

# Citizens' agenda for CMS

## Educate! readers assess bond reallocation flap, other issues facing district

Last week's school board meeting left many scratching their heads. A 7-2 coalition in March launched a study to move bond money to new construction? Why had the coalition collapsed?

Why, if a majority didn't want be seen as stealing money from

communities that worked hard to pass earlier bond issues, were board members also unwilling to ask county commissioners for new money when school and county leaders had agreed to move in that direction? Why had decorum both on the dais and the Board

Room floor frayed? And what on earth is going to happen if this board starts to debate the even more controversial issues behind student assignment?

What are the key issues this board should be addressing? How are we doing as a community in the struggle to educate all children? And what will it take to rebuild public trust in the schools and their paid and volunteer leadership?

This journal asked its readers to tackle any and all of those subjects. What is below does not answer every question.

Nor do the results represent the full range of public opinion. An example: The scores of this journal's readers who spoke out earlier for moving bond money to suburban construction didn't respond to the invitation to have their voice heard in these columns.

That said, readers will find here a range of commentary on the state of Mecklenburg public education as the school year closes.

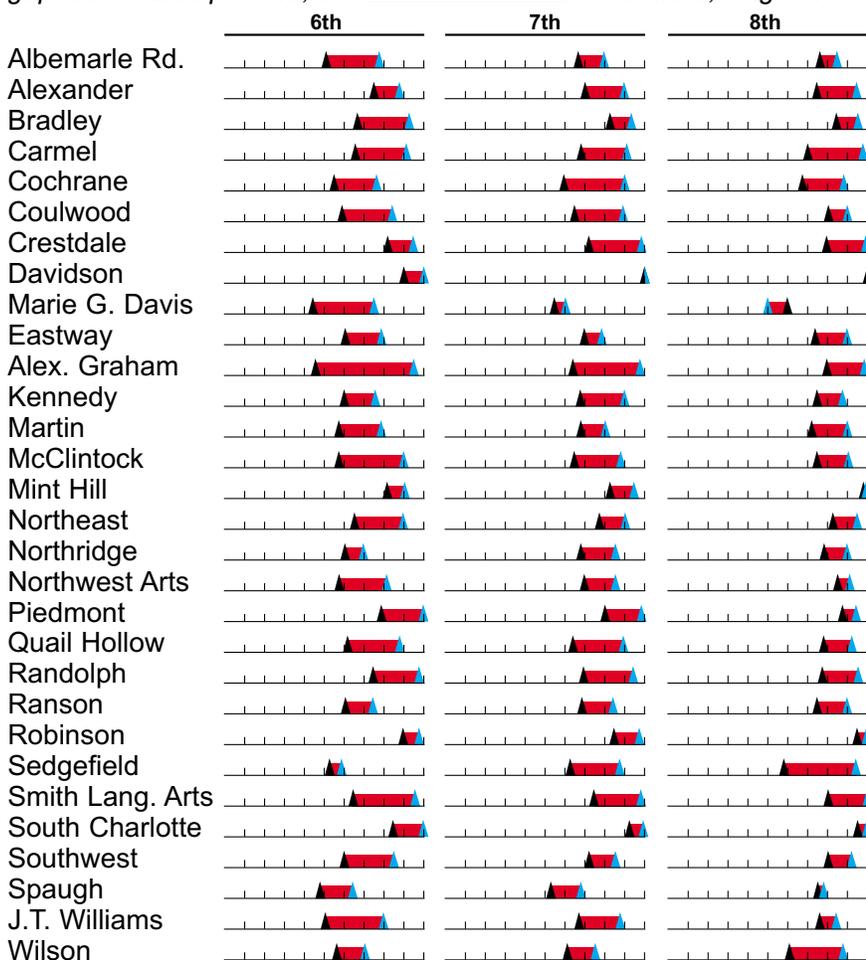
Excerpts from readers' comments are below, with the author's name at the end.

### Reallocation decision

**BACK FROM BRINK:** Did the board make the right decision Tuesday? Yes, assuming I understand what they did! Apparently, they trimmed funding from a few projects (Marie G. Davis, Randolph Middle) where it seemed warranted, but did not reallocate original bond commitments to new "unbonded" work. Thankfully, the board must have realized that the ability to successfully approve future bonds for

## Middle school reading achievement gap

Results for poor (black ▲) and non-poor (blue ▲). The achievement gap is in red. In percent, 0% \_\_\_\_\_ 100%. More, Page 6.



Data source: CMS

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CMS would be significantly at risk if they breached the agreed-upon plan on behalf of suburban interests.

Where we stand, relative to ALL children?

As the CMS 2003-04 test scores prove, the key indicators are trending in the right direction. I am satisfied that CMS is working very hard for positive outcomes under demanding conditions, but I am far less satisfied with the effort of the community at large.

The education of ALL children, I fear, is a half-hearted priority for too many in our community.

The big issues? When it comes to education, the sleeper we never seem to face head-on is housing. I question the real estate industry's role in sabotaging the choice plan, and the incredible indifference of the land-use planners to acknowledge the link between high-density zoning approvals and the "demand" for new suburban schools.

CMS catches it on the chin for not adequately anticipating growth patterns, but no one ever holds the planning department or the developers financially accountable for being a driving force behind inefficient use of existing school facilities.

If filling all existing schools is a community priority, incentives should be in place at the planning and zoning level to reflect that – or levy "user fees" accordingly!

One other big issue that seldom gets discussed as a factor in school performance: the PTA machine.

This off-line funding source is rarely, if ever, openly acknowledged as a strategic influence. Yet high-poverty schools seem to be asked to cover this funding gap with no complaint.

It would be interesting to see how much the high-income schools would change if all PTA funds were redirected to the system as a whole.

Terry Taylor-Allen

**RIGHT THIS TIME:** Although it sets a precedent for reallocation of school bond money, I think it was right to reallocate this time.

I do also feel that the school board needs to be more careful in asking for money and to remember, the people voted for the monies to go one direction and not to be used at the "whim" of the board.

Sandy Brown

**RIGHT DECISION:** I was extremely pleased that the CMS Board of Education took no action involving the reallocation of bond money at their Tuesday meeting.... Once bonds have been approved by the voters, the voters, not a committee, should have the power to alter their use.

