

CMS to court?

Late Wednesday, lawyers representing four CMS students sought to intervene in the Leandro school suit and in hearings planned in March on CMS achievement results.

In papers for N.C. Superior Court, Julius Chambers, who sued CMS in the 1960s to end segregation, asks Judge Howard Manning to declare CMS's current assignment plan unconstitutional, and to order CMS "to end high poverty concentrations in every Charlotte school."

Homework

Board buckles down to assignment task

CMS's top debating society gave some indication of turning into a work group this week as deadlines built into the current school assignment review started to loom on the horizon.

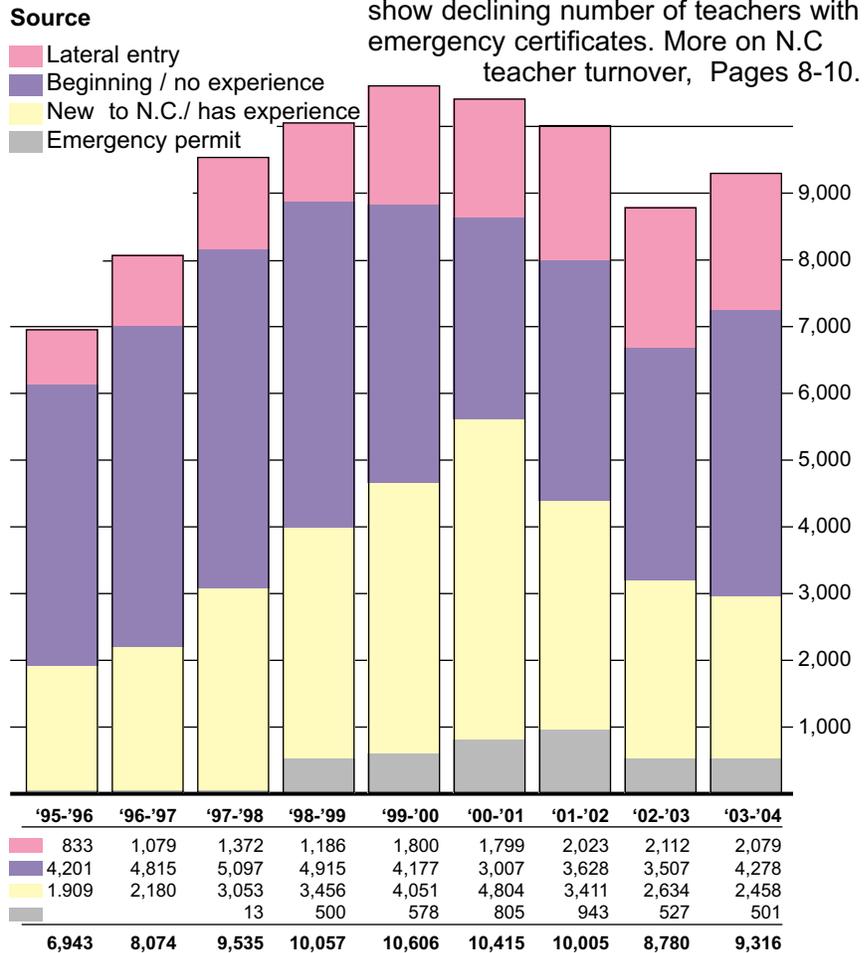
The staff work associated with that effort, along with other regularly scheduled school reports, also suggests the possibility of a greater degree of openness and candor from CMS.

For the first time, for example, CMS has released data that tracks achievement of children at each partial magnet in the district. Earlier reports lumped their scores with non-magnet children under the same roof, making it impossible to tell whether magnets produced the higher achievement expected from a usually costlier educational program.

The regular review of enrollment planning produced a clearer,

New N.C. teachers by source

Chart tracks nine years of data on how teachers new to N.C. schools enter the classroom. Top magenta bars show rising portion employed under lateral-entry rules. Blue bars show stable portion coming out of college without experience. Yellow bars show that, as turnover rose, the state depended on attracting teachers back to the profession or from out-of-state. Bottom gray bars show declining number of teachers with emergency certificates. More on N.C. teacher turnover, Pages 8-10.



Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

likely more reliable result. Even the teacher turnover rates last year at every school tumbled out.

But the highlight was Professor Pughsley sending Coach White & Co. off to individual chalk boards to write down what they really want to do on student assignment.

Do yer homework

Tuesday night's meeting saw a

rehash of the blizzard of student assignment issues discussed at a workshop last week (*Educate!*, Feb. 4). Assistant Supt. Susan Agruso rolled out a Powerpoint full of the items discussed when Pughsley sought a discussion of guiding principles.

On Tuesday, he took a different tack, asking board members to write down their top five issues

Homework assigned

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by Friday to avoid “the stampede that we had last week.”

“Does everybody understand your homework assignment?” quipped chairman Joe White.

Pughsley said he would collate the members’ suggestions and share the full list with members. Whether that list will be released to the public was not clarified.

“From that as a base, we’ll develop guiding principles, and of course get that back to you as well,” Pughsley said, “so that you have some idea what it is we are going to vote on.”

At-large member Kaye McGarry was having none of it.

“I was expecting to spend an hour, an hour and a half on discussion,” McGarry said. “This

board needs to be discussing these. When you don’t start talking about it until 9:30 at night, it becomes very difficult.

“To just have reports shoved to us and then, what do we do? we just individually go home? I think there is strength in discussion.”

The board is scheduled to approve principles for the assignment plan review on Feb. 22.

Long-range plans

Tuesday also saw the release of a new long-range planning document. Together with associated materials to be released in the next two months, the master plan will help shape upcoming bond issues, and the pace of new construction in a severely overcrowded district.

The plan recommends 36 new elementaries, 8 middles and seven high schools over the 10-year period. The plan could easily have the district returning to a \$200 million-per-year construction pace if the school board asks for the money and voters and county commissioners approve spending it.

By comparison with earlier efforts, the planning document is a breath of fresh air. It is thorough, clear and packed with data.

It maps out (thus far, without cost data) what it will take to implement the board’s determina-

tion to rid the system of overcrowded schools.

It takes account of board members’ desire to rid the system also of routine dependence on trailer classrooms.

It figures in the cost of 30-year renovations to shield future boards from the crushing fiscal challenge of delayed maintenance.

