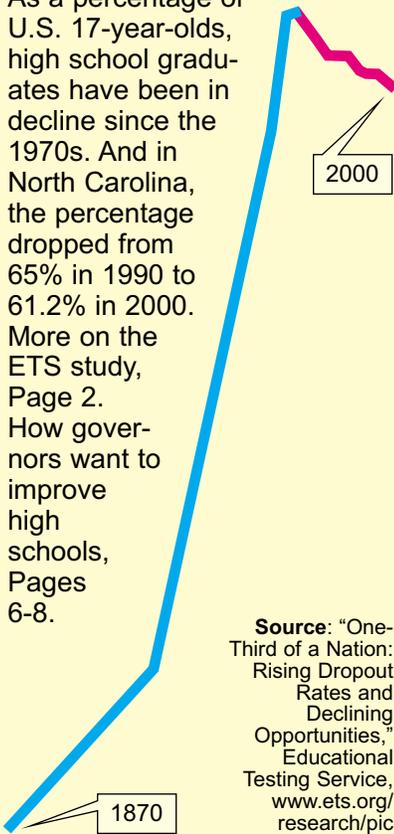


High school graduation

As a percentage of U.S. 17-year-olds, high school graduates have been in decline since the 1970s. And in North Carolina, the percentage dropped from 65% in 1990 to 61.2% in 2000. More on the ETS study, Page 2. How governors want to improve high schools, Pages 6-8.



Source: "One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities," Educational Testing Service, www.ets.org/research/pic

Quality matters

Superintendent recounts how children gain or are set back over time by quality of teachers

Teacher quality is the gold standard, and pursuing it is the first line of defense in raising student achievement, CMS board members were told last week.

In what may prove to be a run-up to March testimony before state judge overseeing the Leandro school adequacy lawsuit, Supt. Jim Pughsley and his staff laid out last week a defense of factors they have long believed are key to student achievement.

And charts released by the district last week (Page 3) back up the notion that teacher quality, as measured by six common standards, tends to be higher at low-poverty schools, and much lower at high-poverty schools.

Pughsley caused a firestorm among some teachers when he proposed assigning experienced

teachers to high-poverty schools where experienced teachers would not volunteer to transfer.

Last week as part of the school board's comprehensive review of student assignment, administrators shared with the board a number of indicators of teacher quality.



Pughsley

District 6 board member Lee Kindberg noted that some high-poverty schools are making adequate yearly progress and doing quite well despite any challenges their

children face. Conversely, some low-poverty schools are not making AYP, the mandate under No Child Left Behind to make quick progress toward having 100% of students on grade level by 2014.

Kindberg asked if there were correlations between schools performing well and teacher factors. Staff tried to sidestep the question but Pughsley took it on:

"There are some definite relationships between performance of the school and the quality of teachers. If you define quality in terms of experience, advanced degrees and a few other factors, there is no doubt there is a relationship.

"We were fortunate enough this weekend," Pughsley said at the last board meeting Feb. 22, "by way of the Broad Institute to get a front seat in that regards, as to what the research says about having quality teachers in place, having that critical mass in place in a school, and how that makes a dif-

'Where are the pulpit greats?'

Whatever happened to the Myers Park pulpit greats?

That, says Myers Park Methodist senior minister James Howell, is a question he's often been asked in his first two years.

Charlotte has a reputation of having had, during the 1960s through the 1980s, a group of pastors, some in Myers Park, who spoke out and were "in the vanguard of leadership for the city."

Today, says Howell, "we are being as big as we know how to be." But in a "help-me-think-this-out" meditation to a Wednesday



Howell

night group studying the church's role in the city, Howell said there's more to the story.

These days, when preachers speak out on social, community or political issues, "we get dinged pretty hard.... I do it on a Sunday and I pay during the week," he said to laughter.

He said the criticisms were coming from his own congregants.

"Any time I say something" on political or social issues, "someone comes up to me and says, 'You cannot abuse the pulpit'....