I am concerned that the board scaled back the capacity of Marie G. Davis and Randolph. Scaling back is a nail in the coffin of an integrated school system.

The biggest issues that our community needs to work on are restructuring our student assignment plan; placement of affordable housing; and better joint planning among our three elected bodies

I will know that our community is committed to a quality education for all students when we cap the population of free and reduced lunch children to no more than 55% of any school and/or classroom enrollment, and when we assign our most experienced teachers to the children who need them the most.

Richard McElrath, Sr.

**POLITICIANS MISJUDGE:** I think the public supports quality education far more than the politicians give us credit for. People move to Charlotte largely because of the cost of living (including lower taxes than many other large cities).

These relocations are putting a strain on our education system, which is growing faster than we are able to keep up with, and if it means raising taxes to make sure our children are properly educat-

ed, I'll vote for the tax increase!

An educated population is essential to economic opportunity and maintaining a progressive community.

Laurie Dykes

**REALLOCATION A TRADITION:** CMS should not be reallocating money (which they've done for years, simply without the knowledge of the community at large)....

The major concerns should be to provide well-qualified teachers in the marginal communities, no-tolerance for students who do not want to learn (teach them a trade so they can get employed – after true assessments); more technical/trade schools in communities that desperately need it; full-time nurses or physician's assistants in the schools (or assigned to two to three schools); equal access to

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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.

**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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.educateclt.org). To be removed, message [swannfello@aol.com](mailto:swannfello@aol.com). Subscribe at [www.educateclt.org](http://www.educateclt.org). A print edition is available by mail for \$125 a year. First published September 2000; 6-week average circulation through last issue: 3,506.

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equipment and learning tools so that when students finish they will be ready to compete with children from other communities for jobs and higher education.

Betty Gregory

**NEITHER SIDE WRONG:** The difficulty with the bond money debate is that neither side is wrong. Unfortunately, the planning and financing process we have for capital projects requires years of lead time, which assumes a stable system with predictable change. This does not match well with our recent history. I wonder how it will match with our next 15-20 years.

I think most people would agree that kids should not be discriminated against because they are poor and they should not be discriminated against because they are not poor. They should all have what they need. There is inherent difficulty in believing that any extremely large organization runs efficiently, and CMS's aggregate numbers are now so large that most of us have a hard time comprehending them. So it is not surprising that taxpayers (and parents) do not automatically accept that more dollars into the system will translate into kids getting what they need.

It may be that there's no way to fix this short of dividing the system into semi-autonomous smaller units that operate on a more manageable scale.

Claire Trexler

### Community distrust

**CATCH-UP NEVER ALLOWED:** I don't think that our community is honest with itself.

If the suburban schools were in the condition the inner-city schools are, and the inner city schools were overcrowded, what would be the reaction by the community?

When CMS tries to address deficiencies in programs that serve underachievers, there is

## The gospel according to Joe White

*School board chairperson Joe White during Tuesday's debate:*

"There's been a lot said about trust in this thing.

"Well, as I look around, the people that have spoken to us the most represent two different organizations.

"I remind both of your organizations: You didn't trust me when we were running, folks. Y'all worked your cans off to get me beat.

"So why should I be concerned and believe you are going to trust me now because I vote one way or the other?

"So it's not about trust, for me.... I'm going to vote my conscience, and do exactly what I think is best for the most kids out there.... If you don't agree with me, that's your problem, not mine."

always the cry, 'What about the gifted?'

Go down the list and whenever there is an effort to address issues of low income, low achievement, the inner city, etc. there is immediately an effort to neutralize it.

B.B. DeLaine

**TALKING PAST ONE ANOTHER:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg's education system is a single-interest entity; each community is after its own interest and the children are left to suffer the consequences.

White Charlotteans think that it's a waste of resources to refurbish underutilized, urban schools since they don't reside in those areas. Black Charlotteans distrust the school board because of so many previous promises that have been broken, leaving us with the short end of the stick.

The end result is that neither side is talking openly and honestly with each other. The children suffer.

A.J. Brown

*The writer is Wake County Schools' assistant superintendent for facilities.*

**KEEP UP MAINTENANCE:** As a product of CMS schools (Pinewood 1-5, Marie G. Davis 6, Smith Jr. High 7-9 and Olympic High '97), I have been keenly interested in Charlotte's struggle with reassignment and the need to meet the demands of growth.

Facility staffs do not generate

lists of things to do for a building. The structure itself demands and requires maintenance of both the building and educational program.... The performance of students and teachers, and the educational offerings of a public school system, do more for a community than most every other publicly funded initiative. It increases property values, attracts new jobs, lowers crime rates, and cares for the young children that need our assistance the most....

Basic maintenance and renewal operational budgets need to match the requirement of the structure. If you cannot support regular, planned and scheduled maintenance and refurbishment, all the bonds and taxes you have spent so far will be in vain.

We in Wake County will continue to struggle with these same issues, and if not properly funded, we will have the same criticisms of poor planning, poor stewardship, and lack of trust.

Mike Burriss

### School board's role

**DEMAND RESULTS:** The school board has been and continues to be a shill for CMS administration and Chamber of Commerce types, telling us all what a great job CMS is doing.

The truth is CMS lacks focus on education and instead concentrates on bureaucratic issues. It is so bad that concerned parents

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and community activists now seek relief from the Board of County Commissioners.

Instead of repeating what CMS administration tells them to say, the school board needs to decide that education for all children is the goal, then demand results. They have not, they do not and it doesn't appear they will. At-risk children continue to be run through the CMS system while bureaucrats produce paperwork which justifies their jobs but do little if anything to assist teachers in improving results.

Lewis Guignard

**IMPROVE DISCIPLINE:** Clearly the most important thing the community and school board should address is the lack of discipline by the students in the schools. Solve that nasty problem and most everything will improve!

David Hartz

**TAXING AUTHORITY:** Consistently, every time the superintendent presents a budget to the county commission, he knows that he won't get what he asks for. He even starts with less than he needs because he knows to present to them what is truly necessary, he'd get laughed out of the meeting.