And its enrollment projection methods have been checked backwards against growth already experienced, and the results have won the concurrence of city and town planners. This time around, there may be no repeat of last year’s embarrassment of having a long-range planning document that concluded that student enrollment would fall, not rise, in the rapidly building-out suburban north.

That said, the document sends an odd message about poor children. Some explanation:

The plan assumes that 2.2% of
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Letters

Let students punch in

To ease your counting students burden, perhaps you should have them punch in. Just like a factory – only a learning factory.

Jo Ann E. Casserly

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Homework assigned

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enrollment each year will be pre-kindergartners, and the plan projects new space for that growing number of children, either at elementaries or at stand-alone pre-K centers.

And when the needs of English language learners were discussed Tuesday night, CMS officials said that by next year they would have in the plan full estimates of the growing numbers of ESL children and the kinds of spaces that schools need to teach ESL children in small groups.

But when it comes to the Equity Plus II schools now serving low-achieving and high-poverty children, the plan projects no increase in the numbers of such schools.

The overall rate of poor children in the district has been growing one or two percentage points annually for a number of years.

And this year, 17 schools already qualify for Equity Plus services but are not getting them for lack of funding. For facilities planning, the key Equity Plus impact is its provision for smaller class sizes.

Assistant Supt. Susan Agruso said at a media briefing Tuesday that there was not a valid statistical method to project overall Equity Plus school needs or the locations where Equity Plus populations would need to be served.

Perhaps so, but a long-range plan that projects no growth in Equity Plus must bank on all newcomers being wealthy; or that the facility projections can be wrong; or that CMS will stop offering at-risk children the additional help they need; or that such children will be redistributed, breaking up the high-poverty schools that qualify for Equity Plus services.

Such a redistribution is sought by People United for Education, a citizens group led by former CMS math teacher Richard McElrath. PUE members have been attending board meetings regularly and

arguing that socioeconomics should be balanced at all schools. They point to Wake County's success with such a policy, and the higher test scores of at-risk children in that district.

But the redistribution also might occur by individual action under the federal No Child Left Behind Act:

More than 800 parents at Title I schools that did not make Annual Yearly Progress for two years in a row opted last summer to transfer out. Parents who remained at such schools this school year had a chance in January to opt out for next year.

The results of those parental decisions may well be known by CMS officials already. They won't be announced until next month.

One of the more startling ele-

ments of Mecklenburg's situation brought out in the the long-range planning exercise was mentioned at a media briefing Tuesday afternoon involving Mike Raible, executive director of facilities planning and real estate.

CMS enrollments have been growing for years, but the rate of growth has risen in the last several years. Raible said the rate of growth was not slowing down, but continuing to rise.

Even in 2030, he said, the best available estimates suggest that the rate of school population growth in Mecklenburg will still be accelerating.

The 10-year plan forecasts a CMS district with 171,785 students in 2014-2015, a 45% increase over last fall's 118,599.

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DidYaHear?

✓ School board member George Dunlap was reporting Tuesday night on a trip to New York City, where he marveled that street-wise kids in the city's new small high schools consistently, if reluctantly, bowed to a dress code of regular pants in blue, black or khaki. Hearing that, board member Kit Cramer swiveled her chair to face Supt. Jim Pughsley and said in a stage whisper, "Let's do it."

✓ A new wrinkle in the Leandro blanket: Seems an Edgecombe County youth was caught with some marijuana last year, and was expelled. The family sued the district, according to the Rocky Mount Telegram, arguing that the Leandro rulings say the student should have been able to choose an alternative placement, but none of the available schools would accept him. The paper said the case has been settled, and school officials say they had no appropriate program for high school students at the time. www.rockymounttelegram.com

✓ As requested, the school board Tuesday approved the naming of a new track at Providence Spring Elementary after a donor. Children's PE classes had been using painted lanes on the main parking lot. Children were forever being scooted out of harm's way as vehicles entered and left the lot. Enter the great uncle of two of the school's students – Irwin Belk, the retired retailer and former UNC track star who gave a track to J.C. Smith University. Great Uncle Irwin donated \$50,000, and the proceeds from the annual "Jump Rope for Heart" campaign were redirected this year to cover the remainder of the \$65,000 cost of a new track elsewhere on the campus. Will schools in less-wealthy neighborhoods have a Great Uncle to step up? Supt. Jim Pughsley called the gift "an exciting opportunity" and offered that "after this example, maybe we will have an opportunity to take a look at other situations as well."

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com

Homework assigned

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Real textbook story

During Tuesday's adoption of textbooks, there was a dustup over whether CMS was steering contracts to McMillan McGraw Hill because of former board member Arthur Griffin's employment with that company. Larry Gauvreau asked for assurance that no CMS employees would get what he called kickbacks, and Pughsley issued such an assurance – twice.

Then George Dunlap disclosed that “during this textbook adoption process there were some

teachers who were invited to dinner by one of the textbook companies and as a result of that were... investigated.”

Board member Vilma Leake described the situation this way:

“I heard that some teachers invited some book people out to dinner so they could negotiate to get a contract and get some books bought by this district, so let it all come out and let us deal with it equitably and deal with it fair.”

Dunlap asked that the board release information on the investigation, as it did when it disciplined a former assistant superintendent. Later Tuesday, the board went into closed session for 90 minutes, ending the session at

12:15 a.m. without further comment on the investigation.

Disciplinary action in such a case would normally fall under state personnel confidentiality rules.

But the real issue in the textbook adoption may have been more related to student learning, and was not discussed.

Committees advising the superintendent on the science adoption were split. And at a key juncture a committee was told that if a science book series preparing students for the upcoming fifth-grade science test covered the elements of the N.C. Standard Course of Study by fifth grade, it didn't

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Teacher turnover: Is it a canary for a leadership problem?

Classroom Teacher Association President Judy Kidd speaking to the school board Tuesday night:

“We need strong, dynamic leaders placed in each school to promote the formation of an environment that is conducive to learning and working, whether you are a student or teacher....

“This is not a one-size-fits all society. We have a leadership problem in certain schools that is, and will continue to be, a primary obstacle to encouraging experienced teachers to voluntarily transfer into and remain in those schools.

“All of the schools needing

attention are not [high]-poverty and low-performing. Check the individual school turnover rates. You will find the schools in need of the leadership change.”