"Who decided that?... All of us find ourselves in this new atmosphere where that is not supposed to be talked about.... The city is

Continued on Page 4

Continued on Page 9

Third of U.S. teens never walk across a stage with a diploma

A new report punches home the data: A third of America's high school students never graduate, and completion rates vary widely among the states. About 58% of that variance can be accounted for by family socioeconomics, the number of parents at home and children's frequency of changing schools, according to the report.

Written for the Educational Testing Service by Paul Barton, the study focuses on the rising high school dropout rates, the "increasingly dire prospects for dropouts in today's economy," and successful retention efforts. Among them:

- Alternative schools like CMS's Derita Alternative.
- A Talent Development High School model similar to CMS's Transition 9 program.
- Quantum Opportunities

Program, funded for six years ending in 2001 by the Department of Labor, had many aspects of the current CMS High School Challenge services for at-risk teens, but cost \$2,500 per student per year, and offered 24/7 counseling or mentoring support. CMS's Challenge will spend about \$400 per year per student at the three high schools.

Barton figured dropout rates by totaling private and public school diplomas in 1990 and 2000, and dividing by a weighted number of 17- and 18-year-olds reported in those Census years.

Download the full report from www.ets.org/research/pic/onethird.pdf

Between 1990 and 2000, only seven states saw an increase in overall graduation rates, according to the ETS study. Data begins below.

	'90	'00	Diff.
VT			
CA			
UT			
CT			
MD			
WV			
RI			
VA			
KY			
PA			
MA			
TX			
NJ			
AL			
U.S.	72.0	69.6	-2.4
NY			
FL			
LA			
IL			
MS			
NB			
MO			
NC			
GA			
AR			
WI			
SD			
OH			
AL			
KS			
ND			
WA			
ID			
NM			
MI			
IO			
OK			
NV			
IN			
OR			
SC			
ME			
WY			
TN			
MN			
AR			
HA			
CO			
MT			
DE			
DC			
NH			
Illinois	74.6	71.8	-2.8
Indiana	73.8	67.7	-6.1
Iowa	89.7	83.9	-5.8
Kansas	78.9	74.3	-4.6
Kentucky	71.1	70.8	-0.3
Louisiana	66.5	63.9	-2.6
Maine	87.9	80.0	-7.9
Maryland	76.1	79.6	3.5
Mass.	75.4	74.4	-1.0
Michigan	74.7	69.0	-5.7
Minnesota	90.6	81.8	-8.8
Mississippi	62.2	59.3	-2.9
Missouri	76.1	72.4	-3.7
Montana	89.2	79.1	-10.1
Nebraska	86.8	83.7	-3.1
Nevada	66.4	60.4	-6.0
New Hamp.	81.5	68.4	-13.1
New Jersey	84.8	82.7	-2.1
New Mexico	72.8	67.2	-5.6
New York	67.8	65.3	-2.5
No. Carolina	65.0	61.2	-3.8
North Dakota	88.2	83.5	-4.7
Ohio	80.9	76.6	-4.3
Oklahoma	77.9	72.1	-5.8
Oregon	72.3	65.8	-6.5
Pennsylvania	77.7	76.7	-1.0
Rhode Island	62.4	63.2	0.8
So. Carolina	65.2	57.7	-7.5
South Dakota	81.6	77.3	-4.3
Tennessee	69.4	61.2	-8.2
Texas	68.9	67.7	-1.2
Utah	68.6	73.2	4.6
Vermont	65.1	88.2	23.1
Virginia	71.5	71.4	-0.1
Washington	76.3	71.3	-5.0
West Virginia	77.7	79.8	2.1
Wisconsin	83.4	79.1	-4.3
Wyoming	86.1	78.1	-8.0

Source: "One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities," Educational Testing Service, www.ets.org/research/pic

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People: Leonard R. (Deacon) Jones, president; Lucy Bush Carter, vice president; Steve Johnston, executive director and *Educate!* editor. Assisting with this edition: Stephanie Southworth.

Do high-poverty schools get their share?

