

Execs: Link principal pay to meeting school targets for high-quality teachers

Chamber echoes issue boiling in black community; advice targets efficient, effective school operations

Business leaders have added their heft to a growing community voice that the creation of incentive programs is not enough: Mecklenburg must actually deliver high-quality staff to every classroom and to every student.

An Efficiency and Effectiveness Review Team from the Charlotte

Chamber Tuesday scolded school officials for a teacher turnover rate at high-needs schools that jumped from 25% to 38% in the last year. The turnover leaves such schools with an overwhelming number of first-year teachers.

The team recommended setting school-by-school targets for experienced teachers as a percentage of every school's faculty; raising pay for teachers working in high-needs schools; and linking principal pay to achieving the targets.

With principal leadership being the key to school improvement, the team said the school board should have its administration using outside evaluators to assist with principal selection, and should make sure that its superintendent has action plans to improve or replace the third of principals ranking lowest in annual evaluations.

These recommendations were just a small portion of preliminary advice from the review team, which will continue to work with CMS staff and report later on financial implications of its recommendations.

Supt. Jim Pughsley and the Charlotte Chamber created the review team last spring.

Recommendations covered human resources, technology, transportation, warehousing and food service. Among the detailed recommendations:

- Reduce stigma attached to the subsidized lunch program; cajole



Wachovia's Peter Sidebottom

- more eligible children to breakfast to disperse fixed labor costs; and thoroughly survey students, parents and teachers about how to entice more children to patronize the cafeteria lines.

- Make sure that teachers at least have the computer skills expected of eighth-graders; mandate Web sites for all schools and all teachers; and put the hardware already in place to better use by having a seasoned computer instructor at every school.

- Prepare new facilities in north and south Mecklenburg, with each site combining warehousing and bus maintenance, to promote efficiencies in both programs.

- Explore possible private-sector interest in donating the global positioning gear that, during both regular operations and in emergencies, would allow officials to track every school bus's location.

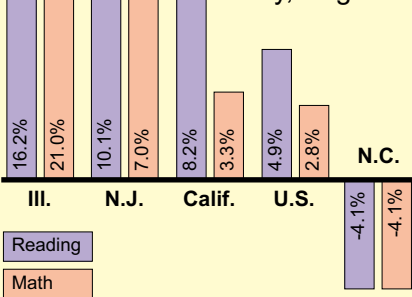
- Push for removal of a broad

Continued on Page 3

Do charters deliver?

A Harvard study of state data reports that in some states, charter school students are more likely to be proficient on their state's reading and math tests than students at the near-

by public school with similar racial demographics. Nationwide, they were 4.9% more likely to be proficient on reading tests, 2.8% more on math. North Carolina was the only state in the study where charter school students were less likely to be proficient in both. Story, Page 2.



CANDIDATE FORUMS

DETAILS, PAGE 2

Study: Some charters outperform regular schools; N.C. an exception

In a study by Harvard economics professor Caroline Hoxby, many charter schools come out smelling like roses.

Overall, Hoxby found, charter school students are 4.9% more likely to be proficient in reading, and 2.8% more likely to be proficient in math, than similar students at nearby schools taking the same state test.

North Carolina was the only state studied in which charter students were less likely to be proficient in both reading and math. The study offers no explanation for the N.C. results.

Hoxby's work follows an August study by the American Federation of Teachers, which claimed that

charters were failing. The AFT study used data on just 3% of charter students. Hoxby's used 99%, and in the data at right compared charter students not to all public school students but to students at a nearby regular public school with a similar student racial composition.

Hoxby's study notes that in many states, charters are too few or too new to draw statistically significant results. Absence of data does not mean charters are better, or worse, than regular schools. Hoxby suggests patience until charters have a track record, and researchers have sufficient data.

For charter school students, percent more or less likely to be proficient on state tests.

	Reading	Math
D.C.	36.6	41.5
Louisiana	32.9	29.1
Alaska	20.1	16.9
Illinois	16.2	21.0
Hawaii	14.3	11.7
Oregon	13.6	
Colorado	11.4	12.9
Nevada	10.3	
New Jersey	10.1	7.0
Pennsylvania	8.5	
Massachusetts	8.4	7.8
California	8.2	3.3
Arizona	7.6	7.4
Georgia	5.9	
United States	4.9	2.8
Florida	4.6	
North Carolina	-4.1	-4.1

Source: "A Straightforward Comparison of Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States," download at www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/09.23/09-charterschools.html

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IN THE AT-LARGE RACE FOR
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHERE VOTERS ASK THE QUESTIONS

JACK STRATTON

THURSDAY, SEPT. 30 12:15 P.M. 1510 E. 7TH ST.

RUTH SAMUELSON

MONDAY, OCT. 4 12:15 P.M. 1510 E. 7TH ST.

DAN RAMIREZ

TUESDAY, OCT. 5 NOON 1510 E. 7TH ST.
(RESCHEDULED FROM SEPT. 14)

ALREADY HELD: PARKS HELMS, SEPT. 16; WILHELMENIA REMBERT, SEPT. 20; JENNIFER ROBERTS, SEPT. 22; ANDY DULIN, SEPT. 27.

LIGHT LUNCH OR REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE BEGINNING 30 MINUTES BEFORE FORUM. DONATION FOR FOOD REQUESTED. UNLESS OTHERWISE LISTED, EVENTS WILL BE AT ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, 1510 E. 7TH ST., BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD AND HAWTHORNE LANE.

Effectiveness study

Continued from Page 1

range of barriers to efficient operations now embedded in state law.

The most detailed and controversial recommendations were presented by Wachovia's Peter Sidebottom for a human resources team led by Diverso Global Strategies' Astrid Chirinos.

"Principal leadership is a real key to setting a tone in a school," Sidebottom said. "We believe the district has a high focus on that... On the other hand, we found a couple of places where we would say some effort could be further expended..."

Pay for performance

"First, the pay differentiation for spread of performance is really minimal.... It may be differential across different types of careers.

"Everyone responds to reward and recognition. Teachers may not be primarily motivated by pay or recognition. They may have other psychic rewards that they come back to, but there still is some need to recognize someone who is doing a better job than someone else.

"And at the moment we would say that the spread within that performance band is too low to really recognize the type of performance, particularly when people are doing extraordinary efforts in extraordinary places."

Teacher turnover

"Second, and very concerning to us was that in schools with high concentrations of poverty, teacher turnover rates have deteriorated, not gotten better.

"So it's gone from about 25% to 38% attrition. That number is just way too high by any standard.

"There are highlights within those numbers, so we are doing much better at putting licensed teachers in the right subjects and with advanced learning in a number of those schools.

"But at 38% we are way off the

Legislative agenda

Recommendations for changes at state level:

- Provide an equitable allocation of cable fee funds (local legislative issue).
- Correct the absence of pay increases to support pay-for-performance for the central office.
- Provide the flexibility to allow pay-for-performance for central office leaders and teachers similar to the process for principals.
- Simplify evaluation mechanism for teachers.
- Alter career status privileges for teachers.
- Allow for direct shipment of textbooks from publisher to classroom.
- Provide a full-time technology facilitator in the schoolhouse.
- Allow more local decision-making authority regarding bus fleet purchases to help standardize on inventory.