Kidd

Teacher turnover, 2004	ELEMENTARIES	Pct.	ELEMENTARIES	Pct.	MIDDLE	Pct.	HIGH	Pct.
<i>Equity Plus schools in italics</i>	Albemarle Road	19	First Ward	10	Alex. Graham	27	Garinger	29
	Blythe	19	Hidden Valley	10	Northeast	26	Hopewell	26
	Joseph W. Grier	19	Matthews	10	Wilson	26	Berry Academy	26
	Long Creek	19	Pineville	10	Davidson IB	24	Olympic	18
	Prov. Spring	19	Selwyn	10	Sedgefield	24	West Meck	17
	Byers	17	Hunt. Farms	9	Spaugh	24	West Charlotte	16
	Hawk Ridge	17	Lansdowne	9	Ranson	23	Vance	16
	Hornets Nest	17	Morehead	9	Marie G. Davis	22	Myers Park	15
	Lebanon Road	17	Sharon	9	McClintock	22	Independence	15
	Irwin Ave.	16	Endhaven	8	Coulwood	20	East Meck	14
	Lincoln Heights	16	Mountain Island	8	Bradley	19	Northwest	13
	McAlpine	16	Olde Providence	8	Crestdale	19	North Meck	11
	Dilworth	15	Park Road	8	J. T. Williams	18	Providence	10
	Mallard Creek	15	Sedgefield	8	Martin	18	Waddell	8
	Smithfield	15	Eastover	7	Albemarle Rd.	16	South Meck	8
	Statesville Road	15	Elizabeth Lane	7	Piedmont	16	Harding	8
	Montclair	14	Rama Road	7	Carmel	15	Butler	7
	Bain	13	Clear Creek	6	Smith	15		
	Devonshire	13	Tuckaseegee	6	Quail Hollow	14	PRESCHOOL	Pct.
	Sterling	13	Westerly Hills	6	Kennedy	13	Double Oaks	25
	Merry Oaks	12	Barringer	5	Northridge	12	Tryon Hills	21
	Oakhurst	12	Highland Ren.	5	Robinson	11	Amay James	19
	David Cox Road	11	J. H. Gunn	5	Southwest	11	Plaza Road	5
	Eliz. Traditional	11	Piney Grove	5	Alexander	10	Starmount	3
	Greenway Park	11	Oakdale	4	Cochrane	10		
	Idlewild	11	Reedy Creek	3	Eastway	8	SPECIAL	Pct.
	Myers Park Trad.	11	Hickory Grove	2	Randolph	7	Midwood High	44
	Nations Ford	11	Ashley Park	0	South Charlotte	5	Derita	22
	Steele Creek	11	Beverly Woods	0	Mint Hill	2	Morgan	11
	Winterfield	11					Metro	3
	Berryhill	10					Tate/TAPS	0

Homework assigned

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matter if the series didn't exactly follow the grade-level order imposed by the state standards.

How that decision will play out for children moving to new districts within North Carolina is unclear.

Reform in the Big Apple

George Dunlap also reported on a trip to New York City where, on the tab of the Helping Empower Local People organization, he examined some of the Big Apple's new small high schools.

"Small schools have a gradua-

tion rate of 93%," he said, "versus the citywide graduation rate of 68%."

Teachers can't transfer in. They must be interviewed by a committee that includes students and parents.

"All of this is to solicit community buy-in to the school," he said.

"They wanted to make sure everyone was there on a mission and not for a paycheck."

Nurses were assigned to all schools by creating community health clinics in each schoolhouse.

About how the schools handle discipline, Dunlap said he saw "a

lot of the things we used to do that we quit doing.

"There was a big emphasis on in-school suspension. And the bottom line was that students got the message that if you mess up, you're not going to be on the street."

Principals dealt with suspensions up to 10 days. Only the superintendent can suspend for more than 10 days. Those suspended to another location "must earn the right to come back to their regular environment."

Every fight is mediated in New York. "Currently what we do is send both fighters to the alternative school. Then sometimes we have additional fights."



Dunlap

Looking out 10 years: Enrollments vs. paid-for capacity

The draft update of the CMS Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan includes the following estimates of enrollment by grade level. Capacities listed

by year include current space minus mobiles – plus additions and new schools for which money has been appropriated or bonds approved.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND PROJECTIONS FOR 20th DAY THROUGH 2014-2015

	Actual	Projected enrollment									
	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
K	10,023	11,086	10,890	11,214	11,649	12,125	12,621	12,954	13,409	13,897	14,397
1	9,873	10,448	11,534	11,358	11,707	12,127	12,636	13,152	13,503	13,976	14,480
2	9,322	9,865	10,457	11,536	11,359	11,696	12,125	12,636	13,149	13,499	13,971
3	9,007	9,557	10,155	10,797	11,899	11,701	12,043	12,496	13,026	13,550	13,908
4	8,971	9,067	9,628	10,217	10,897	12,016	11,792	12,140	12,598	13,138	13,664
5	8,851	9,022	9,129	9,693	10,282	10,957	12,090	11,866	12,215	12,674	13,217
Elementary	56,047	59,045	61,793	64,815	67,793	70,622	73,307	75,244	77,900	80,734	83,637
<i>Capacity*</i>	47,036	48,764	50,562	52,954	52,998	52,998	52,998	52,998	52,998	52,998	52,998
6	8,891	9,087	9,269	9,392	9,992	10,595	11,272	12,443	12,217	12,578	13,048
7	9,159	9,061	9,256	9,456	9,595	10,203	10,808	11,501	12,700	12,470	12,836
8	9,098	9,191	9,115	9,319	9,509	9,664	10,262	10,875	11,573	12,778	12,548
Middle	27,148	27,339	27,640	28,167	29,096	30,462	32,342	34,819	36,490	37,826	38,432
<i>Capacity*</i>	23,976	26,220	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342	27,342
9	11,041	11,825	11,948	11,909	12,195	12,428	12,605	13,394	14,206	15,117	16,685
10	8,322	8,795	9,435	9,489	9,422	9,608	9,862	9,994	10,607	11,243	11,965
11	7,120	6,835	7,233	7,778	7,886	7,840	7,938	8,158	8,276	8,792	9,314
12	5,900	6,414	6,199	6,542	7,016	7,160	7,090	7,185	7,381	7,488	7,960
High	32,383	33,869	34,815	35,718	36,519	37,036	37,495	38,731	40,470	42,640	45,924
<i>Capacity*</i>	25,780	25,780	28,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780	30,780
K-12 subtotal	115,578	120,253	124,248	128,700	133,408	138,120	143,144	148,794	154,860	161,200	167,993
All Exceptional	3,021	3,117	3,182	3,260	3,339	3,413	3,490	3,566	3,641	3,717	3,792
TOTAL ENROLL.	118,599	123,370	127,430	131,960	136,747	141,533	146,634	152,360	158,501	164,917	171,785

*Capacity in each year includes current space, minus mobiles, plus future construction for which there is already funding.