I think school funding authority [for schools] should be taken away from the county commission and given to the school board like many school systems in the nation. Who ever said that county commissioners know anything about running a school system? Bill James an educator? Get real!

Jim Henderlite

**'CHILDISH, PETTY':** It is extremely disappointing to me that some members of our school board could behave in such a childish and petty manner just when many in this community have been showing a willingness to work together.... I especially find it unconscionable that our school

## Can this board deal with assignment?

*Board members have promised to begin this summer with a full-scale review of the 2001 decision to allow parental choice to dominate student assignment. Lawyer Robert Simmons, who was appointed to the board in 2001, helped broker the resolution that created the choice plan. We asked him whether the board was bound under previous written promises to undertake that review.*

"We didn't include a written requirement for the timing of a formal review," Simmons replied. "Because we were uncertain about how the plan would be accepted by families and about how the issues of utilization, transportation, isolation and academic performance would be affected by that acceptance, we intended to remain flexible as we kept the effects of the plan under constant review.

"But there was an unwritten expectation that the plan would not undergo substantial changes during its first three years – until we could determine the effects of the phasing in of the priorities for transfers based on socioeconomic isolation and low performance. We also expected the effects of grandfathering and of sibling exceptions to have diminished after three years, giving us a more accurate picture of population trends in the zones and a better basis for both the adjustment of the zones and the construction of new schools.

"There was an understanding that, subject to adjustments for the addition of new schools, if any, in the interim, and subject to any necessary clarifications, the plan would remain essentially unchanged for three years but be subject to more substantial adjustment as necessary at that time. But, just as there was no formal schedule for review, there was no formal schedule for making changes other than the schedule of the phasing of the priorities over three years, leaving flexibility for adjustment as required. Review was expected to be a constant process."

board chairman would publicly state that he would not support the request of one group of citizens because they did not support him in the election!

Perhaps we would all be better off if the meetings were not televised. At least that might reduce the temptation to grandstand!

Sharon Starks

### Curriculum, placement

**TEACH FOR KNOWLEDGE:** Schools need to teach the reading, writing, math, etc., not to teach for a test but for knowledge.

Assign homework. Through repetition learning happens.

Give every school programs for the challenged, and gifted.

The largest generation was taught knowledge, not tests. If you have knowledge, the tests are easy.

Every school needs a computer

room for education.

Do away with the magnets. Instead, put the programs in every school. There are children who are not in magnet schools who are just as talented. Every school should have a magnet program.

JoAnn Casserly

**MAJOR DEFICIENCIES:** ... We should admit that there are major deficiencies in "our" socioeconomic and education system, including a Eurocentric curriculum, the predominance of white teachers (mostly female) who have received little or no education on black history-culture, misguided student "tracking" in special courses (segregation within classrooms), the failure to assign best-qualified teachers where they are most needed, the failure to provide sup-

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plementary African-centered education for black students and parents, the concentration of low-income students (irrespective of race) into high-poverty schools, the misuse of Ritalin or other dangerous drugs on students, in lieu of addressing their generally related nutrition deficiencies, etc., ad nauseam.

Gyasi Foluke

**TESTS MISUSED:** I completely disagree with the way a child is placed in a classroom. The school system bases where to place a child (scholars, remedial, etc.) solely on their EOG (end-of-grade) scores. I feel this should be based on a student's portfolio and actual achievement and comprehension, not on how well or how poorly they perform on a standardized test.

Heather Smith

**ROLE OF MAGNETS:** Our four grandchildren are having a wonderful experience in the Spanish immersion magnets at Collinswood and then Smith Middle. I believe all our schools could be as good if the smaller class size and other supports were available.

However, I fear that magnet schools are taking from the broader system. And are we putting more resources into the schools in the affluent areas to keep those families in the system, at the expense of the schools in lower-income areas?

Jan Valder Offerman

### Parent involvement

**SEE CONDITIONS:** It would be good for someone from Swann to try working in the school district for one year to begin seeing the realities of where resources are, and how tough it is for highly motivated new teachers to survive; and getting parents to stay involved in their children's progress, even if it means taking buses and not being ashamed at

## The payoff from smaller classes

*Michael Winerip in the New York Times:*

'Academic studies show small class size carries many benefits, even mitigating racial problems that interfere with learning. A recent study by Tom Dee, a Swarthmore professor, in *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, concluded that both white and black children achieved more when they were taught by teachers of their own race.

"This is bad news for black children since the vast majority of teachers, even in big cities, are white and the vast majority of urban children... are minority. But there is a hopeful exception:

"If classes are small, Dr. Dee found, black children do equally well with a white or black teacher. 'It may be because there's more personal interaction, less chance for stereotyping,' Dr. Dee said."

— [www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/education/26memo.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/education/26memo.html)

what they do not know; and the importance of math, science, health education, sports, and culture for every child.

Christy Kluesner

*Educate! routinely receives the advice of one or more readers who fit this category. Ed.*

**NO SUCCESS WITHOUT PARENTS:** We need a major campaign to get parents involved in their children's education. Apathy cuts across racial, ethnic, and economic lines. I don't know the answer to this one but without the parents actively engaged at their children's schools, I don't think public education will ever be successful...

I am very sympathetic to working parents, some of whom hold down two jobs to make ends meet. But, we have to reach out to them and make them know that their involvement and activism in their children's school is so important.

Jim Henderlite

### The need for order

**END DISRUPTION:** I believe that there are too many students not learning up to their potential. There is too much disruption for teachers to focus on education. The political climate is difficult now with many demands on the educational dollar. It is not good to alienate any group of parents

or other supporters (i.e. businesses).

The answer: Focus on quality teachers (pay more, maybe try for endowed Chairs like the universities, for selected needy schools). Expand alternative schools for students needing different school situations, and management schools for disruptive students. Make these schools high quality, so those students don't suffer. This will allow teachers at "regular" schools to focus on teaching, not maintaining order.

Nancy Mosley

**TEACHERS NEED RESPECT:** The discipline process at the high school level needs improvement. Out-of-control students take away educational opportunities for students who want to learn.

Teachers need to be treated with more respect from state legislators, school administrators, parents and students.