– Source: CMS and Charlotte Chamber Efficiency and Effectiveness Review

mark and we are moving in the wrong direction...."

Because of tight budgets, CMS has had to slow down implementation of human resources management software. Sidebottom told the board the software is essential.

"The ability to say what type of teachers we are losing, and where, is very minimal. So the ability to stop a problem you can't identify is very, very hard.... There are some schools that are doing great. And we ought to learn from those. But at the moment it is hard for us to identify best practices because we don't have the metrics to know where that is."

Ensure quality teachers

"Second, and this is very consistent with the first, is we think there need to be targets set for retention and placement of high-quality teachers by school – not just for the overall system, but you need to roll it down.

"In many of our businesses, whether it's revenue targets or profitability targets or diversity targets, those are made the responsibility of the local manager.

"In this case your local manager is the principal. They need to be able to have the information, but they also need to have targets for where they [need to go].

"Thirdly, we would emphasize the link of the superintendent, the assistant superintendent of HR and principal compensation to meeting those targets. Not exactly sure how we would do it, but we think you need to stress the importance of having your core resource in place, in the right way, and that the folks who are leading that need to know that."

Sidebottom urged that the financial rewards for good work be clearer to all employees.

"We think it's important that people know what you can make if you do a great job. It doesn't help motivate people if it's a secret as to what you get if you succeed.

"And we just think that you should demonstrate to people – and that the public also know – what it is that we as a community are willing to invest in top performers....

"On the principal selection, we think it would be important to have third-party assessment by an assessment center.... We think you do have some outstanding

Continued on Page 4



Sidebottom

Effectiveness study

Continued from Page 3

principals, and we would leverage their expertise in looking for the next generation or the next group of leaders for schools that need great leaders....”

Sidebottom also encouraged CMS to do the math and make clear how its various bonus and other programs affect salaries. “Frankly, it was hard for us... to say, ‘well, if you got it all the, what did it add up to?’ ...

Don't ignore weak leaders

“Lastly, we recommend a grouping mechanism that the superintendent use and that you all engage in on an annual basis, to say, this is kind of the group of principals I think are performing outstandingly; here's a group who may be doing quite well but are kind of at standard; here's a group that I'm kind of concerned about; and that there be individual action plans for the folks who are kind of in the last bucket.

“Not that we are asking you to be responsible for managing the system. That's clearly Dr. Pughsley's responsibility. But that you ensure that he has an action plan around the folks who are at the bottom.

“Now let's be very clear, as we talked about it with Dr. Pughsley:

“We're not saying that some of those folks at the bottom couldn't be very good principals. They may be in the wrong place at the wrong time. They may be at the wrong time in their career.

“But the question isn't, ‘Are they OK?’ None of us would accept ‘OK’ in the leadership of a school that our children were in.

“And so we should always be striving for ‘great,’ and realize that's going to be a moving target as we continue to move up the average.”

Sidebottom said Pughsley and HR chief Barbara Jenkins were “very receptive” to the review team's suggestions.

Technology

Technology team leader Barbara Laughlin praised CMS's attention to standard budgeting and management practices. But she encourage a shift of focus “from hardware ratios and spending to whether what we are spending on is being effectively used.”



Laughlin

Laughlin added that CMS should clarify the penalties for abuse of its computer network, and have more software in place to protect its systems. The goal: “As soon as someone attaches an iPod, it's out of there.”

(See technology recommendations, Page 5).

Transportation

David Dooley said the demands of choice plan transportation account for drops in bus load size, arrival times and overall efficiency ratios. He said last spring's survey of parents about whether they would need transportation trimmed routes before they were

first run, avoiding about \$3 million in expenses.

Food service

“Believe it or not, many students are not eating, particularly at high schools,” food service team leader Selma Fox told the board.

Fox recommended more kiosks and even mobile units at cafeterias overwhelmed by today's overenrollment at many schools.



Fox

Managers have already embraced many of the efficiency tools used by outsourcing contractors. Change pay structures to give workers an incentive to make additional gains, Fox said.

HR overload

Selected ratios of employees to human resource personnel, including trainers:

Duke Energy:	48:1
National average:	100:1
Grant Thornton:	105:1
Carolinas Healthcare:	115:1
CMS:	198:1

— Source: CMS and Charlotte Chamber Efficiency and Effectiveness Review

Team members

Leadership

David Dooley, RT Dooley Construction; Selma Fox, Wachovia; Peter Sidebottom, Wachovia; Mike McGuire, Grant Thornton; Ken Sharp, Grant Thornton.

Food Services

Selma Fox, Wachovia (team leader); Bill Haygood, CMS (co-leader); Bob Anderson, CPCC; Art Gallagher, Johnson & Wales; Ray Galleno, UNCC; Cindy Hobbs, CMS; Stefan Latorre, Lattore's and Aquavina Restaurants; Darrel Williams, Neighborhood Concepts;

Grant Thornton consultants Andy Barbee, Erik Lioy, Bill Spears.

Transportation

Bobby Drakeford, The Drakeford Company (team leader); Carol Stamper, CMS (co-leader); Larry Allen, CMS; Bill Crawford, Wilmar Leasing; Todd Lanham, BellSouth; Todd Mansfield, Crosland; Keith Parker, CATS; Ron Soble, BellSouth; Doug Stukenburg, McKinsey; Ron Tober, CATS; Grant Thornton consultants Rob Byrd, Charles Gallman.

Warehouse

A.R. Mullinax, Duke Energy (team leader); Vic Ajygin, CMS (co-leader); Larry Cooper, Harris

Teeter; Jerry Hern, BellSouth; Mark Miralia, Distribution Technology; Ron Soble, BellSouth; Doug Stukenburg, McKinsey; Grant Thornton consultants Rob Byrd, Charles Gallman.

Human Resources

Astrid Chirinos, team leader; Barbara Jenkins, CMS (co-leader); Terry Broderick, Royal Sun Alliance (retired); Juli Marley, Blue Point Capital; Ann Morgan, Duke Energy; Anna Nelson, Wakefield Group; Taylor Renfro, Carolinas HealthCare Systems; Peter Sidebottom, Wachovia; Karen Simpson, TIAA-CREF; Rev. Ricky Woods, First Baptist Church

West; Grant Thornton consultants: LouAnn Hutchison, Brian Brooks.

Communication

Barbara Laughlin, First Union, retired (team leader); Jerri Haigler, CMS (co-leader); Renee Alexander Sherrod, TIAA-CREF; Tony Hoppa, UNCC; Moira Quinn, Charlotte Center City Partners; Allison Rice, Wachovia.

Technology

Barbara Laughlin, First Union, retired (team leader); Terry Middleton, CMS (co-leader); Magdi Attia, JCSU; June Moore, Piedmont Natural Gas; Cecil Smith, Duke Energy; Grant Thornton consultant Jay Brietz.

Key findings and recommendations on CMS operations from the review team

From a summary to school board members from the Efficiency and Effectiveness Review Team of their key findings and recommendations.