Magnet achievement: Let the marketing begin

Data released for the first time this week shows 2004 state testing achievement, and one-year

gains in math and reading, for students in partial magnets, with their scores separated from non-

magnet students at the school. Rankings compare all elementary magnets, or all middle magnets.

Elementary, by type

School	Magnet	Reading proficiency				Math proficiency			
		%	Rk.	Gain	Rk.	%	Rk.	Gain	Rk.
First Ward	Accel. Learn.	93.3	9	3.44	28	98.0	7	3.99	25
Hornets Nest	Comm. Arts	77.7	26	5.03	10	87.6	25	4.81	17
Sharon	Comm. Arts	93.2	10	4.60	16	93.2	20	4.40	22
Statesville Rd.	IB	100.0	1	6.83	1	100.0	1	6.97	2
Lansdowne	IB	97.5	3	5.29	7	98.3	5	6.35	6
Paw Creek	IB	94.3	7	4.65	15	98.4	4	5.70	10
Cotswold	IB	97.1	5	4.85	13	94.2	17	4.88	15
Hunt. Farms	IB	93.5	8	4.54	17	94.8	16	4.77	18
Irwin	IB	76.9	27	4.92	11	85.4	26	4.29	23
Smith	Lang. Imm.	88.8	19	4.73	14	96.1	13	5.59	13
Collinswood	Lang. Imm.	93.2	10	3.78	27	97.3	10	4.69	20
Beverly Woods	Lead/GE	91.6	15	5.72	3	97.9	9	6.72	3
Winding Springs	Lead/GE	84.6	21	4.23	21	93.6	19	3.61	27
Tuckaseegee	LI/TD	96.7	6	5.46	5	100.0	1	8.13	1
Idlewild	LI/TD	92.2	13	5.64	4	98.0	7	6.59	4
Lincoln Hts.	LI/TD	91.3	17	3.20	29	96.2	11	6.36	5
Villa Hts.	LI/TD	99.3	2	4.20	22	98.7	3	6.24	7
Barringer	LI/TD	97.2	4	4.13	25	98.3	5	5.69	11
Morehead	M/Sci, Envir.	86.1	20	5.20	8	91.3	22	5.90	8
Park Road	Montessori	91.2	18	4.13	25	95.9	14	4.88	15
Highland Mills	Montessori	84.4	22	4.44	19	93.8	18	4.42	21
Irwin	Open	76.9	27	4.92	11	85.4	26	4.29	23
Oakhurst	Paideia	92.1	14	4.16	24	95.6	15	4.73	19
Sterling	Paideia	79.3	25	6.69	2	84.4	26	3.02	29
Myers Park	Traditional	91.6	15	4.37	20	93.0	21	5.88	9
Elizabeth	Traditional	92.7	12	5.15	9	96.2	11	5.32	14
Druid Hills	Traditional	72.7	29	5.37	6	76.4	29	3.33	28
Univ. Park	Vis/Perf. A.	82.2	23	4.50	18	88.3	23	5.66	12
Dilworth	Vis/Perf. A.	80.7	24	4.18	23	87.9	24	3.99	25

Middle, by type

School	Magnet	%		Rk.		Gain		Rk.	
		%	Rk.	Gain	Rk.	%	Rk.	Gain	Rk.
Carmel	Comm. Arts	89.6	6	3.22	2	94.1	6	5.23	1
Williams	Comm. Arts	82.0	11	2.60	7	86.9	11	3.05	9
Sedgefield	IB	86.5	9	1.52	17	89.7	9	3.63	6
Davidson	IB	99.6	1	3.63	1	100.0	1	2.89	10
Randolph	IB	95.5	3	2.84	4	95.0	5	2.78	12
Albmarle Rd	IB	88.8	7	1.98	16	90.5	8	2.64	14
Ranson	IB	94.3	4	2.51	8	95.6	4	2.02	16
Smith	Lang. Imm.	92.6	5	2.89	3	96.3	3	3.59	7
Kennedy	Leadership	82.0	11	2.62	6	88.6	10	4.16	3
Eastway	Leadership	85.1	10	2.34	10	85.1	13	2.85	11
Cochrane	M/Sci, Envir.	75.6	15	2.19	12	82.6	14	2.66	13
Piedmont	Open	88.0	8	2.69	5	93.3	7	3.87	5
Randolph	Paideia	80.7	13	2.30	11	85.4	12	3.35	8
Piedmont	Pre-AP/IB	95.6	2	2.07	14	97.3	2	4.28	2
Sedgefield	Traditional	72.1	16	2.17	13	77.9	16	3.91	4
Wilson	Traditional	67.8	17	2.50	9	77.5	17	2.21	15
Northwest	Vis./Perf.A	78.8	14	2.02	15	78.0	15	0.75	17

(High school magnet data is to be reported later.)

Data source: CMS

Raising grad standards: How Class of '04 would have shrunk

The N.C. State Board of Education has been holding sessions statewide on plans to raise standards for high school graduation. In March, the board will discuss that feedback and could proceed to approve changes. Any changes would affect students entering ninth grade in 2006-07. Two proposals (Options 2 and 4 below) are on the table.

All options under discussion add a senior project to the graduation requirements for all students covered by the proposals. The proposals do not cover students in the Occupational Course of Study.

Option 2 says a student must pass these five end-of-course tests by senior year: Algebra I, Biology, English I, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History. Four of the five are generally given by 10th grade, and students failing a first test may take it again.