Many schools in north Mecklenburg are dangerously overcrowded.

The statewide testing system should be eliminated and replaced with other better-quality assessments of student learning.

I hope I live long enough to see at least one of these improvements.

Mary Tranquillo

# Where CMS stands on 2005 goal of 95% on or above grade level

Grade 3 reading

Grade 8 math



## Some progress on EOG scores

There was no great leap forward this year for CMS on end-of-grade test results. A huge leap forward next year would be required to meet the district's 2005 goals of having 95% of students on or above grade level.

The gaps between whites and minorities held roughly steady.

The data below is districtwide. Officials delayed until July any indication of which schools would be sanctioned under No Child Left Behind for failure to meet annual yearly progress.

### Percent at or above grade level

Reading				2005 goal
Grade	'02	'03	'04	
3	78	82	84	95
4	74	83	84	95
5	81	87	88	95
6	71	77	75	95
7	73	82	80	95
8	81	84	86	95

Math				2005 goal
Grade	'02	'03	'04	
3	76	88	89	95
4	88	95	94	95
5	87	92	93	95
6	85	88	88	95
7	79	82	82	95
8	79	81	83	95

## Elementary reading gaps, all grades tested

Percent of tested students on or above grade level, spring 2004 EOG tests:

	White*	Black	Gap		White*	Black	Gap
Rama Road	91.3	63.4	27.9	Allenbrook	68.8	58.0	10.8
Sharon	96.3	70.3	26.0	Clear Creek	93.8	83.0	10.8
Beverly Woods	97.0	72.9	24.1	Hawk Ridge	98.7	87.9	10.8
Berryhill	83.8	60.6	23.2	Greenway Park	91.1	80.4	10.7
Barringer	98.4	75.7	22.7	Piney Grove	94.8	84.2	10.6
Dilworth	94.4	72.5	21.9	Hornets Nest	84.0	73.5	10.5
Sterling	94.1	72.5	21.6	Statesville Road	91.3	80.8	10.5
Windsor Park	89.7	68.5	21.2	McAlpine	96.3	86.3	10.0
Cotswold	97.8	77.0	20.8	Devonshire	71.4	62.1	9.3
Lincoln Heights	100.0	79.8	20.2	Mallard Creek	93.7	84.5	9.2
Davidson	98.1	78.8	19.3	Shamrock Gardens	78.9	70.2	8.7
Idlewild	96.5	77.2	19.3	Huntersville	99.2	90.9	8.3
Park Road	98.8	79.7	19.1	Thomasboro	75.0	66.7	8.3
Hickory Grove	93.8	74.9	18.9	Tuckaseegee	87.7	80.3	7.4
Westerly Hills	91.0	72.2	18.8	Winterfield	86.4	79.1	7.3
Chantilly/Billingsville	71.4	52.7	18.7	Bain	93.0	85.7	7.3
Selwyn	98.4	80.0	18.4	Nathaniel Alexander	78.5	71.7	6.8
University Meadows	94.7	76.4	18.3	Paw Creek	93.0	86.3	6.7
Long Creek	89.3	71.4	17.9	McKee Road	98.6	92.0	6.6
Huntingtowne Farms	95.9	78.3	17.6	Winding Springs	88.3	82.0	6.3
Irwin Avenue	89.5	71.9	17.6	Nations Ford	75.0	69.0	6.0
Cornelius	98.1	81.2	16.9	Sedgefield	80.0	74.4	5.6
Oakdale	84.8	68.3	16.5	Blythe	92.2	87.3	4.9
Oakhurst	95.5	79.0	16.5	J.H. Gunn	82.9	78.6	4.3
Newell	84.9	69.1	15.8	Lebanon Road	89.9	85.8	4.1
Eastover	98.4	82.7	15.7	Olde Providence	96.8	93.5	3.3
Steele Creek	94.8	79.1	15.7	Elizabeth Lane	98.3	95.8	2.5
Pawtucket	84.6	69.2	15.4	Villa Heights	100.0	98.5	1.5
Morehead	98.5	83.6	14.9	Collinswood	94.8	94.7	0.1
University Park	94.4	79.5	14.9	Providence Spring	100.0	100.0	0.0
Montclair	87.9	73.3	14.6				
Grier Road	100.0	85.9	14.1	<b>Schools' black scores higher than white</b>			
Pineville	92.1	78.1	14.0	Merry Oaks	76.7	77.9	-1.2
Smithfield	93.8	79.9	13.9	Endhaven	96.9	100.0	-3.1
Lansdowne	96.3	82.5	13.8	First Ward	71.5	82.6	-11.1
David Cox Road	96.1	82.9	13.2	Highland Renaissance	70.0	89.1	-19.1
Albemarle Road	92.9	79.9	13.0				
Highland Mill Mont.	94.7	82.1	12.6	<b>Insufficient whites to calculate gap</b>			
Myers Park	97.6	85.0	12.6	Ashley Park		56.1	
Reedy Creek	95.4	83.3	12.1	Briarwood		69.6	
Matthews	96.0	83.9	12.1	Byers		65.9	
Crown Point	91.6	79.6	12.0	Druid Hills		63.7	
Pinewood	86.0	74.4	11.6	Hidden Valley		80.5	
Lake Wylie	94.6	83.1	11.5	Oaklawn/Brunts		54.6	
Elizabeth Traditional	98.9	88.0	10.9	Reid Park		59.9	
Mountain Island	94.9	84.1	10.8				

\*White does not include nonblack minorities.

# Latest 'Kids Count' data book a trove of info on children

New data on children's issues ranks N.C. 41st among the states.

Jonathan Sher, president of the N.C. Child Advocacy Institute, wrote that the N.C. data indicated that "it continues to be true that when North Carolina's leaders make significant investments in child well-being (such as N.C. Health Choice for Children or

immunizations), we succeed admirably. However, when the investments are minimal, so are the results."

In most categories, below left, the N.C. rate tracks U.S. change over the five-year period studied, and in the same direction. The exceptions are easy to spot.