CMS releases data and charts tracking key teacher quality issues for all schools

CMS last week released information for all schools related to six indicators used to track teacher quality.

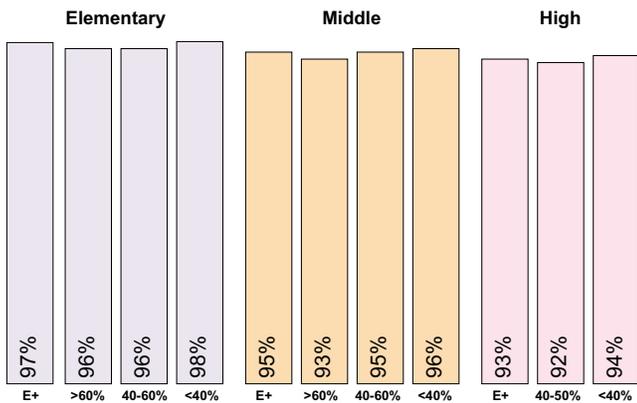
Annual January equity reports listed such data only for high-poverty Equity Plus II schools. The lack of comparable data for low-poverty schools raised questions from CMS's Equity Committee.

In raw data and in charts, administrators sorted schools by level – elementary, middle and high school – and then by level of poverty, using data for percent-

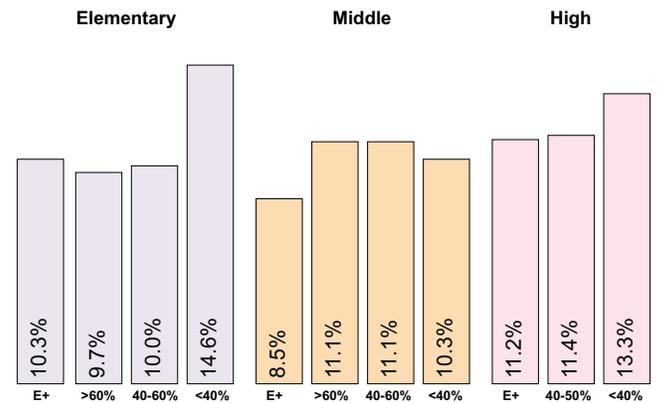
age of students on subsidized lunch. Equity Plus II (E+) schools are so designated for a variety of reasons but, as a group, they are the district's highest-poverty schools. The second category in the bar charts below, marked >60%, includes non-E+ schools at greater than 60% subsidized lunch.

The overall results in chart form are below. Raw data for all schools will be published in the next edition of Educate!