Food services

Findings:

- Well run organization - there are opportunities to move from “Good to Great.”
- Participation has improved but opportunities remain.
- Time and space are serious constraints at certain schools.
- Budget & efficiency - net operating contribution has been positive.
- Outsourcers’ best practices already identified and being captured internally.

Recommendations:

- Explore implementing an entrepreneurial business model to increase participation.
- Explore potential value opportunity of focusing more attention on the breakfast program and other peripheral activities.
- Invest to know and “listen” to your customers. Then communicate and market to them creatively.
- Create additional value in Child Nutrition through efficiency reviews, new processes and training.

Transportation

Findings:

- 85% of all buses arrive within a 15-30 minute window at schools (based on on-time arrival reports).
- Average student per bus district-wide – 59 students.
- 94.5% transportation efficiency rating as defined by NCDPI Transportation. Above state average rating of 93%.
- 50 installations of emission reduction devices completed – 50 more are scheduled for installation.

Recommendations:

- Explore Global Positioning System.
- Route Optimization (via Spring Registration).
- CATS Collaboration.
- Additional Bus Staging Facilities/ Centralization (north and south end of county).
- Work with Edulog on advanced

routing technology.

Warehouse

Recommendations:

- Optimize warehouse space over the next two years by reducing inventory, consolidating inventory, and outsourcing certain operations.
- A north/ south transportation garage and maintenance facility could have potential opportunities for warehouse operations that warrant further review.

Human Resources

Findings:

- CMS implemented many of the recommendations made by McKinsey.
- Overall teacher attrition is down.
- Principal leadership is key to teacher attraction, retention, and performance.
- Pay differentiation and spread of performance is minimal.
- In schools with extremely high concentrations of poverty, teacher retention rates have deteriorated over the past two years despite efforts to improve.
- There are fewer CMS HR professionals per employee than all of our organizations.

Recommendations:

- Implement within the next six months the HRIS system to track teacher attrition.
- Set placement and retention targets for high quality teachers for each school and for the system.
- Emphasize the link of superintendent, assistant superintendent of HR, and principal compensation to those targets.
- Provide greater differentiation and continued transparency in teacher compensation for top performers.
- Correct the absence of pay increases to support pay for performance.
- Modify selection process to include input from third party leadership assessment center or “A” rated principals.
- Provide greater spread for outstanding performance among leaders and make total compensation more transparent.
- Expose leaders in the Leadership

Academy to successful leader/managers from other institutions.

- Develop grouping mechanism; annually group principals based on superintendent’s view of performance; determine level at which performance is not acceptable; outline action plan for each individual below standard.

Communication

Findings:

- Strong crisis plan.
- Successful internal communications program.
- Ability to measure use of website and amount/type of media coverage.
- Limited resources to evaluate current programs (time, staff, actual measurement tools).

Recommendations:

- Strengthen partnership with local media.
- Leverage the CMS brand.
- Enhance CMS communication channels.
- Increase communication to non-English speaking families.
- Create a balance between crisis vs. proactive.
- Use data more effectively to evaluate communication efforts.

Technology

Findings:

- Processes for the review and implementation of outsourcing solutions, vendor management, budget planning alignment and TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) analysis are inculcated in the present management’s practices and continue to govern service and expenditure decision-making.

Recommendations:

- Establish enterprise-wide governance processes to authorize technology investments and initiatives as well as to safeguard the integrity of the environment.
- Promote and reward the evidenced embrace of technology as an integral component in delivering curriculum as well as to engage parents and students.

The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from www.cms.k12.nc.us/includes/gfi.asp?fileHandle=2154.asp

Charting our schools' future

Coverage in last week's edition of a county commissioner debate on school issues prompted a number of responses.

Below, Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents sound off about some of those issues.

CMS under no obligation to be race-neutral in assignment

The writer, a retired chemist, ran at-large for the Board of Education in 2003.

By FRED MARSH

I would like to make two related points in response to articles in the Sept. 24 issue of Educate!

I suspect all of the portions of Judge Potter's ruling that Commissioner James agreed with were overturned by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals and are not "the law" as Mr. James would have you believe.

Mr. Simmons mentions CMS developing a race-neutral assignment plan as required by the court. In fact CMS did so in ANTICIPATION of a court ruling requiring racial neutrality. That never happened. The court overturned that portion of Potter's ruling by a 6-5 vote.

CMS is under no legal obligation to be race-neutral in assigning students to schools. If Supt. James Pughsley wanted to fill the empty seats, he could do so at any time and my guess is that the school board would vote for it.

Implement N.C.'s constitution: Provide high-quality teachers

The writer, a retired CMS math teacher, is education chair of the Charlotte Black Political Caucus.

By RICHARD A. McELRATH, Sr.

County commissioner Bill James' assertion that the quality of education a child receives at school is dependent on the quality of support the child receives at home is like saying: The quality of surgical care you receive in the operating room depends on the quality of support you have at home. It is not true.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system has never made the assignment of high-quality teachers to classrooms filled with minority and/or poor children a high priority. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, we assign our least-experienced teachers to our most challenging classrooms.

If CMS were a hospital and used the same staffing system it uses now, we would have general practitioners doing the work of brain surgeons, and brain

surgeons doing general practitioners' work.

Some time ago, I gave every member of the county commission a copy of the Winter 2004 edition of "Thinking K-16" published by the Education Trust. Mr. James should have read the following statement contained in an article entitled, "The Real Value of Teachers":

"The gap for low-income and minority children exists because, in addition to more stress in their lives, these children have been, and continue to be, unjustly denied a fair share of those things that assure their success in school – our expectations, our resources, and our best teachers. Justice alone demands we redress these inequities." [Download the winter edition free at www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/product+catalog/reports+and+publications.htm]

On Dec. 17, 2001, the Charlotte Observer published the following:

"Studies have found that teacher education; experience and expertise influence student achievement more than anything else, including race, income and parent education level."

This observation was part of a series of articles. One featured two teachers.

One was a first-year white female teacher just out of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The other was an Afro-American with 30 years experience. The first-year teacher was assigned to a low-level all-black class. The veteran was assigned a largely all-white advanced math class.

The first-year teacher was quoted as saying, "I wasn't sure what I needed to do to help them learn."

The two teachers switched classes. At the end of the year, 83% of the low-performing students, under the guidance of the experienced teacher, scored on or above grade level on their End-Of-Grade math test.

Eighty-three percent was, at that time, 10 points higher than the CMS districtwide average.

According to Education Watch, North Carolina: Key Education Facts And Figures (2002-2003), the state average for teachers lacking a major or minor in the field they are teaching was 19%. The comparable number in high-poverty schools was 34%.

Commissioner James raised his hand and swore to uphold the North Carolina Constitution. The North Carolina Constitution demands that the state provide a sound basic education for all students.

"All students" means those with parents as well as those without parents; those with parents who support their children and those with parents who don't support their children. Commissioner James, be true to your oath and make education happen for all students.



'Our society has become too tolerant, lenient, accepting'

The writer, an accountant, attended California public schools, received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Humboldt State University in California, and now lives in Huntersville. He ran at-large for the Board of Education in 2003.