The data, below right, puts

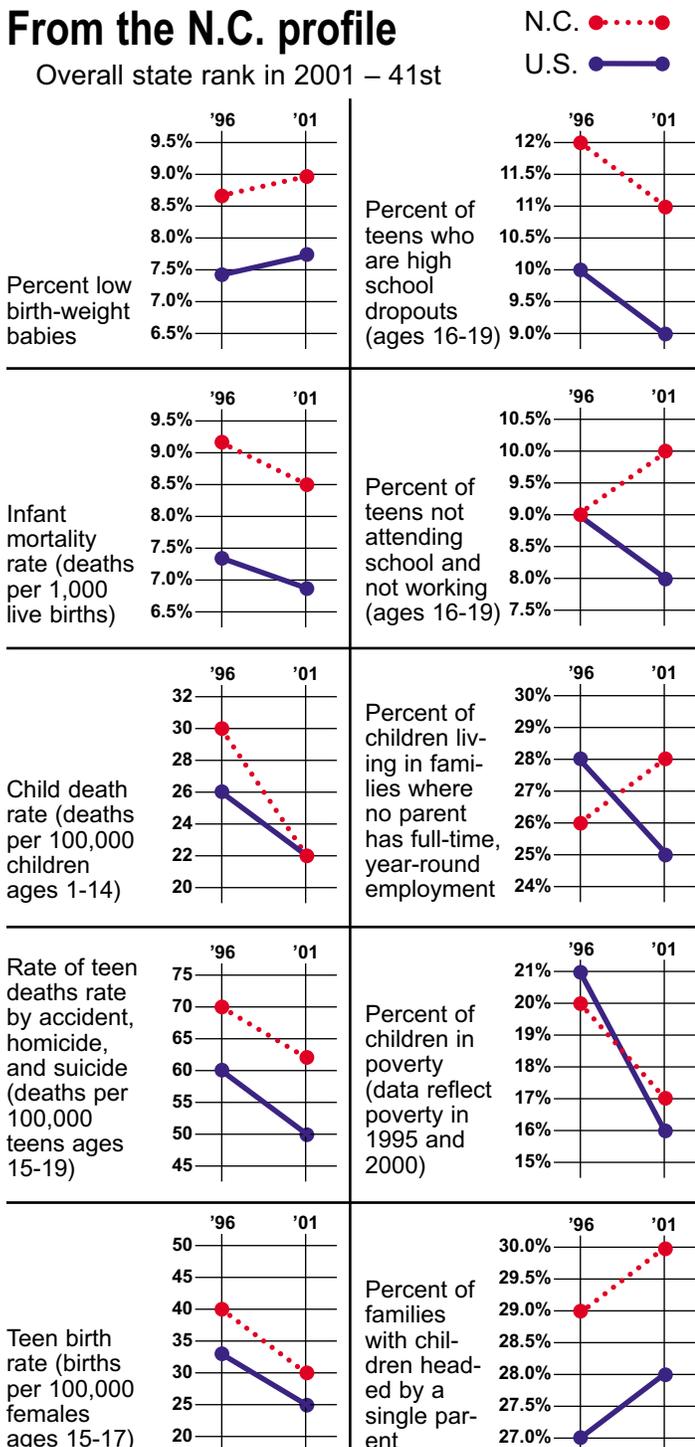
North Carolina results in a 50-state context on three issues: percent of children neither working nor in school; dropout rate; and the percent of children in poverty.

The annual Kids Count data book is underwritten by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Kids Count data is available free online at [www.nccchild.org](http://www.nccchild.org).

## From the N.C. profile

Overall state rank in 2001 – 41st



	Pct neither working nor in school	Pct dropouts	Pct. of children in poverty		
Minnesota	4	North Dakota	4	New Hampshire	7
Iowa	4	Iowa	5	Minnesota	9
Wisconsin	5	New Jersey	5	Connecticut	10
North Dakota	5	Minnesota	5	Maryland	11
New Hampshire	5	Nebraska	6	Iowa	11
New Jersey	6	Connecticut	6	Wisconsin	11
Indiana	6	Utah	7	New Jersey	11
Connecticut	6	Hawaii	7	Utah	11
Vermont	6	Ohio	7	Alaska	12
Nebraska	6	Pennsylvania	7	Indiana	12
Montana	7	Vermont	7	Kansas	12
Virginia	7	Wisconsin	7	Colorado	12
Massachusetts	7	Montana	8	Nebraska	12
Utah	7	Indiana	8	Massachusetts	12
South Dakota	7	Kansas	8	Vermont	12
Kansas	7	Maine	8	Virginia	12
Pennsylvania	7	Massachusetts	8	Delaware	13
Ohio	7	Michigan	8	Washington	13
Wyoming	8	South Dakota	8	Maine	13
California	8	Arkansas	8	North Dakota	13
Illinois	8	Virginia	8	Pennsylvania	13
<b>United States</b>	<b>8</b>	California	8	Hawaii	14
Maine	8	Wyoming	8	Michigan	14
Maryland	8	Oklahoma	9	Nevada	14
Michigan	8	Maryland	9	Ohio	14
Missouri	8	New Hampshire	9	Wyoming	14
Oklahoma	8	<b>United States</b>	<b>9</b>	Oregon	15
New York	9	New York	9	Rhode Island	15
Rhode Island	9	Illinois	9	South Dakota	15
Florida	9	Missouri	10	Illinois	15
Delaware	9	Rhode Island	10	Missouri	15
Washington	9	Washington	10	Idaho	15
Georgia	10	West Virginia	10	<b>United States</b>	<b>16</b>
Nevada	10	Delaware	10	<b>No. Carolina</b>	<b>17</b>
Texas	10	Georgia	10	Tennessee	18
Idaho	10	Idaho	11	Georgia	18
Oregon	10	Alaska	11	South Carolina	18
<b>No. Carolina</b>	<b>10</b>	Oregon	11	Florida	18
Hawaii	10	Alabama	11	California	19
Colorado	10	Mississippi	11	Kentucky	19
Arkansas	10	South Carolina	11	Montana	19
Tennessee	11	Tennessee	11	Arizona	19
Alabama	11	<b>No. Carolina</b>	<b>11</b>	New York	19
New Mexico	11	Texas	12	Oklahoma	20
South Carolina	11	Kentucky	12	Texas	21
Alaska	11	New Mexico	12	Alabama	21
Arizona	12	Florida	12	Arkansas	22
Kentucky	12	Louisiana	12	West Virginia	22
Mississippi	13	Colorado	13	Louisiana	24
Louisiana	13	Nevada	14	Mississippi	25
West Virginia	14	Arizona	16	New Mexico	26

- All data is available at [www.nccchild.org](http://www.nccchild.org)

# State costs out its new Leandro initiatives

State education officials have suggested spending about \$25 million in new money to help up to 15 struggling N.C. school districts meet the judicial mandate that every child receive a “sound basic education.”

