Lifecycle replace	\$125,217,236
Mandates, initiatives	54,960,983
Baseline standards	500,216,422
Growth, land	805,101,937
Total	\$1,485,496,578

A bit of what Chamberlain said about each category, then the financial details:

"We have about eight stadiums that need to be replaced over the next 10 years, a number of them sooner than later," Chamberlain told the board. "If you recall, we basically had to have Garinger Stadium condemned four years ago and replace the seat there. We have a number of stadiums that are close to that condition today."

Lifecycle repl.	\$125,217,236
Plumbing	10,291,600
Roofing	6,513,736
HVAC	20,089,300
Mobile classrooms	7,205,000
Paving	2,805,550
Electrical	4,500,000
Stadiums	23,947,550
Tracks	1,237,500
Windows	11,169,000
Bleachers & floors	8,958,000
Auditoriums	28,500,000

"For the most part our schools meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. All new facilities must meet the North Carolina accessibility code....

"However, every year there are handicapped individuals who come to us requesting some reasonable accommodation. These funds will allow us to do that....

"Indoor air quality: Mold and mildew is becoming a big issue.

Lawyers that used to get rich on asbestos are now going to get rich on mold and mildew.”

Mandates, initiatives	\$54,960,983
Technology infra.	4,900,000
Asbestos	12,916,000
ADA compliance	700,000
Pre-K licensing	8,500,000
Indoor air	10,000,000
High/middle surveil.	4,555,983
Fire alarm upgrades	2,100,000
Struct. repair	10,289,000
Custodial stor. bldgs.	1,000,000

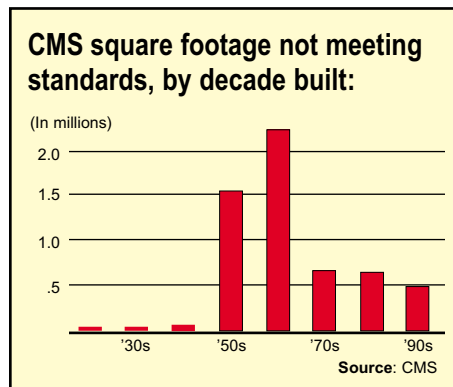
“We have had wholesale (school) replacements. That is not the way we will be operating in the future. I would say with possibly one exception, all future baseline standards projects will simply be renovations and additions.

“Today we have 4.5 million square feet that are 30 years or older. Nearly 3 million of that is over 40 years old. In the next 10 years, that becomes 50 years old.”

Baseline stand.	\$500,216,422
11 Highs	132,027,555
13 Middles	124,455,481
38 elem.	205,622,152
1 K-8	11,855,197
7 Pre-Ks	26,256,037

“This (mobile classrooms below) is not to be confused with the earlier mobile classroom line item (to replace aging units). These are mobile classrooms simply to keep up with growth. Ideally, we wouldn’t have to do that if I could get the classrooms built fast enough.

“We’re not going to be able to catch up with the growth in time to start eliminating mobile classrooms until the end of the 10-year period.



And obviously that’s based on how much funding we get annually....

“Out of that growth and real estate, we anticipate delivering about 40,000 seats.”

Growth, land	\$805,101,937
Additions	91,297,391
30 elementaries	416,822,000
2 middles	49,288,600
3 highs	122,754,000
2 Pre-Ks, 3 additions	32,782,086
Mobile classrooms	27,207,860
Support facilities	22,550,000
Real estate	42,400,000

Chamberlain also presented the plan for capital projects over the next three years. Details:

Lifecycle	\$26,445,600
Mandates, initiatives	18,145,983
Growth, land	274,103,551
Baseline standards	119,980,003
Total	\$438,675,137

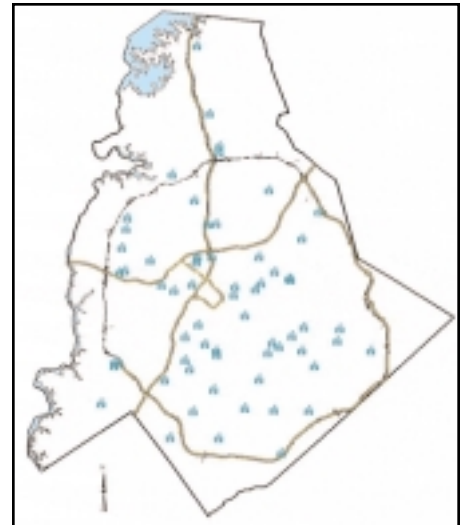
The three-year program includes baseline standards projects totaling \$119,980,003 at: Double Oaks, Tryon Hills Pre-Ks; Long Creek Elementary; Alexander, Cochrane, Alexander Graham, McClintock, Sedgfield, Wilson Middles; Garinger, Harding, Independence, Myers Park, North Meck, South Meck Highs; and Graham Center.

Where are we going?

