

Know history or repeat it, students told

Civil rights veterans recall how their commitments were shaped by segregation

Two veterans of the 1960s civil rights movement used a Law Day celebration Monday to call on N.C. students to remember history so they wouldn't repeat it.

The comments by John Hope Franklin, 89, and John Lewis, 64, might also have helped their young listeners understand why no Americans should forget what African Americans experienced during the era of legally mandated segregation.

A high-tech videoconference linked Lewis and the students at Myers Park High to Franklin at Duke University in Durham and students at Hillside High in Durham. Franklin and Lewis responded to questions from students in both locations.

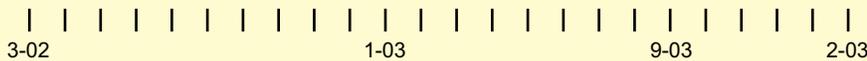
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Ninth-grader Katie Rose's artwork was among those honored in Myers Park High's art contest in connection with its Law Day celebration this week. More art from the contest, Pages 4-5. Poems, Page 3.

U.S. price index for structural steel

January 1997	100
March 2002	84.1
March 2003	75.0
February 2004	102.3



Data source: MEPS International LTD, www.meps.co.uk

The case of the shrinking classroom

Next week brings a decision on school construction. Indications are that cool heads will prevail: Most renovations promised to voters will proceed, no schools will close and monies from now-unneeded projects will be shifted to much-needed new construction.

But when the new classrooms

open several years from now, folks with tape measures may notice that rooms are smaller than those built in the '90s.

Blame steel prices.

Price increases have already had an impact on the county's courthouse now under construction, Finance Director

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Researchers tell stories about days of desegregation

Meet Hannah Monroe, West Charlotte High Class of 1980.

Hannah's experience as a privileged white student at a once all-black high school is one of the stories told in a study that suggests communities make special efforts to keep their schools diverse.

Mirroring the study's findings, Hannah places great value on what she learned by going to a desegregated school, in terms of being comfortable among all kinds of people.

But also like most of the people tracked during the study, both black and white, Hannah's life

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Study tells stories of desegregation

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today is not as desegregated as was her high school experience.

The authors recommend that communities consider diversity as one test of a good school; that choice assignment programs make it easier for parents to choose a diverse school; that money for magnets and transfer programs continue; and that integration of neighborhood housing be a community goal.

“How Desegregation Changed Us: The Effects of Racially Mixed Schools on Students and Society, A Study of Desegregated High Schools and Their Class of 1980 Graduates,” was published recently by Teachers College at Columbia University and the University of California at Los Angeles. Authors Amy Stuart Wells, Jennifer Jellison Holme, Anita Tijerina Revilla and Awo Korantemaa Atanda include in an appendix the story below of “Hannah,” not her real name.

The study may be downloaded at www.tc.edu/newsbureau/features/wells033004.htm

The authors titled the vignette about Hannah “A White Graduate of a Historically Black High School.” Excerpts:

— — —

The history of school desegregation in the United States is full of instances of white students who never showed up to their newly assigned racially mixed public schools. This was not at all uncommon in the South, where “segregation academies” – private schools for white children – opened just in time to enroll students who were fleeing desegregated schools.

Yet, in Charlotte, N.C., the focus of a famous 1971 Supreme Court case that allowed districts to trans-

port students – i.e. “bus” them – to achieve racial balance, relatively few whites fled the public schools.

Many attribute this to the role that several affluent and prominent white families played in supporting the desegregation – in some cases, putting their own children on buses to attend a historically black high school.

In Charlotte and other cities across the country, it was the black students who were more likely to be reassigned to white schools and at a younger age, thus bearing the burden of busing.

But when it came to desegregating historically black West Charlotte High School, a source of pride in the city’s African American community and the only black high school the district had not closed down, the district leaders knew it would only be possible if white students were reassigned there – and if they showed up.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board and several community leaders agreed to a plan that sent white high school students from some of the wealthiest and most influential families on the east side of town to the black community that was West Charlotte’s home.

Reassignment to West Charlotte of some of the district’s best teachers – along with the establishment there of a special program called the Open Program – helped entice white students.

Hannah Monroe was one of hundreds of white students who, in the mid-1970s, was assigned to West

Calendar

MAY

11 Board of Education presents its budget request to Board of County Commissioners, 3 p.m., Government Center Room 267.

13 League of Women Voters on No Child Left Behind’s impact; speaker is John Poteat from N.C. Public Schools Forum; 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 200 W. Trade St. Information: Malyn Pratt, 704-333-2037 or malyn@carolina.rr.com.