The fate of a \$22 million request for one part of the initiative was unclear in a General Assembly that is slicing appropriations to districts, even as some districts see enrollments rising.

The N.C. Forum reported that Charlotte-Mecklenburg may face a \$1.9 million cut in state support for the upcoming fiscal year.

State officials outlined their plans in a letter to Judge Howard Manning, who is overseeing implementation of the Leandro rulings.

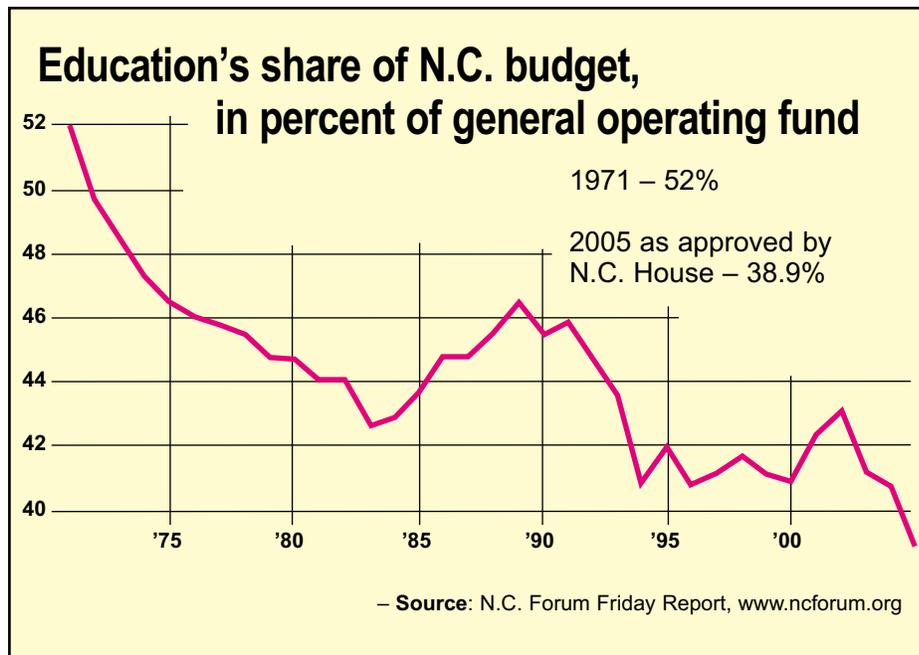
The Leandro case was filed on behalf of a Hoke County student, and the judge ordered initial state efforts to focus there.

In a letter to Manning, State Supt. of Public Instruction Mike Ward and State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee, a former legislator, said the plan would include the following:

- Bonuses for teachers willing to work at hard-to-staff schools.
- Additional administrative and a number of additional educator positions at the district level.
- Continued consultation with Hoke County officials on financial management.
- And what appears to be some marketing brochures promoting the district’s programs and schools.

“Taken as a whole, these strategies constitute a model that can be used to assure student proficiency in Hoke County, and similar school districts,” Ward and Lee wrote.

“If implemented in these districts, we believe that the strategies have the potential to achieve several specific objectives. Those objectives include reducing teacher turnover, improving the content knowledge and teaching skills of regular and lateral entry



teachers, improving the instructional leadership skills of principals, increasing community support, and most importantly, improving student achievement.”

This latest letter is part of a complex dance that the judge and state officials have been engaged in for about a decade.

A number of issues in the long-standing litigation have been settled, and it is those that Manning is now trying to get implemented.

A state Supreme Court ruling, expected later this summer, may settle additional issues in the case.

In May, Manning sought details of how the state would act to improve educational outcomes in Hoke, a low-wealth county east of Charlotte. He directed that the state have its plan in place when school reopens in August.

Whether that happens may be in the hands of N.C. legislators, who must complete work on the fiscal year budget by June 30.

While Ward said he would seek to provide additional resources to up to 15 local districts, he did not identify them. The number to be assisted will depend on the legislative appropriation.

School systems in Cumberland,

Robeson, Vance and Halifax counties joined Hoke in the original lawsuit. Later, six urban districts, including CMS, joined the lawsuit, claiming that the state should be paying more of their costs to educate low-income and special education students.

In his May 28 letter to Ward and Lee, Manning said a plan “to properly instruct at-risk students must be substantial and not a response that can be characterized as a ‘lick and a promise.’”

The News & Observer in Raleigh reported that “the state House has already signed off on a budget that excluded spending on new efforts. And the Senate is under pressure to restore nearly \$30 million that local school systems must cut under the House budget.”

Most of the \$25 million requested would go to the personal education plans. And the ultimate price tag is nearly 10 times higher. Ward explained in his letter to Manning:

“One of our most significant strategies will be providing LEAs with resources and guidance to implement high quality, well-designed Personal Education

## Leandro lawsuit

Continued from Page 8

Plans (PEPs) for those students who are not identified as special needs learners and who have not yet achieved grade-level proficiency.

“These plans are consistent with the provisions of the State Board of Education’s Student Accountability Standards, a vital part of the ABCs accountability program, for which you have expressed support.

“However, there is considerable variability in the quality of these plans and the effectiveness with which they are implemented.

“High-quality PEPs offer significant promise for assuring student proficiency, and meeting the exacting standards of the federal government’s No Child Left Behind legislation.

“The types of support we intend to provide for these students are noted in the attachment. Our expansion request to the General Assembly includes over \$22 million for this purpose.

“This amount represents 10% of the total \$220 million that would be needed to fully fund this new allotment category. Priority for funding would first be given to LEAs on the basis of student performance, poverty and teacher turnover.”