Pughsley and County Manager Harry Jones are still in discussions about a “funding framework” that the school board and county board have been discussing. At a meeting last week, Pughsley told the Education Budget Advisory Committee that when the process began “there were a whole lot of questions.

“It was a challenge, but we have come together with good people.” The results may be announced next week.

The initial proposal was for the county to earmark a flat 47% of its annual budget for CMS. Pughsley went into negotiations with Jones seeking triggering mechanisms that would, for example, give CMS more than 47% to cover higher-than-expected



CMS map shows schools where buildings don’t meet educational requirements. “There’s a myth that the baseline standard projects are an urban vs. suburban issue. I think clearly this map shows that that is not the case,” Building Services chief Guy Chamberlain told the board. When current bond funding is exhausted, 46% of CMS schools will still not meet the needs of today’s curriculum.

ed student enrollment, or as debt service rises and would otherwise begin to eat into operating money.

Working out those details, Pughsley said, “was the easy work. The more difficult task is, what do we do with it” – that is, will the county actually follow through and finance a growing school system.

Charlotte banker Ernie Dehnert said, “Just to say we don’t like it because it’s a big number isn’t an intelligent approach.”

“There is a great risk,” added Anthony Foxx, “that the minimum framework may be the maximum as a political reality.

The community is putting tremendous pressure on schools for improved achievement. “I am not satisfied,” he said, “that there is a two-way level of responsibility and pressure on our county commissioners.... We are going to be compounding the problems we will be facing as time goes on.”

Pughsley said that a demographer's presentation at a state school board association conference "made it even more concrete to me" how the state's demographics are changing.

"North Carolina is going to change and change rapidly," Pughsley said. "Everyone doesn't see the change that is taking place around us...."

"You can see it in the lower grades. There are certain things, that if we don't have proper funding we're all going to pay for."

"The question is when we're going to raise those taxes."

Foxx said he had observed great jealousy among other community groups over the large share of county funds received by the schools. "That is just part of the political context the school system finds itself in."

"You're doing everything you can," Foxx told Pughsley. "I don't think we're getting through to the people we need to get through to."

Observed EBAC chairman Ken Harris, a former Charlotte mayor, about the county commissioners who hold the schools' purse strings, "We've elected them. That's where the change would have to take place."

2004-2005 PROPOSED CURRENT EXPENSE BUDGET: COMPARISON TO PRIOR YEAR

	2004-2005 Proposed Budget	2003-2004 Adopted Budget	% Change
REVENUES			
State of North Carolina	\$534,443,093	\$483,943,381	10.4%
Federal	64,728,694	65,340,075	-0.9%
Mecklenburg County	289,911,497	264,988,951	9.4%
Other Local Revenue	14,024,602	15,522,964	-9.7%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$903,107,886	\$829,795,371	8.8%
EXPENDITURES			
Instructional			
Regular	\$382,279,700	\$351,704,318	8.7%
Special	82,521,315	80,815,820	2.1%
Adult Educational Programs	-	-	-
Co-Curricular	3,562,224	3,402,338	4.7%
Student Services	54,249,239	50,459,344	7.5%
Total Instructional	522,612,478	486,381,820	7.4%
Instructional Support			
Pupil Support Services	1,778,473	1,687,173	5.4%
Instructional Staff	10,444,072	9,499,100	9.9%
Total Instructional Support	12,222,545	11,186,273	9.3%
Operations			
Business Support	119,625,110	112,508,197	6.3%
Central Support	21,650,024	19,428,368	11.4%
Community Services	491,349	490,288	0.2%
Other	2,915,014	6,007,767	-51.5%
Total Operations	144,681,497	138,434,620	4.5%
Leadership			
Administrative	4,686,859	4,963,763	-5.6%
School Administrative	48,626,635	45,582,520	6.7%
Total Leadership	53,313,494	50,546,283	5.5%
Employee Benefits	164,722,844	138,945,743	18.6%
Charter School Funds	5,555,028	4,300,632	29.2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$903,107,886	\$829,795,371	8.8%

In defense of teens

Two excerpts from "Five Things You Don't Know About Your Teen," by Glastonbury (Conn.) High School English teacher Mark R. Dursin:

"Your child is smart but is afraid to show it.... Especially in their written work (when they don't have to worry about what their peers might think), they come up with truly thought-provoking ideas.... Moreover, when they let the façade of 'cool' slip just a bit, they teach each other.... I just wish they allowed themselves to let it happen more often...."

"Your child cares. According to prevailing myths, teens live completely self-absorbed existences.... These myths about teens are usually perpetuated by people who don't actually know any teens personally. As someone who has worked with students for eight years, I can assure you ... they care for each other, for their parents, for the suffering innocents. And yes, they even care for their teachers."