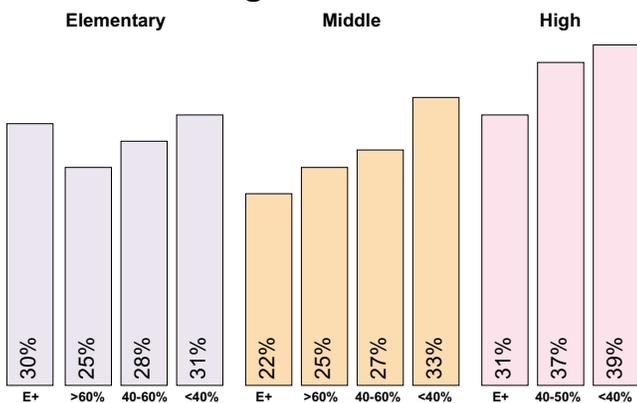
Clear licensure



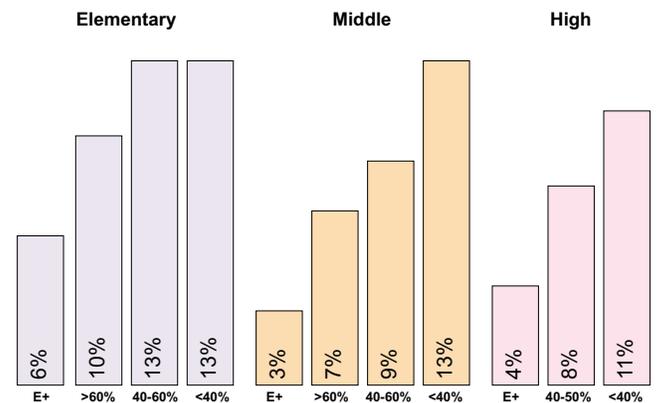
Average experience



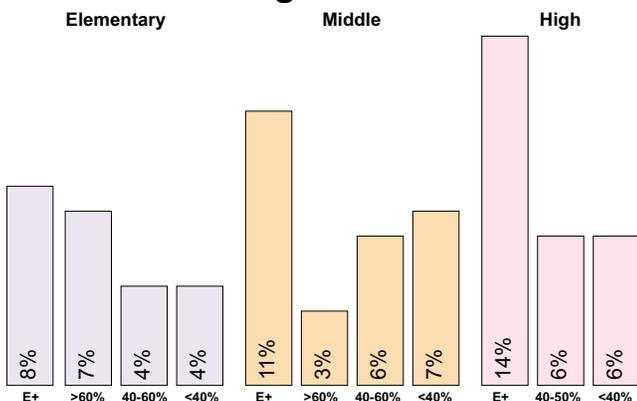
Advanced degrees



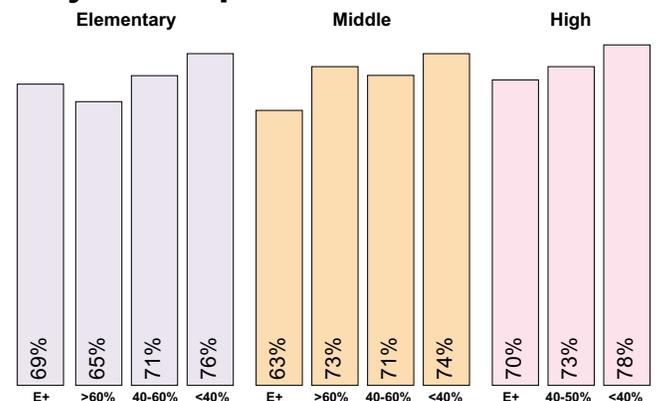
National Board Certification



New to teaching



5+ years experience



Pulpits

Continued from Page 1

always well served by cultivating an atmosphere where it is expected that preachers will speak out.”

One church member Wednesday jokingly said a friend refers to Myers Park Methodist as the Church of the Almighty Dollar. But he said homeless people sheltered at the church overnight have rated Methodists as among the most generous.

Howell early in his talk acknowledged the wealth of the stone landmark at Providence and Queens Roads. But he added that the church is “stunningly beautiful, and that is no small thing” because it acts as a reminder of the sacred to thousands of daily commuters.

The church is known as welcoming, maybe even “the least stuffy” of the wealthy neighborhood’s congregations.

But Howell added that his bishop “told me to come here with a specific task in mind.” He did not elaborate. He last served at Davidson United Methodist.

Howell said he’s learned that what he called do-gooder groups call him early in their work, expecting the church to help out, which it often does. Other churches “with fewer resources look to us.”

But Howell’s meditation raised questions for his audience, and indirectly for his whole congregation.

– “Are we humble or not?”

– “Is God glorified by our existence? Do we do church in a way that might make less-churched people less cynical about church?”

– The church is beginning to study public school issues, “but we have many children in our church who go to private schools.”

– Many people are tired of talking about race, but many blacks still experience discrimination “in a painful way and look to folks like us. Would the city be better if we were offering some healing?...”

“If our witness is not very rich and positive and highly visible

DidYaHear?

✓ “My favorite [CMS] rule I heard lately is that people cannot bring fruits and vegetables from their gardens because they might be adulterated with chemicals, but the same items from BiLo and Food Lion are OK.”