By **MIKE KASPER**

Bob Simmons, I do not know who you are but I know what you represent. You assume that if you are a suburbanite, you are white. I call that a racist statement. Let me first start out by informing you that suburban areas exist not because of your prejudicial position called "white flight," but because of economic growth. That is a good thing in my book.

As companies move into our area, jobs are generated and a need for an experienced and well-educated employee base is created. Companies are finding it increasingly difficult to find such a pool, so some positions are imported from other states or overseas.

New employees, imported or domestic-local, have an opportunity to earn more, which creates a desire to provide a higher standard of living for their families. They aspire to purchase bigger homes with more land, buy cars, and provide a higher quality of education so that their children will have a greater opportunity as they grow older. This is called the "American Dream."

Second, segregation does not exist today. Yes, thanks to laws created 30-40 years ago, that terrible condition has not existed for quite a few years now. We must never forget our history but we cannot live in the past.

Our problem is that the school board and other older community leaders live in the past. Your malevolence stands in the way of effectively educating all children regardless of location or skin color.

We need to get to the root of the problem. However, that would mean admitting that we have faults. The truth may rise to the top and then some may lose power and the racist trump card along with all of the fabricated excuses will be blown out of the water.

Our society has become too tolerant, lenient, and accepting. We need to realize our faults, openly admit our problems, and then fix them.

We have a crisis on our hands and it is the fundamental breakdown of the family unit. Don't try to drown the symptoms in cash. It hasn't worked up to this point and it will not work in the future. Enough is enough! The only thing that has changed over the past seven years is that our educational bar has dropped and our spending has increased over 40%.

It is easy to place blame; it is difficult to accept responsibility. [School board member] Larry



Kasper

[Gauvreau] and [County Commissioner] Jim [Puckett] didn't create this problem but, like many others, they want to fix it. Governmental social engineering combined with a socialistic point of view has prolonged this dilemma by not accepting responsibility, change, and evolving with the times.

We live in a free society, one filled with the opportunity to make choices. I chose to live where I live because I want to have a better life for my children. I chose to have children and to provide them with a quality education. I am not asking nor do I expect the government or the community to raise my children. I work hard for these choices. I call it responsibility.

You are also dead wrong about neighborhood school advocates. It is a proven fact that a smaller school, and parental involvement, increases the quality of education. Busing disrupts that process. I call that caring. You call it selfish and dishonest.

Education is a privilege, not a right. If you and others truly believe CMS needs more money to provide a quality education then please feel free to contribute your monthly income but stay out of my pocket. We don't have a funding problem. We have a spending problem. Face reality.

Even top-performing schools have been impacted by choice

The writer serves as PTA fund-raising chair at Villa Heights, a Learning Immersion and Talent Development magnet.

By **PAMELA MURRAY**

My child was a kindergartner in 2003-4. We saw a change in our demographics after our countywide magnet was reassigned to a zone. The demographics are markedly different, which is easy to see if you look at the 4th or 5th grades shaped from before the choice plan and compare them with the kindergarten and first grades shaped by the choice plan.

The parent involvement, the economic diversity, the racial diversity has been negatively impacted. Our school used to be the top-performing school in the state. We have since slipped. Our decline is not acceptable to us and should not be to CMS.

The point I'm trying to make is that the choice plan has impacted all schools – even the best ones. In many ways we are very lucky and I feel our school is a showcase. Yet, if we as parents are not vocal, small problems turn into big problems similar to what has happened to Garinger. Not so many years ago Garinger was an excellent school and today it is portrayed as an underachiever.

By the way, our small building is fully utilized, filled to capacity. We do not receive any additional funding. We do not cost CMS any more than any other school. I am an Asian-American and am proud that our school is very racially diverse. The truest success is when you see our students are color blind as far as the color of people.

A Board Room era closes

School officials hold last meeting in cramped quarters they moved to in 1969



It's where assignment changes were made .. where budgets were whacked ... where superintendents were hired, and fired ... where always-messy school governance in a democracy has played out since 1969.

Possibly the last regularly scheduled televised meeting from the Education Center's Board Room occurred Tuesday night. The board's next meeting, Oct. 12, will be held at the Government Center, in the Meeting Chamber where Charlotte's City Council and Mecklenburg's county commissioners deliberate.

The new venue holds three times as many observers. It has more comfortable public seating. And TV sight lines won't be blocked by speakers returning to seats.

But the dais for elected officials is at far greater remove from seats for the public. Staff members – the bulk of the audience in the room many nights – will commute across the street. The public will literally look down on their representatives. Will the hall encourage those on the dais to look up to the public that elected them?

From 9-28-04 CMS-TV3 live broadcast



Teacher turnover rates generally fall across N.C.

For the period ending June 30, 2004, N.C. school districts reported 11,399 teacher departures, for an annual turnover rate of 12.37%. State officials characterized the rate as stable, declining from 12.44% in 2002-03 and 12.49% for 2001-02.

Turnover ranged from a high of 25.76% in Bertie County, on the Albemarle Sound in Eastern North Carolina, to a low of 2.73% in Graham County in the mountains.

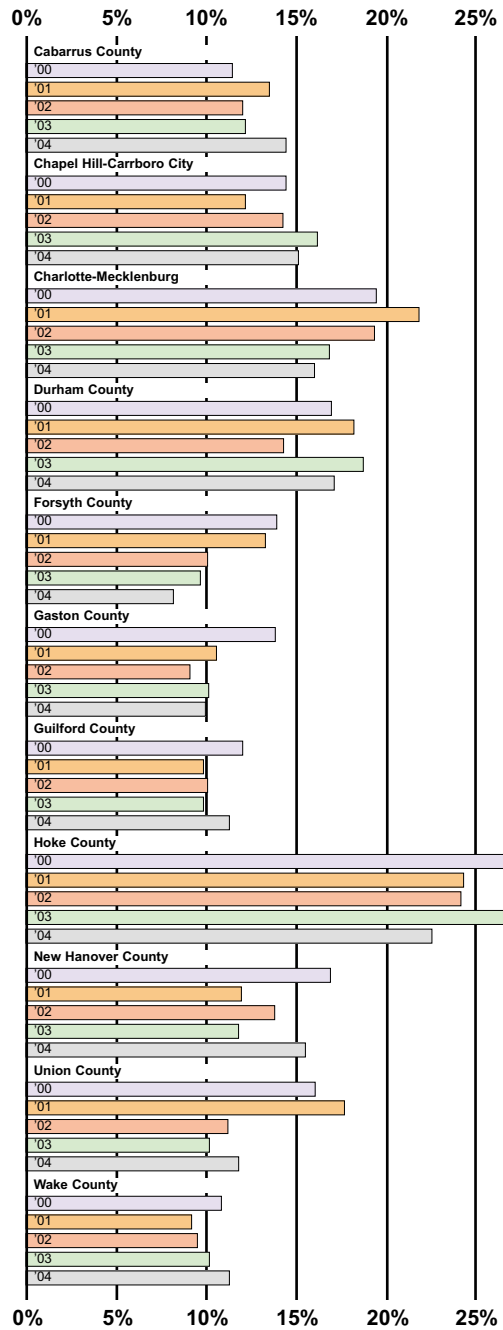
CMS saw its rate drop a bit to 15.95%. Three years ago it stood at 21.77%. The five-year average in CMS now stands at 18.64%.