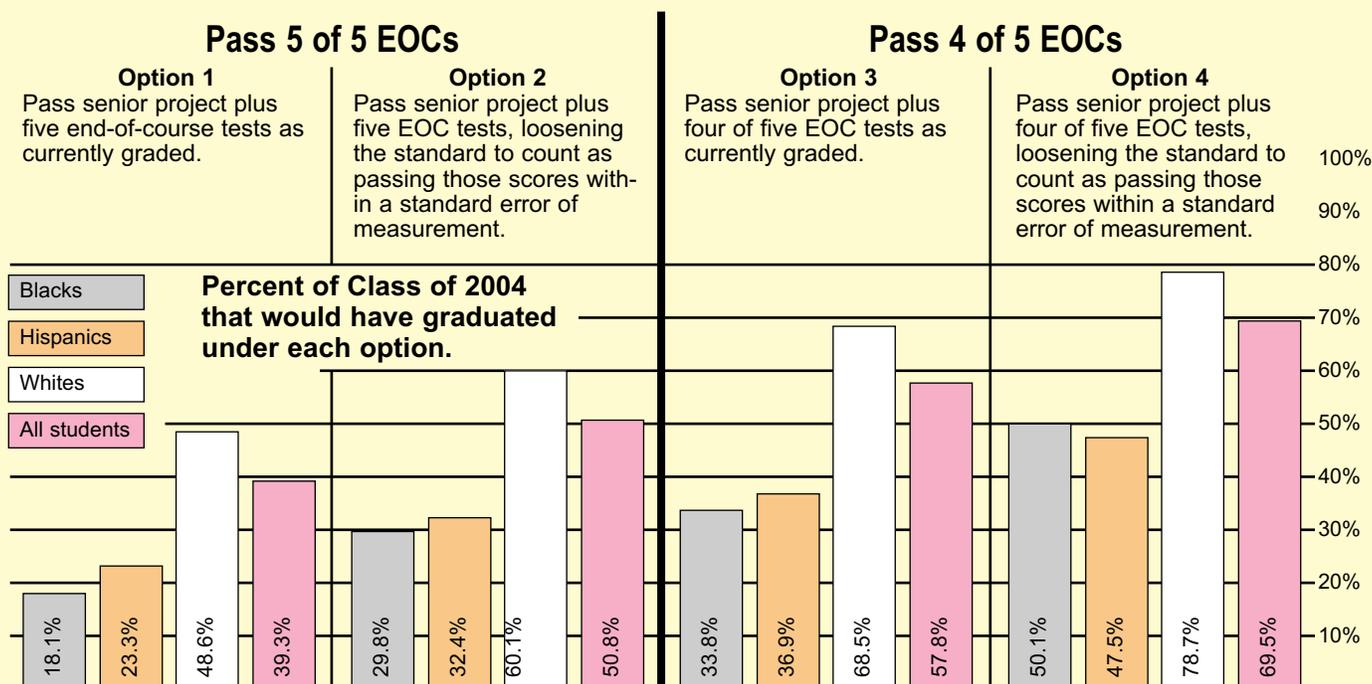
Option 2 below would allow students near the cutoff to pass by lowering the cutoff by one standard error of measurement (SEM), a statistical measure-

ment that the state says would "provide students with a margin of error as a safeguard for attaining proficiency." The effect of applying SEM is to lower the current standard for what it means to be at Level III, or passing, on each EOC.

Looking below at Option 2, then, the proposal, if it had applied to the Class of 2004, would have meant that only 50.8% would have graduated. Only 29.8% of black students would have graduated.

For reference, Option 1 answers this hypothetical question: If students must pass five EOCs using current pass cutoffs, what's the impact? Answer for the Class of 2004: Only 39.3% of the class would have graduated, and only 18.1% of black students.

Option 4 includes senior project and passing only four of five EOCs, at the lower SEM standard. Even then, only 69.5% of the Class of 2004, and only 50.1% of its black students, would have graduated. Option 3 shows the impact of not employing SEM.



- N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction data, from chart in N.C. Forum's Friday Report, Feb. 4, 2005, www.ncforum.org

Training lay leaders

The N.C. Justice Center in Raleigh plans its 2005 Education Leadership Institute for four days in March and April.

The institute is "an education advocacy training program created out of a belief that informed knowledgeable parents and community members are essential to making public education the best that it can be for all students."

Topics include federal and state laws relating to school issues; suspension policies; developments in the Leandro lawsuit, and tips for parents on making the most of parent-teacher conferences.

Daylong sessions are scheduled for March 19, April 1, April 2 and April 16. Sessions will be held in the Research Triangle.

Applications are available at www.ncjustice.org. Fax forms to 919-856-2175., or e-mail sheria@ncjustice.org, marking subject line "ELI registration."

How to reduce teacher turnover

Task force offers list of initiatives to cut losses in N.C. classrooms

The N.C. General Assembly instructed the State Board of Education to convene a task force to identify impediments to the "effective recruitment and retention of teachers for public schools of North Carolina." The directive followed a period in which 10,000 teachers had departed N.C. schools, at a replacement cost of \$112 million.

The task force headed by Jane Norwood, vice chair of the state board, met from September through January. Excerpts from the report:

Many local school systems are struggling to fill classrooms with qualified teachers. Retirement, increases in student population, efforts to reduce class size, competition with higher-paying private sector positions, and working conditions have created a demand for teachers that far exceeds the supply.

In recent years, North Carolina has hired approximately 10,000 new teachers annually. Our colleges and universities produce approximately 3,000 new teachers annually, of which roughly two-thirds begin teaching in North Carolina within one year of graduation. The remaining new hires come from other states or enter the classroom through alternate routes (e.g., lateral entry).

Teacher turnover costs North Carolina economically and in terms of the quality of education possible for our children. Seven thousand (7,000) teachers employed in March 2003 did not return to the public schools during the 2003-04 school year. An additional, 3,000 teachers returned but were not employed in March 2004. The cost of replacing these 10,000 teachers is estimated at over \$112 million....

Teacher turnover also affects our children's opportunities to succeed in a stable learning environment. While the costs to change the status quo may be substantial, the costs of doing nothing will be even greater....

Recommendations

Planning Time

1. The State Board of Education should seek statutory change and required funding to ensure that every teacher has a guaranteed (protected) planning block period of a minimum of 5 hours per week, which includes both individual and common planning time. This is particularly problematic at the elementary school level.

2. The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission should be asked to identify and disseminate information on best practice (innovative/validated) models of scheduling teacher time for planning, collaborating with colleagues and par-

ents, and professional development.

Instructional Time

3. Class size should not exceed the legislated class size averages. The composition of classes (i.e., students with special needs) should be considered in determining class size. Teachers should be involved in decisions about the placement of students in classes.

4. The State Board of Education should review, and as appropriate, seek legislative changes related to class size to reflect increasing accountability of teachers and schools. Class size figures should reflect actual enrollment and not the allotment figures. Current allotments, which include special subject teachers in addition to classroom teacher are not accurate reflections for individual class sizes and are not sufficient. Allotment formulas should be differentiated by school level.