19 Chamber Education Lobbying Trip to Raleigh to visit with members of the N.C. General Assembly about public education needs, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Day includes lunch with delegation and forum on taxing authority for school boards. To reserve seat on bus, call 704-378-1301 or e-mail kramer@charlottechamber.com

20 Parent Power meeting, 7 p.m., First United Presbyterian Church, 406 N. College St.

Charlotte High.... The change had cultural and other dimensions, many of which Hannah and her white classmates ended up embracing. For instance, West Charlotte’s band and cheerleading squad had a different, more fluid style than those of the white schools.

At 50% black and 50% white, and with a long tradition of serving the

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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.

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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: Stephanie Southworth.

Correction

A story in *Educate!* April 30 misspelled Dorothy Counts Scoggins’ last name.

Law Day marked at Myers Park High

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The two keynoters trod the route from Selma to Montgomery together. But the differences in their backgrounds, lives, training and interests was on display as well.

Lewis, a sharecropper's son and in-the-streets tactician of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the early 1960s, was arrested more than 40 times during the civil rights movement and is in his ninth term in the U.S. House representing the city of Atlanta and parts of several surrounding suburbs.



Lewis

Franklin, son of a lawyer and a schoolteacher, was educated at Fisk and Harvard, contributed to the legal work that led to *Brown v. Board*, has his name on more than a dozen books and compiled an academic vita as a historian that runs 11 pages.

Both men recalled how their commitments were shaped by direct experience of segregation.

Lewis recalled applying in the '50s to Troy State College for admission to the then all-white school. He wasn't turned down. He was simply ignored. "I will never forget it as long as I live," Lewis said.

The "white" and "colored" signs on public water fountains and

restrooms are relegated to documentaries and museums, Lewis said. The days when a black person asking to pay for a shoe shine could be arrested and led off to jail are over.

But they are over forever, Lewis seemed to argue, only if everyone remembers those who died in the struggle, and those like Lewis who stood up against injustice and found themselves, as Lewis did, left in a pool of their own blood in a Rock Hill bus station.



www.house.gov/johnlewis
A young Lewis preached to his chickens.

White voting officials administering literacy tests were known to ask how many bubbles would come from a bar of soap, Lewis said.

He recalled hearing the state troopers advance on the marchers at the Pettis Bridge in Selma in 1963. The confrontation left Lewis with a concussion. "To this day I don't know how I made it back

across the bridge." The Alabama National Guard was federalized and brought in to protect the marchers during their Selma-to-Montgomery trek.

Lewis recalled the tears on the cheek of Martin Luther King Jr. as together they listened as a white Texan addressed Congress a week after the Pettis Bridge attack.

"What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.

"Their cause must be our cause too. Because it's not just negroes, but really it's all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of

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After the Decision

Brown.
An ugly color
No one liked Brown when he first showed up.
They ignored him.
They wouldn't even recognize his presence.
It took years.
But Brown waited.
Some places they had to push him through
Mobs
Soldiers
Guns
Shouts
Slurs
Threats
But Brown got in.
And he survived.

Once he got in, they couldn't make him leave.
Now, no one notices Brown.
They take him for granted.
Again, no one acknowledges his presence.
But he doesn't mind.
After all,
That's what Brown wanted
All along.

– Elizabeth Rudisill, 12th grade, Myers Park High School

A Gavel Sounded

A gavel sounded and a draw-bridge fell,
The fortress breached in the tumult of war;
A first wave,
Clad with glistening conviction,
Inched toward virgin gates
With eyes of steel.

Pelted with jeers from on-looking jesters
Of an outdated elite,
They toiled forward;
Threatened with blood
From a torn region and society,
They made their ascent.

Not in vain, cried the determined few;
Let this plea fall upon
Open ears and hearts,
For this a gavel sounded.

– Brett Sturm, 11th grade, Myers Park High School

SEG-RE-GA-TION

separate u_nequal

antagonize obstruct suppress

"bad to the bone"

UNCONSTITUTIONAL

– LeVesta Wilson, 9th grade, Myers Park High School

Law Day marked at Myers Park

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bigotry and injustice.

“And we shall overcome,” President Lyndon Johnson said.

“We’ve made a lot of progress,” Lewis told the students Monday. “Martin would be very proud of seeing you hear today, for you... are part of what Dr. King was trying to do.”