It was unclear whether CMS would be part of the expansion of the PEP initiative, though it is unlikely, given the size of the district and the large number of much smaller districts needing the help and where implementation could be achieved and results noted with greater ease.

To implement the teacher bonus, Ward will seek \$3.14 million. The plan includes a signing bonus of \$1,500, then additional bonuses for staying three, five and seven years. A teacher could receive as much as \$16,000.

The bonuses would be paid at six high-turnover Hoke schools. The documents shed no light on what statewide implementation of the bonuses would cost.

## The PEP initiative

*Attachment 8 to the letter from Supt. of Public Instruction Mike Ward and State Board of Education Howard Lee outlines the following proposal. Annual cost of statewide implementation is \$224 million.*

### Request for Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding

**1. Anticipated Outcomes:** To assure academic proficiency among students who are performing below grade level consistent with ABCs Student Accountability Standards and No Child Left Behind’s Adequate Yearly Progress requirements.

**2. Implementation:** The State Board’s student accountability standards and North Carolina statute require that PEPs be provided for all elementary and middle grades students below grade level. With the academic progress realized in recent years, the remaining students not at grade level present serious and specific learning challenges. However, there is considerable variability in the quality of these plans and the effectiveness with which they are implemented. High quality PEPs offer significant promise for assuring student proficiency, and meeting the exacting standards of the federal government’s No Child Left Behind legislation. To assure optimal implementation of PEPs, funds would be used to support the following types of strategies:

- Instructional resources to meet AYP targets.
- Transportation for afterschool programs.
- Tutorial services.
- Classroom support for Limited English Proficient students.
- Reduction of class size beyond current formulas for at risk students.
- Saturday academies.
- Materials and equipment.
- Additional teachers and specialists.
- Alternative learning settings.
- Implementation of research-based programs such as Project Achieve, EVAAS, Learning Bridges and Positive Behavior Support, Schools Attuned, etc.
- Staff support through professional development, lateral entry teacher course support, best practices training, etc.

**3. Support and Technical Assistance:** The Department of Public Instruction will provide guidance, support, and technical assistance in the development, implementation, and monitoring of effective PEPs through its Local Education Agency Assistance Program (LEAAP).

**4. Projected Costs:** Total – \$223,844,660.

Immediate Request: At least 10% of total – \$22,384,466

In order to adequately fund this effort across all LEAs, the budget for these purposes should be aggressively expanded each year in order to achieve the recommended total and assure that the North Carolina and No Child Left Behind goal of universal student proficiency are achieved.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Governor’s Education First Taskforce, this amount would effectively double the funds available through the at-risk student services and improving student accountability allotment categories. Priority for funding would first be given to LEAs on the basis of student performance, poverty and teacher turnover.

– *The letter from Ward and Lee to Judge Manning, and all attachments outlining the state’s plans, are online at [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)*

## Briefly...

### ... in the Carolinas

**Transfers clarified:** Wake County's school board on June 1 reviewed preliminary test results. Officials said two schools would, under No Child Left Behind, have to offer parents transfers to other schools. Both are Schools of Distinction under N.C. testing rules, but both failed to meet all No Child subgroup goals. Parents at the affected schools have already been mailed letters about their transfer options, including the names of the two schools they may transfer to. Decisions will await final test results in July.

[www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net)

**Quality teachers:** CMS Supt. Jim Pughsley and the school board agreed that they need to find ways to get high-quality teachers into high-poverty schools, the Charlotte Observer reported. High-poverty schools do not have enough teachers with advanced degrees. Research has shown teacher quality makes a big difference to children who are struggling. Pughsley said one deterrent is that experienced successful teachers often value creativity and CMS curriculum requires a highly structured approach when teaching underperforming children.

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

### ... in the nation

**Student preference:** A Gallup Youth Survey found that teenagers respond better to teachers who are engaged and who challenge them to learn, the Detroit News reported. About 12% said they work harder for teachers who expect more from them. A 17-year-old boy reported that he works harder for some teachers than others "because some teachers work harder for me."

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

**More retentions:** Despite over

## Fewer applicants for superintendent

*UNCC professor Michael Jazzar, quoted in the Cincinnati Enquirer about why there are fewer applicants for superintendent and principal positions nationwide:*

"There are no empirical studies, [Jazzar] said, but conventional wisdom in following these kinds of vacancies reveals there might be 20 to 30 applicants for a huge district when typically 10 or 15 years ago there might have been more than 100.

" 'Slim supply means little choice in appointment. What's so important is the fit, the academics, the personality, the type of leadership style. When you have a limited pool, you get whatever is available,' he said.

"Jazzar has some theories about the shortage.

" 'At one time, when one went into education and educational leadership, it was to do very special things for children, for students. Today the positions are so political, there's hardly any direct contact with children.

" 'There are boards of education that micromanage to the point of candidates not being interested in those districts. That micromanaging is very harmful. It sends incorrect messages throughout the district and community in terms of educational, instructional and curricular leadership,' Jazzar said."

– [www.enquirer.com](http://www.enquirer.com)

\$8 million to prepare New York City students for the end-of-grade tests this year, as many as 10,000 third-graders, twice as many as last year, will be asked to repeat third grade, the New York Times reported. Mayor Bloomberg announced a new policy in January eliminating teacher discretion in deciding whether an individual child is promoted. The new policy takes homework and effort into consideration only if the initial decision is appealed by parents.

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

**Suspension rates:** Child advocates believe that suspension and expulsion have become common methods for disciplining students in Massachusetts, the Boston Globe reported. The suspension-expulsion rate was up 9.9% from last year and some blame funding cuts that have affected children in low-income communities the most. Class sizes have increased and schools have reduced services for children with behavioral problems.

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

### Communication gap:

Educators are having difficulty implementing the NCLB mandate that states, districts, and schools notify parents about all aspects of their children's education:

Although more information is available, not all parents know where to look, the Christian Science Monitor reported. More districts are relying on Websites, but parents must have access to a computer in order to receive the information provided.