Data and charts on this and the next page will allow readers to compare CMS turnover with that experienced in area counties, as well as in the largest urban systems in the state.

District	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	5-yr. avg.
Hoke	28.21	23.55	23.43	27.59	21.84	24.92
Edgecombe	24.22	23.36	20.04	18.33	24.65	22.12
Warren	19.80	30.46	13.27	17.21	17.51	19.65
Vance	25.38	20.00	13.60	21.04	21.17	20.24
Tyrrell	27.87	20.34	12.07	24.56	15.00	19.97
Weldon City	21.18	20.45	22.34	18.28	15.79	19.61
Hertford	11.75	15.64	30.57	18.75	17.49	18.84
Franklin	15.98	21.23	17.61	21.53	16.83	18.64
Mecklenburg	19.44	21.77	19.31	16.73	15.95	18.64
Thomasville City	16.67	18.52	18.18	21.14	18.08	18.52
Northampton	13.81	17.33	24.71	16.78	17.98	18.12
Lexington City	20.44	18.72	16.25	13.25	20.41	17.81
Person	19.45	21.26	20.96	12.97	13.89	17.71
Newton-Con. City	18.57	17.27	17.59	16.81	16.37	17.32
Montgomery	17.83	19.44	16.67	18.05	14.17	17.23
Shelby City	17.55	16.41	17.57	20.48	13.17	17.04
Durham	16.93	18.12	14.21	18.76	17.11	17.03
Duplin	22.24	15.47	13.22	20.38	13.74	17.01
Jones	21.49	22.05	18.11	10.00	12.98	16.93
Chatham	18.88	17.48	16.09	15.71	14.58	16.55
Alamance-Burl.	18.13	16.43	16.19	15.11	16.57	16.49
Pasquotank	13.53	19.03	9.39	18.57	21.40	16.38
Bertie	12.72	14.98	20.34	7.69	25.76	16.30
Halifax	18.67	19.78	13.93	12.81	15.94	16.23
Harnett	12.80	14.08	16.37	18.34	19.52	16.22
Hickory City	19.12	19.00	16.62	14.24	11.50	16.10
Lenoir	12.63	15.14	17.89	20.13	13.59	15.88
Nash-Rocky Mt.	15.07	18.24	13.76	20.34	11.05	15.69
Greene	16.16	18.45	12.90	13.30	16.10	15.38
Kannapolis City	18.49	18.30	14.20	12.57	11.14	14.94
Wilson	12.34	22.79	16.56	13.57	9.17	14.89
Onslow	18.36	15.60	14.62	13.29	12.40	14.85
Mount Airy City	11.52	19.08	13.01	11.02	19.18	14.76
Chapel Hill-Carr.	14.58	12.38	14.51	16.43	15.40	14.66

Teacher turnover, last 5 years

Teacher turnover for selected N.C. districts:



Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

District	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	5-yr. avg.
Anson	23.10	13.68	13.27	10.14	12.67	14.57
Polk	20.37	16.98	13.77	11.35	9.73	14.44
Granville	16.16	17.45	12.17	12.05	14.05	14.38
Moore	17.84	13.74	14.39	10.53	15.35	14.37
Edenton-Chowan	16.40	13.89	13.89	13.89	13.44	14.30
Asheville City	15.38	16.58	13.54	13.38	12.58	14.29
Martin	19.86	12.89	13.61	13.03	12.00	14.28

Teacher Turnover

District	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	5-yr. avg.	District	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	5-yr. avg.
Lee	9.52	14.89	15.36	17.12	14.47	14.27	Iredell-Statesville	10.78	13.91	10.71	11.50	9.17	11.21
Catawba	15.34	18.17	12.52	13.58	11.27	14.18	Forsyth	14.17	13.47	10.19	9.73	8.25	11.16
Robeson	14.15	16.18	13.41	13.97	12.23	13.99	Currituck	9.71	15.07	14.29	5.08	11.50	11.13
Johnston	11.66	17.41	11.90	15.81	13.14	13.98	Richmond	10.64	13.52	16.12	10.44	4.76	11.10
Davie	13.22	12.98	13.53	16.10	13.35	13.84	Scotland	16.04	9.90	7.75	10.13	11.60	11.08
Orange	13.58	15.32	12.31	13.55	14.35	13.82	McDowell	12.00	13.57	13.46	8.39	6.81	10.85
Caswell	11.90	16.30	13.89	14.34	12.15	13.72	Yadkin	10.86	10.44	9.62	11.73	11.38	10.81
Clinton City	18.72	12.50	11.73	10.95	14.72	13.72	Guilford	12.29	9.77	10.06	9.95	11.49	10.71
New Hanover	16.48	11.68	13.50	11.50	15.22	13.68	Gaston	13.81	10.53	9.04	10.03	9.79	10.64
Burke	14.81	14.33	13.63	14.73	10.65	13.63	Transylvania	12.11	14.12	8.27	12.64	5.99	10.63
Washington	19.00	11.27	15.34	11.64	10.70	13.59	Wake	10.78	9.20	9.48	10.22	11.30	10.20
Asheboro City	16.25	15.61	9.84	12.78	13.00	13.50	Camden	14.77	15.22	6.25	7.00	7.62	10.17
Rowan-Salisbury	12.94	14.41	14.04	12.81	13.09	13.46	Cumberland	8.33	11.36	9.71	9.81	11.09	10.06
Randolph	13.13	15.12	12.92	13.58	12.30	13.41	Davidson	11.36	11.03	9.22	9.11	9.51	10.05
Union	15.91	17.62	11.12	10.08	11.62	13.27	Madison	7.73	9.22	9.36	12.96	9.95	9.84
Rockingham	14.89	10.09	14.16	11.57	15.47	13.24	Dare	8.24	11.11	9.09	8.79	10.80	9.61
Pender	15.11	11.84	9.63	10.65	18.81	13.21	Gates	7.36	10.26	5.99	7.10	16.03	9.35
Sampson	11.31	14.77	15.21	13.04	10.87	13.04	Kings Mtn. City	9.46	10.44	11.41	5.84	9.42	9.31
North Carolina	13.59	13.96	12.49	12.44	12.37	12.97	Wayne	9.70	12.89	7.46	3.57	12.88	9.30
Hyde	13.70	12.00	12.16	14.47	12.50	12.97	Perquimans	12.06	10.34	8.28	8.28	6.90	9.17
Stokes	13.64	13.30	10.28	9.69	17.43	12.87	Pitt	11.05	9.24	8.58	8.54	8.20	9.12
Bladen	8.96	11.04	19.80	13.26	11.11	12.83	Buncombe	8.62	9.95	8.57	9.32	8.37	8.97
Brunswick	12.55	12.25	13.18	14.45	11.31	12.75	Craven	10.50	11.46	7.89	6.74	7.59	8.84
Alexander	12.58	13.48	17.65	10.93	8.96	12.72	Henderson	11.07	11.27	8.76	6.32	6.73	8.83
Cabarrus	11.42	13.52	12.04	12.14	14.40	12.70	Carteret	5.72	13.17	6.97	7.50	9.97	8.67
Cleveland	10.37	12.92	14.07	12.59	13.29	12.65	Swain	9.02	9.56	5.96	8.12	10.20	8.57
Elkin City	14.74	13.48	14.77	10.23	9.78	12.60	Columbus	9.98	8.58	6.49	8.13	7.46	8.13
Lincoln	15.99	14.36	10.10	11.01	10.60	12.41	Haywood	4.01	6.16	9.78	11.00	8.92	7.97
Surry	14.21	13.04	10.24	14.83	9.52	12.37	Rutherford	8.35	8.61	6.46	8.56	6.25	7.65
Jackson	8.47	9.09	14.40	15.69	12.36	12.00	Macon	8.02	4.73	9.43	8.31	7.39	7.58
Caldwell	12.80	14.89	7.56	12.66	11.17	11.82	Cherokee	7.94	4.59	9.67	5.35	8.67	7.24
Beaufort	11.11	13.57	12.95	10.83	10.56	11.80	Avery	10.09	5.03	7.55	6.22	7.11	7.20
Watauga	12.96	11.50	12.73	9.15	12.50	11.77	Ashe	6.28	9.13	3.54	9.62	7.00	7.11
Pamlico	12.03	11.80	11.46	11.46	11.46	11.64	Mitchell	5.75	6.92	5.63	9.20	6.75	6.85
Roan. Rapids Cty.	17.19	12.62	11.42	8.87	8.04	11.63	Alleghany	8.73	5.60	2.99	9.09	7.00	6.68
Wilkes	6.98	9.63	15.43	12.95	13.00	11.60	Clay	7.00	5.00	3.16	3.16	7.27	5.12
Stanly	11.42	13.46	12.38	9.86	10.30	11.48	Yancey	1.65	2.22	2.63	6.12	8.65	4.25
Mooresville City	11.45	15.81	11.50	9.38	9.03	11.43	Graham	3.00	1.60	3.92	5.32	2.73	3.31
Whiteville City	11.06	9.09	11.27	10.47	15.02	11.38							