“We all live in the same house,” Lewis said. “Maybe our foremothers and forefathers came in different ships, but we’re all in the same boat now. We are one people. We are one family. We are one house. “Hang in there. Don’t give up. Don’t become bitter. Keep the faith.”

At age 6, Franklin said, he and his mother were evicted from a train because the black section was full. “I never forgot it,” he told the students.

Later, from Tulsa to Nashville to the Harvard Yard, “when I experienced segregation... the experiences are just as vivid in my mind as the day I experienced them.”

But Franklin says he also never forgot the lesson his mother drew from being evicted from the train. There is no one on that train better than you, she said.

Franklin said he marched in Selma because “I had as much right to be a citizen with equal rights as anyone in the United States.”

But Franklin also exhorted his listeners to a higher standard, living with “a determination to prove to the entire world not only that we deserve the best, but that we will perform the best, that we will do extremely well in everything we undertake.”

Asked what students could do, Lewis urged his listeners to respond to any form of discrimination. “When we see it we must not tolerate it.... Just do it. It’s the right thing to do. Just do it.”

Franklin added that the violence and legal discrimination of the past has, since 1954, been replaced with “subtle and cruel and deceptive” forms of discrimination that run counter to “everything we stand for.”

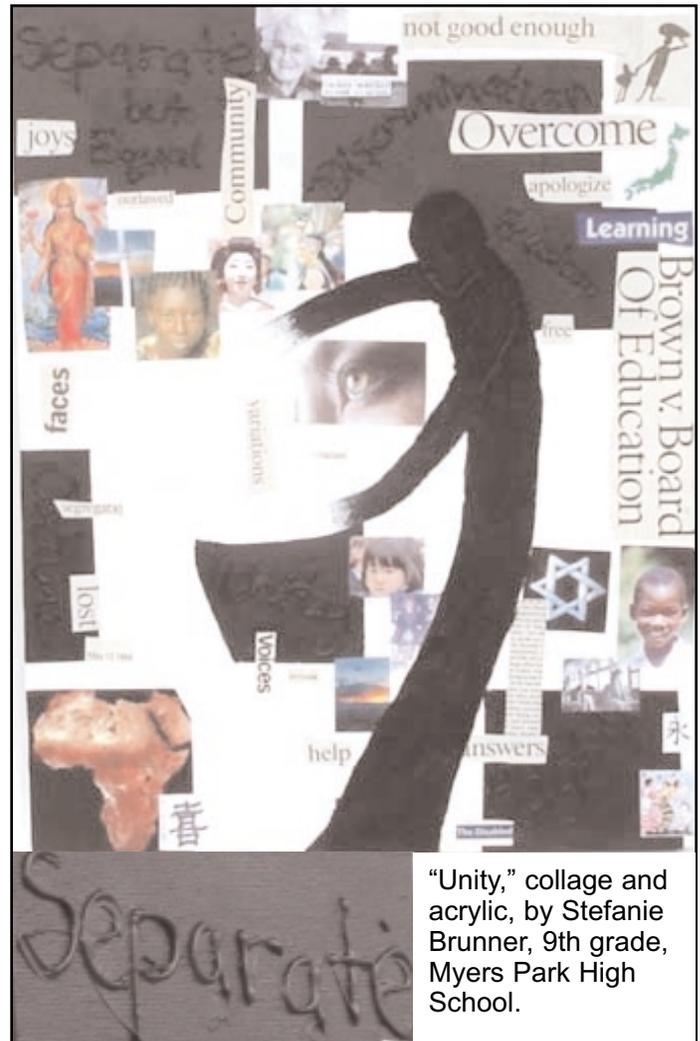
Asked if students should “carry themselves in a more productive manner,” Lewis recalled how in most cases when he was attacked, arrested and jailed, he was wearing a suit and tie. Marchers were also careful about their language.

“To be nonviolent is not just about striking back. Your words can be very violent.... There is nothing wrong with being kind. There is not anything wrong with saying ‘I am sorry.’”

“We must be able to forgive and move on. Hate is too heavy a burden for me to bear. I don’t have time to hate....

“In America and around the world we need to love people a little more.”

“Why don’t we attract attention to ourselves by being absolutely excellent,” added Franklin.



“Unity,” collage and acrylic, by Stefanie Brunner, 9th grade, Myers Park High School.

Facing another student’s question about how students could get involved, Lewis said, “We are too quiet. We need to make a little noise.”

Leave the earth “a little cleaner, and little greener, and maybe just a little more peaceful.”

He had concluded, he told the students, that “war as a tool for our foreign policy is obsolete.