✓ Wake County has been annually reassigning students since 1995. This year’s proposed batch includes 2,279 students, down from last year’s record 7,738. And while the reassignments are to populate new schools, ease overcrowding and maintain diversity, most of the discussion seems to be on growth. The district even calls its administrator a director of growth management. By one estimate, only a fifth of this year’s reassignments are to balance schools by socioeconomics or to prevent isolating low-achieving students. The rest are to ease overcrowding or populate new schools or the modulars Wake builds pending brick-and-mortar.

✓ Speaking of Wake, the county’s annual education summit on April 28 will focus on “ways to recruit, develop, retain and support highly qualified educators for all our schools.”

✓ “Racial and economic discrimination, no matter how you downplay it or hide it, create two worlds which too many of our children recognize and refuse to accept. They have created their own world, parallel to and but diametrically opposed to ours. As much as it is counterproductive, it serves a purpose for many of them and they fall victim to society’s horrible forces, from violent youth gangs to skilled marketers who sell them tennis shoes for hundreds of dollars, and sugar water by the gallon. Until we re-establish communication with our children, we will always watch as their self-destructive efforts to make sense of the madness that we call America bring too many of them to ruin.”

– Charlotte writer John Minter at www.beattiesfordroad.com

✓ The New Schools Project is creating small high schools. The State Board was asked Wednesday to approve a waiver to allow one such project in Davidson County to be led by someone not certified as a principal. The board directed that the waiver be specific to the Davidson case. Administrators said state law requires the board to approve such waivers, but board chair Howard Lee said the documentation needed “a little more praying over.”

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com

and highly energized, we are failing,” he said.

Wednesday, the group heard Museum of the New South historian Tom Hanchett lay out the thesis of his book, “Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975.” The 1998 work shows how an integrated town was deliberately segregated in the years after 1900 through both private and public action. The pre-segregation town saw races living together, with work and home sometimes in the same building. Today’s mixed-use devel-

opments, like popular Phillips Place or Birkdale Village, are a return to an earlier urban model.

“We are building a new city,” Hanchett said, “and we can choose to make it a city where people come together.”

Next Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., Winthrop University political scientist Steve Smith and Providence United Methodist’s Rev. Bill Jeffries take on the topic, “Education’s future, the business community and Myers Park UMC: How can we prepare our children for the city of Charlotte?”

Beyond the Balanced Scorecard

Report offers way to sift data for the right questions

After decades of hearing it, most Americans get the meaning of the Cost of Living Index. Most understand what the Dow Jones Industrial Average “means,” even if they have no idea what stocks it tracks.

The Washington State-based Center for Reinventing Education has put together indicators on school health that go well beyond the limited vision offered by test scores. A portion of their model is shown at right.

The model also trumps CMS’s management tool called the Balanced Scorecard, which sets goals in areas of performance and tracks attainment, but keeps all analysis nicely at the district level – rather than at the school-house level where any improvements will have to be made.

The indicator system – little circles familiar to the readers of Consumer Reports – reflect a scale of “worse” to “better.” The system avoids static letter or

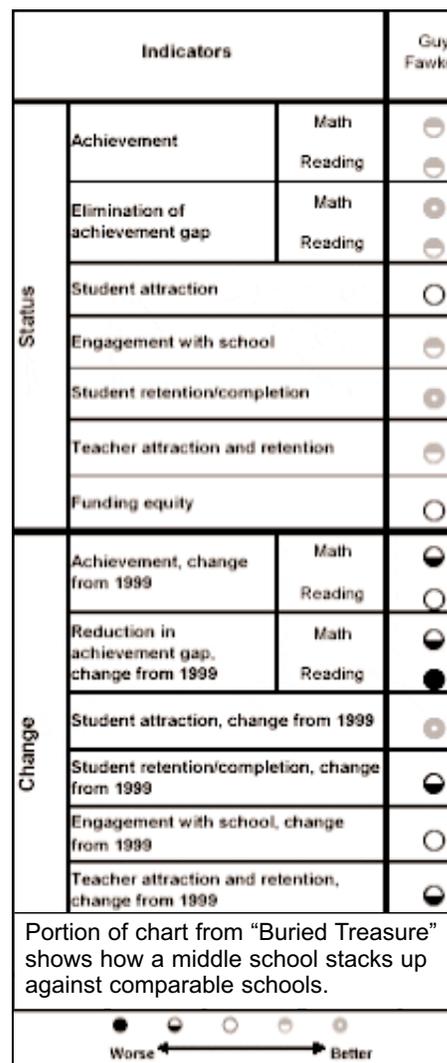
numerical grades and instead compares one campus to similarly situated schools in the district.