Instructional Materials and Supplies, including Technology

5. The State Board of Education should review and, as appropriate, seek revisions to the funding allotments for textbooks and instructional materials and supplies to reflect current cost levels and teacher needs. Student economic levels should be considered in the allotments. Allotment policies should include special funding to support the collateral costs of new teaching positions, new classes, and new schools.

6. The State Board of Education should review teacher access to technology hardware, software, and support. Based on this review, the State Board of Education should seek funding, as needed, to ensure that all teachers, regardless of geographic or socioeconomic factors, have access to the hardware and software needed for quality instructional programs and have adequate technical support and training in its use.

School Improvement Teams

7. School Improvement Teams should be viable, working groups. The State Board of Education should ensure that the statutory requirements in G.S. § 115C-105.27 for School Improvement Teams are adhered to and that teacher membership on the teams is constituted as specified in the law.

Compensation for Additional Responsibilities

8. Teachers who have leadership responsibilities (e.g., grade level chair, School Improvement Team [SIT] chair or member) should be compensated through released time and/or additional pay.

National Board Certified Teachers

9. The State Board of Education should seek a change in the statute... that requires National Board Certified (NBC) Teachers to work in the class-

N.C. teacher turnover

for the State Board of Education by June 2005.

Assessments

20. The State Board of Education should identify and adopt alternative assessments or options for the Preprofessional Skills Tests (Praxis I) required for admission to teacher education programs.

21. The State Board of Education should consider options to the Praxis II (specialty area) tests for teacher licensure. This may include other standardized tests or alternative assessments.

Funding for Programs

22. At a minimum, the State Board of Education should seek reinstatement of funding for mentors for all beginning teachers for their first three years of teaching. Additionally, the State Board of Education should seek funding for a full-time mentor program at a ratio of 1 mentor per 15 beginning teachers. All beginning teachers, regardless of funding source, should be included in the allotment. While local systems should have the flexibility to design mentoring programs that best meet their needs, the State Board should establish guidelines for local systems to receive funding for the full-time mentoring programs.

23. The State Board of Education should seek funding for a full-time Initial Licensure Program Coordinator at the LEA level.

Best Practices

24. The Department of Public Instruction should disseminate information on best practices in mentoring. This should include effective practices being implemented in North Carolina (e.g., NCCAT's Connections Program), as well as national models such as the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project and the Milken Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

Accountability

25. The State Board of Education should revise the Initial Licensure Program Annual Report to focus on measures of the impact of the programs on teacher retention.

needed to support the program and any policy changes that would be needed to pilot the programs.

Preparation, Induction, and Continued Professional Development

12. The standards for the Masters in School Administration (MSA) programs should be reviewed to ensure that appropriate competencies related to teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluations, teacher support programs, teacher leadership, teacher empowerment, and teacher retention are included and emphasized.

13. The State Board of Education should ask the Center for School Leadership Development to offer training for principals related to the principal's role in teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluations, teacher support programs, teacher leadership, teacher empowerment, and teacher retention.

14. The State Board of Education should revise the license renewal requirements ... to require school administrators to earn at least 5 renewal credits during each renewal cycle focused on the principal's role in teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluations, teacher support programs, teacher leadership, teacher empowerment, and teacher retention.

15. The State Board of Education should seek funding for and require that beginning school administrators be provided mentors.

Evaluation

16. The State Board of Education should ensure that principals are evaluated annually as specified in G.S. § 115C-333 and revise the standards for the evaluations of school administrators (SBE Policy QP-C-006) to include accountability measures of teacher retention, teacher empowerment, teacher leadership, and school climate. This will require revision of the evaluation instruments currently approved by the State Board of Education for this purpose.

Time/Workload

17. The State Board of Education should direct the Department of Public Instruction to review the allotment formula for assistant principals to ensure that principals have sufficient time to support teachers. Representative stakeholders should be consulted in the review. The results of the review and recommendations for any needed changes should be brought to the State Board of Education by April 2005.

Recruitment and Marketing

18. The State Board of Education should coordinate the development of a comprehensive statewide recruitment and marketing plan for teaching in North Carolina. The plan should include additional funding, both in the number of scholarships awarded and the amount of the scholarships, for current scholarship/loan programs, funding for additional scholarship/loan programs, and expanded funding for the Teacher Cadet Program.

Current teacher scholarship programs include;

- the Prospective Teacher Scholarship Loan Program;
- the Teaching Fellows Program;
- the Teacher Assistant Scholarship Loan Program; and
- the Teacher Assistant Scholarship Fund Program.

Additional programs might be targeted to include:

- Lateral entry teachers;
- Community college students transitioning to four year institutions to pursue teacher education programs; and
- College juniors and seniors majoring in teacher education.

Student Teaching

19. Consideration should be given to expanding the student teaching component of teacher preparation programs. Options may include a full-year of student teaching with pay or a paid residency program during the first year of teaching in which the teacher works under the direction of a master teacher. The Department of Public Instruction should prepare a feasibility study

Ky. lessons on what helps close gaps

“Inside the Black Box of High-Performing High-Poverty Schools,” a report from the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in Lexington, Kentucky, compared eight high-achieving, high-poverty elementary schools with eight low-achieving, high-poverty schools. An excerpt from the report:

Unanticipated Results

The characteristics of the eight high-performing schools will not surprise those who have followed successful schools research over the years.

We have long known the importance of high expectations for students, a supportive culture, a strong academic focus, attention to student performance data, and competent teachers who believe in the students. From a practical standpoint, the problem has been deciphering ways to spread these characteristics to most schools rather than only a few.

But our research did turn up some unexpected findings. Some of these findings were unexpected because of what prior research has found about high-performing, high-poverty schools. Others were unexpected because we had not anticipated that these schools would, as a group, perform poorly in certain areas. The main unexpected results were:

- The “leadership factor” did not emerge in the precise manner that we had expected.

- The high-performing schools did not score particularly well on following state-recommended practices for planning, documentation, and school-based decision-making (SBDM).

- Schools did not score well on the use of technology.

- The districts did not play as strong a role as we anticipated, although this varied from one district to another.

Leadership. We discussed earlier the fact that the principals of

the eight schools had very different leadership styles, but all were collaborative in their approaches to decision-making. The principals of the eight study schools mostly lacked big egos, instead channeling their energies toward the vision of academic success for the students in their schools.