“Why go killing people? What is that about?”

“You have to say to your government, ‘Stop spending millions and billions on bombs and guns and missiles. Spend it on education!’”

Write the president, members of Congress, your two senators, he said. Sign petitions. And when you’re 18, “go out there and vote like you’ve never voted before.”

Know your history, Franklin advised, so you can take up where leaders like Lewis will leave off. “There is no need going through the same thing.”

It is currently considered “sophisticated and very ‘in’ to be indifferent,” Franklin said, “to not be attentive to the problems around us, to live above them.

“Our society can be freer than it is, but only if we work to make it freer than it is.”

Lewis told the students about the training in non-violence that he and other civil rights marchers

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Law day marked at Myers Park

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went through. “We prepared ourselves.... Nonviolence is not simply a tactic but a way of life.... Means and ends are inseparable.... We were prepared to die for what we believed in.”

Franklin said there were other means than marching. Bringing knowledge to an argument in favor of a cause can have “consequences which are enormous,” he said. Writing and speaking have value along with marching and demonstrating “and doing so many other things that people have heroically done.”

Asked if it was race or socioeconomic factors that accounted for African Americans’ low college participation rates, Franklin said race was behind socioeconomic disparities.

Race has long had an impact on “whom you should marry, where you should work, how much you should get.” Women face similar problems.

“The biggest factor, the clearest factor of all is race. Until we confront that, we are going to have these disparities.”

“We have to continue to move down the road toward an integrated society,” said Lewis. “We cannot and we must not give up....” It will take political muscle “and all of our ingenuity to make it” happen, he said. “It is not a struggle that lasts for one day or one week... it is a struggle of a lifetime.”

“We have started down the road you call resegregation,” Franklin warned. Whites moved to segregated private academies in the ’60s and ’70s. Blacks have not been blameless, moving to the suburbs as well and ignoring poorer blacks left behind in inner cities without leadership. People have ignored “the golden opportunity” of creating “a truly integrated, truly democratic, truly beloved society.”

Franklin wrestled with the complexity of issues as students

“My art project is supposed to show that there are many things that are black and white can get easily get along. However, white and black people don’t always get along, and I don’t understand why because we are just colored. I write that in the shape of a question mark to show that I don’t understand why it is like that.”

– Lang Fiser, 9th grade,
Myers Park High School



asked questions. An example was his discussion of something he did as a youth.

He was interested in opera, and the Chicago City Opera tour would be coming to his hometown Tulsa convention center. He wanted to go, but his parents refused in protest of the building’s segregated section for blacks. His father had also been incarcerated in the building during the 1921 race riots. Young Franklin went with his music teacher.

It was a degrading situation for a child of 6 or 7, he said. “On the other hand I have learned to appreciate an art form I would

not have seen otherwise.

“I apologize for having gone.... I don’t commend that conduct. This is simply a confession.... One has to solve problems like that for yourself.”

In closing, Lewis quoted Horace Mann and exhorted his audience that “whatever you do, do it with passion. Just go for it.”

Franklin, ever the nuanced academic, urged the students to “seek perfection in whatever you are doing” but added, “I hope it’s a worthy search, a worthy achievement.”

– Steve Johnston

Shrinking classroom

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Harry Weatherly said Wednesday. Last week, CMS building services chief Guy Chamberlain said his staff was reviewing design standards to squeeze a few square feet out of classrooms and other spaces to shave steel costs.

Contingency money could cover steel costs, Weatherly said, but inevitably some corners will be cut to bring projects in at budget.

County Manager Harry Jones, smiling Wednesday over his budget proposal having gone to the printer, said school and other needs are pushing the county

toward unsustainable annual tax hikes. He said the N.C. General Assembly should be offering counties additional revenue sources.

“If we could get a real estate transfer tax that would apply only when you sold your property, that would be great.”

In the meantime, he said, “we need to watch our debt.”

Wednesday, the Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee agreed not to ask for a 2004 bond referendum, but to tell county commissioners next week that a referendum would be essential in 2005, saying that any further delay would stall school construction – both for growth and for renovation.

Study tells stories of desegregation

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black community, West Charlotte was not going to become just another white school. According to Hannah, West Charlotte was a black school and it was an important part of the black community. "So, assemblies and things, [we] just did the way they'd always been done, and that didn't bother anybody."

"In a lot of ways it was a more sophisticated environment we were in, and it was more fun."

Hannah became a member of the West Charlotte student council, but not without a little affirmative action.