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

### Rural school commutes:

Although the average adult work commute is 25 minutes, bus rides taken by poor rural students can be over 90 minutes, the Chicago Tribune reported. Bus rides for rural students are getting longer as districts cut down on the number of small rural schools.

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

**Microsoft grant:** Helping educators prepare students for success in an increasingly digital world is the incentive for

# 'Somebody has to speak up for marriage'

*Eleanor Holmes Norton, a University of Georgetown law professor and Washington, D.C. delegate in the U.S. House, at a Brookings Institution forum last week on "The Marriage Movement and the Black Church."*

My friends, we are seeing a sea change in African-American life. It cannot continue or we will not continue as a viable people. I just want to put it as starkly as I can. We've got to get the attention of our community and our country.

It is impossible to overestimate what has happened to our community in only a single generation or two or what might then happen in my son's generation if it continues at this pace.

There is already a catastrophic disparity between the number of marriageable young, black men, and by that I only mean men with enough sense of their future, men without a felony conviction, men whose lifestyle is not rooted in the underground economy or the ghetto culture, between those men and the number of marriageable young, black women; that is, women who have jobs or who know they're going to get a job, who are trying to get a job, who are trying to get an education. That is the catastrophic disparity.

These disparities are worse than wartime disparities. In time of war, great wars, there's a period of time, usually not as great as the disparity I see here, when there are more young women than young men. That rights itself immediately. In the next generation, an equal number of men and women are born, and that balance is straightened out.

In the African-American community, the balance isn't being straightened out. It's getting worse.

A job and legitimate work or the desire to look for work is, I believe, a predicate to the mindset that leads to family formation, and we've learned that in this

generation.

There has been so much black unemployment. Perhaps we have not understood that at least the prospects of a job, the notion that if you go from Alabama and Mississippi to Detroit, you can find a job, all of that is part of the ingredient of wanting to get married.

The challenge is to come to grips with the world we now live in and to try to put the shattered pieces together to form a composite that meets the needs of this world, but this is a world in which marriage can thrive again.

Somebody has to speak up for marriage. Somebody has to speak up for family. Somebody has to talk some turkey about it, but

they need somebody to back them up because preaching about it can make people cynical if they see nothing in the society that makes them marriageable.

Yet, somebody needs to bring the moral and practical clarity up front about marriage, about what it's meant to family life, about what it's meant to the progress of African Americans from slavery until today.

It must be done in the name of marriage. We must do it in the name of the black family, but we must do it, first and foremost, for our own children.

*Transcripts of the Brookings conference may be downloaded from [www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20040602.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20040602.htm)*

## Briefly

Continued from Page 10

Microsoft to spend \$35 million over the next five years to add a U.S. component to its Partners in Learning program, ESchoolNews told its readers. Washington State will be the first to participate in the program, which will help develop a curriculum model and methods intended to facilitate the development of 21st-century skills among students and create a program designed to increase student achievement and graduation rates.

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

### Cost of ignorance:

Researchers are concerned with the abstinence-only stance schools receiving government money are required to have when discussing sex with students, the New York Times reported. Teachers are not allowed to mention contraception unless they are pointing out failure rates. One expert, Cynthia Dailard, a lawyer and senior public policy associate at the Alan Guttmacher Institute, reported that sex education promoting abstinence but including informa-

tion on contraception delayed the start of sexual activity and reduced the incidence of teen-age pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

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

**Digital divide:** Federal figures show that more children are using the Internet to complete school assignments, but that there is a disparity between whites and minorities, the Miami Herald reported. Fifty-two percent of white students, 28% of black students and 27% of Hispanic students use computers to complete their homework.

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

**Pass rate up:** Roughly 96% of Massachusetts seniors passed the state's exit exam this spring, the Boston Globe reported. The rate is up from 95% passing within the five allotted opportunities, prompting calls for making the exam more rigorous in about three years. Some experts oppose raising the bar, only two years after the test was imposed. Scores among blacks and Latinos are catching up those of whites and Asians.

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



### 'Endangered Beacons'

An exhibit on the role of Rosenwald schools in early 20th century education in mostly African-American communities opens July 13 at the Museum of the New South, 200 E. 7th St. A slide lecture will be presented Tuesday, July 13 at 7 p.m. and Thursday, July 15 at 12:30. Bring a bag lunch to the midday lecture. The museum's Tom Hanchett will discuss the exhibit. Johnson C. Smith University's Monika Rhue will discuss preservation efforts. Museum admission \$6. Information: 704-333-1887 ext. 224.

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## Were '70s 'riots' racially motivated?

In a February Vassar College thesis, CMS graduate Nora Carroll adds to the historical record by looking at students' role in the heavily publicized "riots" that punctuated the early years of Charlotte-Mecklenburg desegregation in the 1970s.

Carroll says her research suggested that students were less racist than their parents, and that "the difficult saga of CMS desegregation 1969-1975 teaches us that those working at and attending school... were capable of doing what it took to come closer to equal education for all."

Carroll points out that some of the incidents that disrupted classes in the '70s were not expressions of animosity, but teen-age ploys to avoid going to class. In another category, explored in the following excerpt, Carroll quotes Bill Strong, a Michigan native and North Meck High graduate who began teaching

at Alexander Jr. High in 1971, later moving to North Meck.

"Many so-called 'racial incidents' were no more than the usual disciplinary breakdowns at school that happened to involve children of both races. Bill Strong recalled the so-called worst 'racial incident' at Alexander Junior High School:

"The ugliest single incident... the meanest black girl I ever dealt with and the craziest white boy I ever dealt with... came out of their classes at the end of second period one day, and they came running out and slammed right into each other, knocking each other flat – and the Latin teacher.

"They didn't know each other; they both got up and started swinging at other kids and we had a big fight that started out of nowhere... so, yeah, it was a black kid and a white kid, but it had nothing to do with race, it had to do with lunatic eighth-graders.'"

## Calendar

- 15** Bond Oversight Committee, 7:30 a.m., Building Services, 3301 Stafford Drive off Wilkinson Boulevard.
- 16** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., 11th floor, Government Center.
- 16** School board Safety Committee, 3:30 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 22** School board Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 24** School board Personnel Committee, 2 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 24** School board Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, Board Conference Room.