Interestingly, four of the principals were male and four were female; four were under the age of 40 with 4-5 years of experience as principals; the other four were veterans who had led their schools for more than 15 years.

What surprised us was not these facts but the realization that when we compared the audits of the eight high-performing schools with a comparison set of low-performing schools, Standard 7 (leadership) was one of only two standards where there was no statistical difference between the schools’ performance.

This does not mean the high-performing schools did not do well on this standard. In fact, three of the eight schools earned the high-

est ratings of 3s and 4s on the leadership standard; three others earned 3s and 4s on 10 of the 11 indicators under the leadership standard; another school earned 3s and 4s on 9 of the 11 indicators. At only one school were the leadership ratings almost evenly split between 1s/2s and 3s/4s.

What we found intriguing was that the ratings of low-performing schools on leadership did not differ appreciably from those of high-performing schools. What can this mean, given the extensive research findings over the years that have underscored the pivotal role of the principal in a school’s success?

We suggest three possibilities:

- First, the audit instrument itself implies a role for principals that may not contribute as strongly to student success as initially believed.

- Of the five high-performing schools that earned a rating of 1 or 2 under leadership, four earned these low ratings for indicators

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The middle school reading list: Any there there?

Mark Bauerlein, director of research at the National Endowment for the Arts, and Sandra Stotsky, a Northeastern University researcher, in “Why Johnny Can’t Read” in the Washington Post:

“At the middle school level, the kind of quality literature that might appeal to boys has been replaced by Young Adult Literature, that is, easy-to-read, short novels about teenagers and problems such as drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, domestic violence, divorced parents and bullying. Older literary fare has also been replaced by something called ‘culturally relevant’ literature – texts that appeal to students’ ethnic group identification on the assumption that sharing the leading character’s ethnicity will motivate them to read.

“There is no evidence whatsoever that either of these types of reading fare has turned boys into lifelong readers or learners. On the contrary, the evidence is accumulating that by the time they go on to high school, boys have lost their interest in reading about the fictional lives, thoughts and feelings of mature individuals in works written in high-quality prose, and they are no longer motivated by an exciting plot to persist in the struggle they will have with the vocabulary that goes with it.”

– www.washingtonpost.com

Closing gaps

Continued from Page 11

having to do with whether the principal had a growth plan that focused on building leadership skills, and/or how effectively the principal was implementing school-based decision making (SBDM). Only one school earned low ratings for leadership indicators connected to curriculum, assessment, or instruction.

– A second possibility is that the recent push under standards-based reform for principals to serve as instructional leaders may undervalue other, equally effective leadership styles. We would classify five or six of the eight principals as instructional leaders. However, at two schools (and possibly a third), principals were mostly building managers and motivators; there were others in the building who provided instructional leadership.

At one school, this leadership came from a team of teachers. At the other, the assistant principal filled that role. At the third school, the principal provided the vision and motivation, but an assistant principal did most of the instructional leadership.

The one school where a team of teachers provided instructional leadership was the one that scored lowest on leadership on the audit. Here, everyone acknowledged that the principal played the role of manager, leaving academics and instruction to the teachers.

To us, the audit instrument assumes that a certain style of leadership is necessary for school success, but it is possible that different types of leadership may be needed at different times in a school's evolution or development.

Perhaps a strong instructional leader is needed to help move a low-performing school to higher levels of achievement. But once that is accomplished, perhaps a more managerial approach is appropriate as long as there are others in the building who can provide instructional leadership.

Prichard Committee Report

– A third possible explanation is that leadership is necessary but not sufficient to bring about academic success for all students.

All of the successful schools we visited had numerous programs, practices, and beliefs in place that seemed to contribute to the schools' success; none of the audit teams gave full or even most of the credit for success to principals.

It was much more common to hear of a combination of factors that contributed; specifically, those characteristics discussed earlier: a culture of high expecta-

'... the recent push under standards-based reform for principals to serve as instructional leaders may undervalue other, equally effective leadership styles.'

tions, a supportive and caring environment, high-quality teachers, collaborative decision-making, focus on academics, regular assessment of individual students.

Of course, effective leaders have a lot to do with putting these conditions in place. But at three schools, at least, some audit team members believed the culture was strong enough to withstand an impending change in principals.

One team member, when asked if a change in leadership might interrupt the school's progress, responded:

"No, there are too many teacher leaders. Changing the principal is not going to faze them. It would take a lot of major changes before they would be hurt."

Planning, documentation, and school-based decision making. Although the study schools performed well overall on the audit, we found that they did less well on following the state-

recommended planning process (known as the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, or CSIP). They also tended to score lower on implementing the formal decision-making structure and process mandated in Kentucky, school-based decision-making (SBDM).

When we asked audit team members if there were any areas in which the study schools did not perform particularly well, comprehensive planning and SBDM were mentioned frequently.

At the same time, audit team members often qualified their remarks by saying that the planning and decision-making processes used by the schools seemed to work, but those processes did not fit the description outlined in the audit. One team leader explained:

"You would expect with all these great things going on – time, resources, efficiency, everything clicking – you would think there would be a great model of documentation and scheduling. That was not there, not nearly to the degree that it was functioning.

"But after being there and going through it, I don't know if I can criticize it because what was going on was working. It was an efficiency thing, I guess, from their point of view. Taking time to write it all down takes time away from doing it. That was kind of the sense we got."

Another team member made a similar statement:

"Their CSIP was not exemplary but yet their school was. They are planning, but it did not get captured in that document, not formally."

Yet a third audit team member remarked:

"Both of these schools [that she audited] have apparently spent more time in the actual implementation of their school mission than they have in writing SBDM policies and formal documentation of CSIP action plan reviews. In the past, other schools may have had model written SBDM policies and CSIP documentation,

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school was succeeding in spite of the district. Again, we found the opposite. Here, the principal and teachers took full advantage of the resources the district had to offer, and there were several.

A district resource teacher, who was assigned to the school several days a week, helped analyze data, facilitated teacher meetings, and helped out in other ways the school identified. Numerous professional development opportunities, as well as assessment tools, were available through the district.

The combined statements of audit team members who visited this school provide details:

“The district had a really powerful role in terms of working with curriculum and training leadership and offering all kinds of things. I was very impressed with district leadership. Their district office provided a lot of tools and resources. There was an assessment piece on the computer for them to take their own teacher-made assessments and plug them into the state assessment model. The district resource teacher, they depended on her a lot.”