After the school was desegregated, a student government election process had been established to assure that the three students of each race – white and black – who received the most votes were elected. After that, the three students – black or white – who received the next highest vote totals won the last of the nine seats.

In the year that Hannah ran, the student body voted in six black council members and three white ones. The school administration decided that more white students were needed to provide more balance, so the fourth- and fifth-ranked white students were assigned two "extra" seats. Hannah was one of those.

She recalled her first student council meeting and how she spoke up when she had an idea. She said that one of the black students snapped: "Honey, as somebody who wasn't even supposed to be on this council, you don't get an opinion."

The remark stunned Hannah, but it also forced her to step back and realize that before she tried to exert any influence, she had to build friendships and trust in the black community....

Looking back on her three years at West Charlotte High School, she has no regrets about going there and thinks she is a better person for it. What's more, she thinks that Charlotte as a community is better

Teacher incentives: Say 'master's degree'

From "Philadelphia's Teacher Hiring and School Assignment Practices: Comparisons with Other Districts":

"Charlotte-Mecklenburg has the most comprehensive package of incentives of all the districts [studied]. These are aimed at staffing its 52 EquityPlus II Schools. The incentives include smaller class sizes, bonuses for teachers (\$2,500 for those with master's degrees; \$1,500 for others enrolled in a graduate program), additional materials and supplies for the classroom, and reimbursement for tuition costs incurred in getting a master's degree. Local colleges and universities offer courses in off-campus cohort groups for teachers in these schools.

"Qualified new applicants and select retirees may be directed to these targeted schools first. This effort is carefully monitored by the district and by a civic group, and early indications are that it is successful. According to a district official interviewed for this study, the coverage of costs for the master's degree is the most popular of the incentives. A sizeable number of teachers in these schools are scheduled to get their master's degree in 2004."

– www.researchforaction.org

for having desegregated its schools and students. She said that if the goal is to "have cross cultural, cross racial relationships, you've got to work at it. And...the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system did that."

At graduation, Hannah was approached by the black student who had said she didn't have the right to an opinion on the student council. By then they had become friends. Hannah recalled, more than 20 years later, "She told me that I was the damn nicest white girl she ever met. And...that probably meant more to me than any other... I mean, I get teary eyed when I tell you about it 'cause it was just like, OK, we've really, you know, built a bridge there."

...For the most part, Hannah's classmates returned to a segregated society, with most of the whites living in predominantly white communities and most of the blacks living in predominantly black communities.

Meanwhile, since the late 1970s, the city of Charlotte has doubled in population and grown physically and economically at an alarming rate. This made the commute across separate black and white communities more problematic, but logistics was not the greatest force

working against school desegregation.

Many of the newcomers, especially whites from the north, had little patience for the desegregation plan. They demanded "better," but not necessarily racially diverse, public schools, for their children. That reduced political support for the policies that had transported Hannah from the white to the black side of town....

Today, Charlotte's public schools are more separate along racial lines than they were when Hannah was in high school. West Charlotte High School is only 10% white....

Coming from a pro-public-school background, Hannah struggled with the decision to put her children in private school.... [But] Even Hannah's mother, who supported public education, told her to do what she thought was best for her children, saying, "It's a different day and time in the city...."

[Hannah says] she is "very sad" that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system is moving away from race-based school assignments. "I just think it's not... good for our community. It's...an easy fix, for something people perceive as a problem that will have long-term detrimental effects on our community."

Briefly...

... in the Carolinas

Calendar law: A legislative committee has reported out a bill to prevent N.C. school districts from beginning school before Aug. 25 or ending after June 10, the Friday Report said. School boards in CMS and several dozen other districts have approved resolutions objecting to state mandates on calendar issues. The bill would cut the school calendar from 220 days to 210 by eliminating 10 teacher workdays. Schools frequently closed by severe weather would be exempt.

www.ncforum.org

Teacher boycott: As of Tuesday noon, only 15% of CMS teachers had participated in Gov. Mike Easley's Teacher Working Conditions survey operated online by the N.C. Professional Teaching Standards Commission. Not a single teacher had participated at 35 of the district's 145 schools. Teacher groups say their members doubt the anonymity of online surveys.

<http://twc.learnnc.org>

.. in the nation

Certified advantage: A new study showed that students with certified teachers fared better on standardized tests than students of teachers with emergency or temporary licenses, Education Week reported. In the study, kindergarten students with uncertified teachers scored 1.26 test score points below those who had certified teachers.

www.edweek.org

CO₂ factor: Between 1980 and 1994, respiratory disease among children in preschool increased 160%, the Atlanta Constitution reported. One possible cause is that the increased carbon dioxide in cities may cause higher pollen flows from some plants to which children can be highly allergic.

www.ajc.com

Can your student say what was learned?