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

30 One in a series of one-hour forums for at-large County Commissioner Candidates, Jack Stratton, 12:15 p.m., St. Martin's Church, 1510 E. 7th St. Sponsor: The Swann Fellowship. Light lunch available from 11:45 p.m. Donation requested to cover lunch costs.

30 "Stories of Hope: Racial Reconciliation," noon, Covenant Presbyterian, 1000 E. Morehead St. \$6 includes lunch, no reservation needed.

OCTOBER

1 School board hosts Broad Foundation visitors, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Board Room.

2 International Festival, UNCC Barnhardt Student

Activity Center, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Booths representing the cultures of about 50 nations will be staffed by UNCC students and members of the community. Some will have native foods for sale.

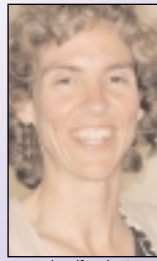
3 International Peace Day at Myers Park Methodist Church, 1501 Queens Road, 4 p.m.-6 p.m. Guest speakers: Dr. James Howell and others; music directed by Dr. Thomas Moore, and a presentation by the combined youth choirs. Sponsors include United Religions Initiative, Mecklenburg Ministries, NCCJ.

4 One in a series of one-hour forums for at-large County Commissioner Candidates, Ruth Samuelson, 12:15 p.m., St. Martin's Church, 1510 E. 7th St. Sponsor: The Swann Fellowship. Light lunch available from 11:45 p.m. Donation requested to cover lunch costs.

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Meet the candidates:**Jennifer Roberts**

From a series of conversations with candidates for Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners at-large. This Q&A is extracted from comments about public schools and the candidate's plans made during forums sponsored by The Swann Fellowship, the publisher of this journal. Roberts, a Democrat, met voters Wednesday, Sept. 22.



www.jenniferroberts.com

ing authority,] you take out the joint finger-pointing and you do give people one place to go for accountability.

Q: Would you support taxing authority for the school board, then consolidating Charlotte and Mecklenburg County governments?

A: Works for me.... The problem with doing that, a lot of it is political.

How can you plan roads and streetlights, but have the parks being planned by someone else, the libraries by someone else?... It would be, not seamless, but it would be a lot smoother, I think....

Q: Does school quality really affect economic development? Those executives won't be sending their children to our bad schools.

A: Companies who are going to move here read the paper. I have heard a number of people have not been able to get kids in private school.

When I worked at the World Affairs Council, we talked to three German companies who decided not to come here... because their employees were concerned about the schools. And it was the executives, the management of the companies, that were concerned about the schools....

Everybody agrees there is a problem in the school system right now. When you have high schools where only 30% of the kids are at grade level when they graduate, what kind of job are they going to get? What are they going to do? How are they going to live in this economy?

If I'm a bank, where are my tellers going to come from?... And that goes for all the companies with workforce issues. I think education makes a big difference in economic development....

Q: You say there is a problem that still needs fixing? What is the problem?

Q: Do we need new sources of revenue to support the schools?

A: I was reading about impact fees. Cabarrus County: \$4,000 a house to help build new schools.... We have hummed and hawed and screamed and cried about any kind of impact fee.... All the surrounding counties are having the same problems we are, and the same concerns, and they're looking at the same solutions.... I think we need to start thinking outside of the box... And there are Realtors who agree with me.

If you tell a developer, "Your building a school in the middle of the development is going to be a big selling point." In lots of parts of the country they use that as part of their marketing....

I'm for looking into [impact fees]. We won't even look into it... because the lobby is so strong. You can't just say we've got to cut taxes. You've got to say, how are we going to provide the services that we need? Can't we look at some kind of alternate financing? I haven't heard a lot of people even be willing to do a study. It's totally written off to begin with, even though they see good examples from around the country, where it has worked without a huge strain on growth.

And especially when our growth problems are starting to develop in surrounding counties.... They're starting to raise taxes. They're starting to have impact fees. You can run but you can't hide....

Q: You want to study that. But what will you say now that you will support?

A: You can't make a pledge for anything in a vacuum. I would never sign a pledge saying I would never raise taxes, because I don't have a budget in front of me. I don't have a list of all the services that are going to be cut....

So in terms of supporting impact fees, you have to do it with a lot of discussion in the community, with the industry, etc.

But if it were determined it were not too much of a burden, let's start with the commuter tax, too much of a burden on employers, or with the impact fee not too much of a burden on real estate development, which I don't think it would be, once you determine that, I would support that rather than let go of services such as education, environmental quality, Central Piedmont Community College, job training, small business initiatives, health and human services, mental health services.

Q: Would you vote to give the school board taxing authority?

A: I have given that some thought. I think you have to do it in the right way. I think it might make sense. I think you'd have to do it in a way that allows voters to change the composition of the school board if they're also going to have taxing authority.