If there was a common thread that ran through the data regarding the district role, it may have been that principals and teachers at these schools had learned to use district resources, professional development, and other supports.

At schools in the larger districts where one might expect that the bureaucracy could be a hindrance, we found that principals and teachers mostly used the tools and resources that were available instead of perceiving them as irritating bureaucratic requirements.

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“Inside the Black Box of High-Performing High-Poverty Schools” was written by Patricia Kannapel and Stephen Clements, with Diana Taylor and Terry Hibpshman. Published February 2005 with funding from the Ford Foundation.

Download the full report at www.prichardcommittee.org

Closing gaps

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but did not appear to be doing much of it in the classrooms.

“I guess if they have to choose where to spend their time and effort, they have made the correct choice. Hopefully, they can put the policies and documentation into place to enhance what they already have going for them. That should continue to strengthen their program along with their accountability.”

Technology. Audit team members also told us that most of the high-performing schools did not use technology as effectively as they might have, either in the classroom or for other purposes.

One audit item measured whether teachers were incorporating technology into instruction. Six of the eight schools were rated at 2 on this item. One audit team member commented:

“Technology is used for drill, practice, and reinforcement. One teacher was able to discuss innovative ways of teaching math with spreadsheets. The school technology coordinator knew little about the school technology plan [typically an element of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan].”

At a different school, an audit team member spoke of how little use the school made of technology for keeping records:

“Teachers still fill out handwritten attendance reports and the principal collects them room-to-room rather than having them on each teacher’s computer to send to the office. Then someone has to input everything. They don’t use [technology] for grades and parent reports....They don’t have electronic lesson planning.”

These findings suggest that technology may not be a necessary ingredient to school success. This is not to say that effective use of technology would not enhance what the schools are doing. But clearly, these schools were successful in student

‘... you would think there would be a great model of documentation and scheduling. That was not there... but ... I don’t know if I can criticize it because what was going on was working. It was an efficiency thing, I guess, from their point of view. Taking time to write it all down takes time away from doing it....’

achievement even with somewhat limited use of technology.

District role. We expected when we started this research that we would learn something about the role that the district plays in school success.

Some of the schools we selected are in districts that have several high-performing, high-poverty schools. Here, in particular, we expected to find a strong district role.

What we found, however, was that the district role was quite varied; and that district influence was somewhat less direct than direct than we anticipated.

We expected that the district was playing a strong role in one school because of district-wide high performance, but we found just the opposite.

An audit team member who visited this school stated:

“A surprise element, one that stuck out, was that there did not seem to be as much district initiative in terms of instruction, curriculum, bringing together schools. They kind of left it up to the schools to do things.”

In another district that had many low-performing, high-poverty schools and only a few successful ones, we wondered if the

Briefly...

Carrots: Teachers in Waseca, Minn. are now receiving extra training and mentoring support, Minnesota Public Radio reported. The hope is that not only will students perform better, but teachers will be compensated as well. A nationwide initiative by the Milken Family Foundation has given the district \$2.6 million for two years to experiment with how the mentoring and rigorous evaluation affects students' test scores. If test scores improve, teachers receive bonuses. Teachers appear to have mixed reactions to the new policy. Some are seeking to improve their education, while others don't think money should be the incentive for them to do their best work.

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org>

Texas showdown: Last September, the Texas education financing system was declared unconstitutional and unless a new finance system can be agreed upon by October, District Court Judge John Dietz will shut down Texas schools, Stateline.org reported. Currently, Texas relies mainly on property taxes to support its schools, which means that low-income communities receive less funding. Sixteen other states are in the midst of similar litigation, including North Carolina.

www.stateline.org

Tough recruit: Despite salaries ranging above \$300,000, urban districts are finding it difficult to find and keep superintendents, the Indianapolis Star reported. Buffalo, Cincinnati and Fresno are among school districts with superintendent vacancies. Some experts say districts should start growing their own.

www.indystar.com

Bilingual ed: At the National Association for Bilingual Education's annual conference, many speakers denounced portions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Education Week

Calendar

FEBRUARY

- 10** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center 11th floor conference room.
- 14** School board's Policy Committee, 8:45 a.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 16** Partners in School Reform, 8 a.m., Charlotte Chamber Belk Action Center. Topic: Behavior in Schools. Guests include CMS School Board Safety Committee Chair George Dunlap and CMS Alternative Programs exec. Ralph Taylor.
- 16** School board's Safety Committee, 3:30 p.m., Board Room, Education Center.
- 17** School board's Personnel Committee, 2 p.m., Side B Board Room, Education Center.
- 17** Parent meeting on comprehensive review of student assignment plan, Highland Renaissance Elementary, 6-8 p.m., Subject: Fundamentals and guiding principles.
- 22** School board's Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 22** School board meets, 6 p.m., Government Center Meeting Chamber.
- 24** School board's Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 26** Let's Talk R.A.C.E. Conference focusing on "Language, Culture and Education," 9 a.m.-4 p.m., UNC Chapel Hill. Speakers: Lisa Delpit, Enrique Murillo. For information and for online registration, see www.unc.edu/sites/ltr

MARCH

- 16-18** Quad State Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Conference, Adam's Mark Hotel. Keynote: Scott Syphax, CEO of Sacramento's Nehemiah Corp. of America. Registration: \$75 for 3 days; \$40 for one day, by March 1; scholarships available. Info: Renee Thompson at 704-336-2424 or rthompson@ci.charlotte.nc.us
- 23** What's Working Community Forum, 7:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., TIAA-CREF Auditorium, sponsored by Charlotte Chamber. To participate: Kit Cramer, 704-378-1301.
- 24** Parent meeting on comprehensive review of student assignment plan, Ranson Road Middle, 6-8 p.m. Subject: Magnet programs.

APRIL

- 19** Parent meeting on comprehensive review of student assignment plan, Waddell High. Waddell High. Subject: Boundaries and feeder patterns.

reported. Attendees were urged to oppose relying on test scores because it undermined bilingual education.

www.edweek.org

Dropouts: A study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago found that only 54% of students entering Chicago high schools in 2000 graduated in

2004, the Chicago Tribune reported. Although the Chicago public schools report a 71% graduation rate, the study shows that Chicago reports miss transfer students who drop out. Chicago schools chief Arne Duncan was quoted as saying, "Whatever the numbers are, it really doesn't matter.... One child dropping out is one child too many."

www.chicagotribune.com