Lorraine Monroe, director of the Lorraine Monroe Leadership Institute, in the April edition of Educational Leadership:

"Every teacher must identify the aim of his or her lesson – the goal, objective, or purpose. No student should be left to wonder what he or she is going to learn that day or that period.

"In my system, students come into the classroom and immediately set to work on what we call the 'Do Now.' It's a warm-up or starter, and it helps teachers demand from students exactly what a good boss requires of employees: 'While you're here, I expect you to be on point, on target, and I expect you to accomplish a goal – or, at least, a piece of it – every day.'

"I also think students should leave the classroom with the ability to articulate exactly what they learned that day. Students can't just say, 'I learned math.' Rather, they must know that 'Today, I learned to add mixed fractions.'

"Too often, when I visit classrooms and ask a student what he or she is doing, the reply is, 'I don't know.' Or the response is vague: 'I learned grammar,' instead of 'I learned the names of the eight parts of speech.'

– www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/200404/checkley.html

Score gains: Children transferring out of failing schools can succeed in high-performing schools, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. An analysis found that there was a "statistically significant" growth in test score achievement for children transferring out of low-performing Chicago schools.

www.suntimes.com

Assessing Brown: A USA Today survey found that although 90% of adults agree that educational opportunities for blacks have improved since the 1954 Brown decision, only 31% of blacks and 63% of whites believe that blacks and whites have the same educational options. About 20% of the respondents who believe that blacks have fewer opportunities feel it is due to discrimination.

www.usatoday.com

K-8 favored: Although there is little research about their effectiveness, K-8 schools are being embraced in Baltimore, the Sun

reported. Parents like the expanded nurturing environment, while educators feel that the K-8 schools increase test scores.

www.baltimoresun.com

New research found that boys are twice as likely as girls to have dyslexia, the Mercury News reported. Four studies in New Zealand and Britain found that 18% to 22% of boys and 8% to 13% of girls have dyslexia. The children in the study were between 7 and 15 and were not previously identified with the problem.

www.mercurynews.com

In a commentary in the Los Angeles Times, Dennis P. Doyle, a member of the National Commission on Time and Learning, asserts that grouping children by age and grade is archaic and should be rethought. Doyle suggests performance-based instructional grouping with high academic standards.

www.latimes.com

Board Room Art

– Anonymous, McAlpine Elementary



Educate!

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DidYaHear?

✓ The folks at Bond Oversight were curious how Northeast Middle got its name. They should call Jack Knighten, who opened the school and served as principal for 15 years, beginning in temporary quarters at J.H. Gunn in 1970, then on to the current building when it opened in 1976. "Northeast" was one of 15-20 names on the table. Others included place names like Reedy Creek and Mint Hill (both names now in use), and Harrisburg; names already on other schools, such as Bain and Gunn; and Liberty and Freedom (picking up the theme from Independence Boulevard).

Northeast was chosen, Knighten says, because the Mint Hill site was then considered the northeastern part of the county, and because the Beatties Ford Road junior high was called Northwest. Students being reassigned from overcrowded Albemarle Road Jr. High, and students coming in from Bain and Clear Creek Elementaries, participated in the selection process.

And lest you think overcrowding is new, Knighten says that the school had trailers when it opened on the Gunn campus in 1970.

✓ Bond Oversight is likely to recommend that a

renovation at Midwood School on Central Avenue be delayed. Officials are looking at the possibility of moving the growing alternative high school program elsewhere for space reasons, then returning to Midwood for renovation work that is, by all accounts, long overdue at the building, built in five pieces between 1935 and 1971.

What are the conditions like? One witty and articulate student says Midwood is a cultured place. The big roaches, he said, always ask for food before consuming it. And the rats? They knock on the classroom doors when they want to come in.

More important was this: The student said his friends call the place "The Wood." Not to be too literalistic, but the only reason a rundown plaster-and-brick place would be known as "The Wood" is if there lives inside an esprit that is worth nurturing. Students must value a program designed to meet their needs for a less-structured environment, and available at nontraditional hours.

So hurrah for the Midwood culture – but no hurrahs for the cultured rats: We still need to renovate ... and build new schoolhouses ... and redouble our efforts to be sure every child gets the education we expect all to receive.

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com