The center offered a range of subjects to be covered. Some might not be useful to CMS parents and board members, but the system itself might be quite an improvement.

The report adds charts that, track students by deciles to show, for example, if a school’s average scores are being carried by high-achieving children while low-achievers are failing.

“Most school districts are already collecting the data underlying these indicators,” the report says. “The nation’s school data problem today is not due to a paucity of data.... The problem is that educators and parents are awash in data they find hard to understand.”

– Download “Buried Treasure: Developing a Management Guide From Mountains of School Data” from www.crpe.org/pubs.shtml#leadership



Do test scores trump what teachers know?

Excerpts from Wake County middle school teacher Bill Ferriter’s diary entry for Teacher Leaders Network:

I made myself pause today. I was talking with my Assistant Principal when I said, “I can’t wait to see what our end-of-grade test scores are this year! I’ll bet we’re doing a great job with our kids.”...

The innocence of my comment scares me. It was made with little intention but speaks volumes about teaching and learning in America. Either my convictions about teacher professionalism are not as strong as I thought, or testing has become such a part of schooling that even accomplished teachers assume that they are valid indicators of achievement.

What is even more disconcerting is that the general public places the same blind faith in testing. While poll after poll show that teachers command great respect from the community at large, the professional judgment of teachers is not enough when measur-

ing student success. How else has testing become so prevalent in America?

I can remember a parent conference not long ago with a mother who wanted feedback about her child’s reading ability. Her son was a favorite of mine, and I was quite aware of his strengths and weaknesses. It was late in the school year and end-of-grade scores had just come back to our school. I knew how he had done but was not allowed to release his results yet.

After spending 30 minutes sharing my thoughts and backing them up with evidence from classroom assessments, his mother simply asked, “Yes, but what does the test say?”

What does “the test” say? Do the results of a single, isolated measure of performance really represent a child’s abilities? Is this one assessment somehow more valid than the thousands of pieces of data that teachers collect on each child?...

– www.teacherleaders.org/diaries04_05/other/BF04_04_05.html

13 governors vow new rigor in their high schools

Governors from 13 states last weekend formed a new coalition to improve their high schools.

Key goals are to strengthen curriculum and align it to the needs of college and workplace, which educators say are now quite similar; to make testing more rigorous; and to retain students, a third of whom now drop out without a diploma.

The 13 states are Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Texas.

Ailing N.C. Gov. Mike Easley did not attend. A spokesman this week said he did not know whether North Carolina would join the project. The state has previously been a leader both in testing and in curriculum alignment.

Foundations have promised seed money for the so-called American Diploma Project, which will be managed by Achieve Inc. The states involved serve a third of the nation's students. Previous education summits planted the seeds of No Child Left Behind.

Following are excerpts from the summit's "action agenda."

College or jobs, same skills

"America's high schools are failing to prepare too many of our students for work and higher education. Just ask business leaders and college presidents, who say they must spend billions of dollars annually to provide their employees and students with the skills and knowledge they should have attained in high school....

"Our high school students' lack of preparedness has serious implications for our economy and prosperity. For most of the nation's history, manufacturing workers with modest formal education could earn decent wages.

"For roughly 60% of the jobs in today's labor market, at least

some post-secondary education is needed, and that percentage is expected to increase in the years ahead.

"The jobs of the 21st century require more sophisticated skills and knowledge. Businesses are looking for employees who can write and communicate clearly,

analyze information, conduct research, and solve complex problems.