Briefly

... in the Carolinas

Reassigned: Wake County's latest student reassignment involves more students than the total in more than half of North Carolina's school systems, the N.C. Public School Forum noted in its Friday Report. A record 7,838 students will be moved, mostly to populate seven new schools opening in August.
www.ncforum.org

Fewer charters: The N.C. Public Schools Forum, citing a Center for Education Reform report, said 309 charter schools opened this school year, the smallest number since 1997.
www.ncforum.org

Fewer languages: N.C. school districts are dropping their elementary foreign language instruction to devote more time to reading and math, the News & Observer reported. In 1994 almost half of N.C. elementary school students received foreign language instruction at least once a week. Today, fewer than 20% are.
www.newsobserver.com

... in the Nation

Certified: Texas will offer college graduates temporary teaching certificates if they pass state tests and their degree is related to the subject they teach, the Dallas News reported. Education Week earlier reported that Georgia will soon certify teachers upon passing basic skills and subject matter tests – but without any classroom training.
www.dallasnews.com
www.edweek.org

Gifted squeezed: School districts nationwide that are facing tight budgets often cut their academically gifted programs, the New York Times reported. Under No Child Left Behind, funding and energy is being shifted to get

underperforming children up to grade level, at the expense of extra services for gifted children.
www.nytimes.com

New market: Academic Accelerator is a program aimed at helping teachers know their students' weaknesses, The Idaho Statesman reported. The program identifies where students did not do well on tests, and suggests curriculum to improve the students' performance.
www.theidahostatesman.com

Graduation gap: While 75% of white students graduate high school in four years, about 50% of their black counterparts, the Boston globe reported.
www.boston.com

Easing rule: President Bush relaxed testing requirements under No Child for students with limited English proficiency, the

Washington Post reported. English-language learners will be excluded from schools' test results the first year, and will be reported in the limited-English proficient subgroup for two years after they learn English. The new rule may allow more schools to achieve annual yearly progress.
www.washingtonpost.com

My buddy: Research in Great Britain concluded that 18% of child and 10% of adult computer users enjoy spending time with their computer more than with friends, The Guardian reported.
www.guardian.co.uk

For sale: After a supermarket paid \$100,000 for naming rights to a new gym, the Brooklawn, N.J., schools are considering selling naming rights on Ebay, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.
www.philly.com

Calendar

MARCH

11 School board budget session, 11 a.m., Board Room, Education Center.

13 5th Annual Social Justice Conference, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, 234 N. Sharon Amity Road, recommended fee \$10.

13 3rd Annual Parents Conference, noon-4 p.m., Cone Center, UNCC, free. Sponsor: Parents On The Move. Info: 704-890-4101.

16 Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services, 3301 Stafford Dr. off Wilkinson Blvd.

16 School board budget work session, 6 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.

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.

23 School board Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Board Conference Room, Education Center.

23 School board meets, holds public hearing on superintendent's '04-'05 proposed budget, 6 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.

24 School board budget workshop, 6 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.

25 School board Personnel Committee, 2 p.m., Board Conference Room, Education Center.

26-28 AAUW N.C. Convention, "Making an Impact: Education Equity for Women and Girls," Marriott Executive Park. Registration due March 15. Information: www.aauwnc.org or 704-661-6568.

27 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. (Rescheduled due to snow.)

Board Room Art

– Bansari Patel, Statesville Road Elem.



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Dunlap seeks attitude change on kids' behavior

School board member George Dunlap Tuesday reiterated his support for CMS discipline policy, appealing to his largely black audience to help change attitudes on behavior by children.

"There has to be a lifestyle change," the District 3 representative told the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum. "I was reared to believe that if somebody hit me, I had to hit back. If everybody did that, we would be in a whole heap of trouble."

Parents and the community need to convince children "there are other ways to resolve disagreements."

Suspension rates are as high as they are, he said, because some principals bypass less severe punishments and go directly to suspension. "I don't know how we get at monitoring whether or not there are principals that do that more often than other principals," he said, adding that state law

gives principals great latitude in such matters.

Asked if there were adults in the schools who could help parents navigate the discipline policy and its appeals process, Dunlap said a few schools had parent advocates, but every parent had a district school board member.

"I don't know why there is a fear of calling your school board member. Most people will not call me."

Among Dunlap's comments:

– Asked where the board is going, Dunlap said "I really don't know. I haven't gotten to know the new members as well as I knew the old members." He said the new members "really have an interest in learning. They don't necessarily agree with what they're learning."

– On a proposed parental right

to pre-approve discussion about sensitive topics like sex, Dunlap said that "as an educational institution I think we have an obligation and a responsibility to answer" a student's questions. If I'm in a classroom, I answer the question. It's not like I'm trying to steer them. I can't answer, 'I need to call your mama and tell her you asked that question.' Obviously they didn't want to talk to their parents about it."

– On CMS's record of 4% of contracts going to African Americans, Dunlap said he had seen some progress in the last year, but "it's an area where we could stand to improve greatly."

– Asked about whether the schools shouldn't teach more black history, Dunlap said, "Until you can convince the superintendent or five members of the board, you're wasting your time. I support it. I'm one vote. Go talk to the other eight."



Dunlap