I think you might want a different kind of person on the school board if they had taxing authority. And you at least need to give voters an opportunity to decide they might want a different kind of person... because that's a big responsibility....

[By giving the school board tax-

Roberts forum

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A: The problem is that we are not providing each child the same opportunity to get a good education, to let them make a choice: They don't have to turn to crime, or McDonald's or whatever. They have a choice, that they may actually want to go to community college or UNC Charlotte or UNC Chapel Hill.

What's the fix?... I think there is common agreement that the school system needs fixing, that the assignment needs fixing. The Republicans and Democrats I have spoken to can all agree that we're not 100% happy with the fact that only 30% of the graduates of West Charlotte are on grade level.

I think trying to fix the high schools is too late. I think you need to start earlier.

But the solution is going to how to figure out how to keep certain schools from having 98% of their kids from impoverished backgrounds....

If you had talked to me during this Gauvreau lawsuit and were coming up with a new assignment plan, I know what my fix would have been then: It would be to do what Wake County does, and do it based on socioeconomics, not on race. And say no school is going to have more than 40% free-lunch kids.

Then all of a sudden your PTA has resources again, because 60% of the kids are going to be able to give money so teachers can have paper in the classrooms and, at elementary school, scissors and glue.

I'm not sure that's a viable alternative from where we are in our history because of the extreme opposition. Maybe it is. Maybe we can do a whole Swann reorganization of everything again.... Short of a lawsuit I don't think we can.... The courts are going to have to drive it again.

But given where we are now, what I think we should do is seri-

DidYaHear?

✓ As of last Friday, there are only 1,500 empty seats in the inner city, not the 11,000 reported by Creative Loafing, school board member Kaye McGarry told a community gathering Monday.

✓ Assignment boundary changes relieved crowding at Vance High by moving hundreds of students to West Charlotte. And yet there are still reports of Vance teacher loads averaging 33 students per class. And will this proposal grow legs? – lecture classes with 60 students. What are we running? UNC Chapel Hill?

✓ At a middle school where 80% or fewer students were on grade level last year in algebra, is it really true that every algebra teacher is brand new to the school this fall? CMS had its own unforgettable statistic this week in a press release: "With nearly one-quarter of its teaching staffing in only their first or second year, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system...." The press release announced a \$50,000 BellSouth grant to fund additional teacher mentoring.

✓ The CMS response to the county commissioners' "high school challenge" to ratchet up student achievement at three high schools compares many troubling statistics at Garinger, West Charlotte and West Meck to the relevant CMS average. But when it says 22.9% of Garinger's teachers, 32.8% of West Charlotte's and 28.5% of West Meck's teachers were absent 10 or more of the days students were to be taught, no comparable CMS average is offered. How do we know teachers at the three high schools are overly absent? Asked for the districtwide average, a CMS spokesman replied: "I have the answer to your question. We do not run a program that gathers teachers' absences across the whole district. A request was made to pull the numbers for the three high schools."

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com

ously look at those impoverished schools, look at the overcrowded schools, look at where they are geographically, and figure out a new plan, maybe involve some choice....

Why can't we we cap enrollment?... The fire marshal does it all the time for building occupancy. Nobody complains about that. There should be a physical cap, then maybe do a lottery for who is going to fit under that cap. And those other 50 or 100 or 200 families... is there a viable choice for them in a 2- or 3-mile radius? You don't want 'em to go to the other side of the county because we're concerned about neighborhoods and that sort of thing. But is there a choice within their area they are willing to make, especially if they knew that 200 other families were going to have to do it too?

I don't know how you do that.

There's going to be a lot of political fallout and there's going to be a lot of protest. I know that whole capping idea has been roundly [criticized]. But there is no question that, equally for the kids in the center city and kids in the suburbs, they are not getting the most out of the dollars we are spending.

The other fix that would be great would be to have great training for principals. The leadership of individual schools makes a huge difference.... Principals that are organized and have standards and support the staff and work toward goals. I think it would great to beef up training, beef up the support network for principals. Teachers obviously are in there as well, but you've got to start with leadership. Make them feel really valued, and give them resource networks and communications to support them.

Meet the candidates:**Andy Dulin**

From a series of conversations with candidates for Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners at-large. This Q&A is extracted from comments about public schools and the candidate's plans made during forums sponsored by The Swann Fellowship, the publisher of this journal. Dulin, a Republican, met voters Monday, Sept. 27.



www.votedulin.com

been over to visit.... He's got a model he's running his business under. Everybody would probably have room to tighten it down, but no, I wouldn't get rid of any of Jake's programs. In fact they've just added six new AIDS employees and probably could use more.... I'm not sure if you really gotta get in there and make huge cuts. I think we've just got to trim things up some.

The school system – I think they're running a pretty good show over there also. They're just not telling the story.... All you hear is there is too much fat, there's too much administration. I haven't seen the books. I'm not sure if there is or not.

Q: Would you support taxing authority for the school board?

A: No. As imperfect as it is, I think the county commission having taxing authority over the county for their property taxes et cetera is the system that is in place and needs to be working. To have another taxing authority, to have a third taxing authority, I think would be cumbersome. Quite frankly, I don't think the school board gets along well enough to get that thing figured out.

Q: But aren't you big on accountability? Taxing authority would put the accountability right where it belongs.

A: In Texas, in the Houston area, it works very well. I'm not signing a "never give them taxing authority" pledge, but as I understand it now, my view today is that the taxing needs to stay on the county side....

Q: What's your view of last spring's proposal to move bond money from central-city school renovations to build new suburban schools?

A: I would have spent that

Q: You say you would have voted against last June's tax hike. Why?

A: We've got to make sure we do things that help Mecklenburg County remain a good place for people to come to. I see that in my profession as a residential Realtor. We see folks from other parts of the country every week.... I want to make it as easy as possible for people to come here, to buy a home, and to enter life in Mecklenburg County.... a region people want to come to....

I've got three little boys, 11, 8 and 4. They've got to be educated. Of course I'm for good schools. We're all for good schools. It's how we delegate that money....

Q: Do you then have a list of the \$16 million you would have cut from the budget to avoid that tax increase?

A: I'm unable to make a list today.... One of the things to avoid having to cut is [to add] some user fees in Parks & Rec. See, for instance, I want the water, the pools open. We need those pools open. But there can be some user fees that attach to that. And none of these are simple facts. And the fact is that money is tight. So to add some user fees would take some of the burden off of that.

Q: Would you then support impact fees on residential land development to pay for schools?

A: I am generally opposed to that, because it takes the cost of those houses up. Now, in Cabarrus County, when they just

went from \$1,500 per lot to now \$4,038, their idea for that is to reduce growth. I think they're probably going to do that. They're going to be pushing some houses here. Now, they've got 10,000 lots over there that are grandfathered through, so I don't know how long it's going to take them to eat up the 10,000 lots.

But to get back to your specific cuts: There's some privatization that could probably happen on some of the grants we give out, some of the nonprofits could work toward less dependence on county money.

Q: How would that work?

A: Charlotte-Mecklenburg's got a history of stepping up to the plate when it needs to. In certain situations of which I'm not exactly sure now until we get in there and start looking at it, there are more than likely some places there that could come up with that.

Q: Would the general public then be making donations?

A: Yes. For instance, we're starting a \$16 million Arts & Science Council fund.... I'm not saying Arts & Science Council needs to be cut, but there are places to go and look....

Q: You say Charlotte steps up to the plate. Are there programs under the Department of Social Services that you think Charlotteans would donate to support?

A: Jake Jacobsen is running a pretty good show over there. I've

Continued on Page 14

Dulin forum

Continued from Page 13

money where they told the – I mean I voted for those bonds....

I want to continue the monies that were pledged to those inner-city schools.... But I'd like to be able to build the schools, as we can, where the kids are, and giving those people an opportunity to go to school near their homes as well....

Q: Are county commissioners really wanting to be Board of Education members?

A: The education questions come up. That's No. 1 on everybody's mind. You all are more interested in what I think about how Kaye's running the school board than what Kim Phillips is doing in Huntersville. Ted Biggers in Mint Hill: He's almost a forgotten mayor over there....

This is the hottest seat I've been in yet, and I appreciate it. It's part of that learning curve, and I thank you.

Q: An independent group of business people [Education Budget Advisory Committee, appointed by the county and school board] said the schools deserve more money from Mecklenburg County. The superintendent says the county needs to supply more funding. Do we need a new superintendent, a new group of businessmen to look at this thing?

A: That's a good group of leaders [but] in a lot of cases I would disagree with them. And as far as Dr. Pughsley, I know him to be a very nice man. I've never worked with him. Every time I get near him I stick my hand out and introduce myself to him. He's running a huge corporation. I mean, he's the CEO of our kids....

There are examples of where it's working well, and he's doing a superior job. I'd like for him to be able to tell the story better, some-

Calendar (Continued from Page 10)

- 5** One in a series of one-hour forums for at-large County Commissioner Candidates, Dan Ramirez, Noon, St. Martin's Church, 1510 E. 7th St. Sponsor: The Swann Fellowship. Light lunch available from 11:45 p.m. Donation requested to cover lunch costs.
- 7** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., 11th floor conference room, Government Center.
- 9** Parent education event, UNCC Fretwell Building, 10-2. Youth aged 12-18 and their parents welcome. Sponsor: Parents On The Move/Parents In Action. Free. Info: Blanche Penn, 704-890-4101.
- 13** "Lights on Afterschool! Community Breakfast," 7:30 a.m.-9 a.m., Westin Hotel Charlotte, 601 S. College St.. Speaker: Deborah Prothrow-Stiith on "Risk and Opportunity: Community Strategies for Decreasing Youth Violence." Sponsor: Partners in Out-of-School Time. Cost \$15 for youth and youth program providers; \$25 for individuals, \$100 for table of 10. Info: 704-376-1845 or info@postcarolinas.org
- 14** Candidate forum for youth, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., meeting chamber, Government Center, 600 E. 4th St. Sponsor: KidsVoting.
- 21** "Choosing on Faith: A Look at School Choice," noon, Covenant Presbyterian, 1000 E. Morehead St. \$6 includes lunch, no reservation.
- 28** "Your Child or Our Child: Moral Responsibility and Care of 'the Other'," noon, Covenant Presbyterian, 1000 E. Morehead St. \$6. includes lunch, no reservation needed.

NOVEMBER

- 11** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., 11th floor conference room, Government Center.
- 11** "Intro to the Continuum of Care for the Homeless in Charlotte," noon, Covenant Presbyterian, 1000 E. Morehead St. \$6 includes lunch, no reservation needed.
- 12** "Invisible Fences: Municipal Underbunding and Minority Exclusion," the third annual conference of the UNC Center for Civil Rights, Friday Center, Chapel Hill, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. An exploration of how annexation, zoning and sewer extensions, and environmental regulations are being used in small Southern towns to disenfranchise African-American homeowners, deny them city services and even leave them little alternative but to sell their ancestral lands. Information: UNC School of Law, Van Hecke-Wettach Hall, 100 Ridge Road CB #3380, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3380 (919) 962-5106.
- 17** Cheryl Brown Henderson and Linda Brown Thompson to discuss *Brown v. Board*, 7 p.m., Dana Auditorium, Guilford College, Greensboro. The Brown sisters are daughters of the lead plaintiff in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 1954.

how get the word out of were it's happening and where it's working well. And I don't know him well enough to walk up to him and say, hey... I think he's running a pretty good show and he's certainly got a hard job.

Q: Why should I vote for you?

A: It's a tough call.... I'm an unproven commodity. I think you guys have gotten a pretty good view of that today. And I don't have all the answers. But I can promise you... that I've got a passion for Mecklenburg County, all of Mecklenburg County... I want to represent everybody.

Briefly...

Overhaul results: In 2002, the Chicago Public Schools system began trying to overhaul its worst schools by changing them into small learning communities, the Chicago Tribune reported. The results, according to a study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, a program of the University of Chicago, are mixed. Bureaucracy, teacher habits and the bad reputations from the old school following the new schools, making real change difficult. On the other hand, students appear to feel closer to their teachers, and report less violence. Attendance rates are up and educators expect more students to graduate.

www.chicagotribune.com

Bound to fail: Although about 10% of Texas students take an alternative state exam for special education or non-English speakers, federal officials will count only 1% of alternative-test takers as having passed for purposes of No Child Left Behind, the Dallas News reported. The rest of the students who pass will count as "artificial failures." This will substantially raise the number of Texas schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress.

www.dallasnews.com

Raising priority: Education parties are the newest method attempting to draw national attention to education as a priority in the November election, the New York Times told its readers. About \$500,000 was spent on last week's 3,800 nonpartisan gatherings sponsored by groups as MoveOn and the National Education Association. Participants were encouraged to sign a petition asking the president to spend more on education.

www.newyorktimes.com

Cell phones: Many children start carrying cell phones between ages 10 and 14, the Mercury News reported. Market

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research firm TNS found that as children began being more involved in afterschool activities and have more independence, they are more likely to carry cell phones.

www.mercurynews.com

Ingathering: In an effort to stop truancy, The Houston Independent School District is going door-to-door trying to persuade students to attend class, Education Week reported. The Los Angeles school district is linking grades to attendance. The new zeal is in part due to No Child Left Behind's push for districts to improve academic performance. Students cannot achieve if they are not in class.

www.edweek.org

Ending use of race: The only integrated city schools in Chicago may drop their race-based admission policy, the Chicago Tribune reported. The elite magnet

schools are the best in the system, but their desegregation order is due to be lifted in 2006. The system is looking at other ways to integrate their schools, such as assignment preferences based on economic status or ZIP codes.

www.chicagotribune.com

Wake poll: A recent study by the Wake Education Partnership found that 60% of those polled supported Wake County's student assignment policy, the News and Observer reported. About 54% of the respondents gave the system an A or B grade, whereas in 2002 only 41% gave the A/B grade to the district. In addition, 53% say they would support raising property taxes to improve schools. Wake's assignment plan caps each school's percentage of children on subsidized lunch and also the percentage of children testing below grade level.

www.newsobserver.com