"Employers say the high school graduates they hire need the same skills and knowledge that colleges and universities assert enrolling students should have."

Summary of education summit 'action agenda'

– **Make All Students Proficient and Prepared.** States must ensure that students arrive in high school ready to perform high school-level work and leave ready for the real demands of college and the workplace. To ensure that all students take the rigorous courses and master content needed to meet real-world demands, all young people should take a rigorous college-prep curriculum with course requirements that include four years of rigorous English and a math curriculum that covers Geometry, Algebra II, and data analysis and statistics. Equally important, states should create college- and work-ready assessments and raise the bar for end-of-course exams to the level of achievement expected to enter college and work.

– **Redesign the American High School.** It is not enough to raise requirements. The average high school must be made more flexible, supportive, and effective in helping low-performing students catch up with their peers. As part of this effort, states must provide additional academic supports for low-performing students and expand the range of high quality high school options for students by financing new types of high schools and providing opportunities for students to take college-level classes and earn credit while attending high school.

– **Give High Schools the Excellent Teachers and Principals They Need.** Strong teachers and principals are crucial for helping all students meet higher standards and leave high school ready for college and work. States must continue to raise the standards for licensure and redesign preparation and professional development to have greater flexibility and accountability in achieving higher standards. They also must continually expand new incentives for teachers to work in the neediest schools and to improve principal leadership.

– **Hold High Schools and Colleges Accountable for Student Success.** High schools should be held accountable for improving college and work readiness rates across all student subgroups and that data on high school performance are publicly accessible and user-friendly. Two- and four-year colleges should be held accountable for improving retention and graduation rates. The document calls on states to set five- and ten-year statewide goals and track progress in increasing high school graduation rates, percentages of students who are prepared for college and work, and postsecondary enrollment and completion rates.

– **Streamline and Improve Education Governance.** Because almost every state operates K–12 and postsecondary education as separate systems, the report calls on states to move toward a more unified and seamless governance systems with a single board that has authority over early childhood, elementary, secondary and higher education.

Close poor performers

“Particularly in high-poverty urban communities, however, there are schools with high dropout rates, persistently low academic achievement, and low expectations for staff and students. In these schools, highly focused assistance is not enough to improve student performance as quickly as is necessary.

“State and local school boards need to close these schools and replace them with proven models of redesigned high schools.

“These new schools could be several small schools, each with a distinctive design, philosophy and instructional approach. Students and personnel should be given a choice about which new school they attend or staff.

“The new schools must be open to all students who want to attend, up to a size limit, and they need the flexibility and resources to recruit and hire effective teachers and principals who are committed to the school’s design and philosophy.

“Boston and Chicago have moved aggressively during the past five years to close their lowest-performing high schools and open smaller schools in their places. These new schools have new management, new curriculum and new teacher supports and a more intensive focus on literacy, personal attention, and parent and community involvement. Boston is committed to giving 30 percent of its high school students a redesigned, better high school by 2007.”

Raise expectations

“When the San Jose Unified School District in California required all students to follow the college-preparatory curriculum required for admission to the University of California system, the test scores of its black 11th graders increased nearly seven times as much as those of other

“Change is hard. Getting every child to graduate high school – with a meaningful diploma in their hands – is one of the biggest challenges our country faces. It’s never been done. That’s why there is push-back from both sides of the political spectrum. In Washington, when both sides attack you, it means you’re doing something right.”



– U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings

black students across the state.”

Link K-16 governance

“Governors, legislators and business leaders must act now to make elementary, secondary and post-secondary education work more closely together.

“At a minimum, states should set up a permanent statewide commission or roundtable to frame a common education agenda and track progress, as Indiana has done....

“Alternatively, states could develop a single education governing board and state education agency with authority over early childhood, elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. To date, Florida is the only state to try this governance approach....

“States such as Georgia, Kentucky and North Carolina have addressed this challenge by establishing strong, central higher education governing or coordinating boards to influence the decision-making of individual institutions. As a result, these states have made significant progress on improving students’ transition from high school to higher education.”

Collect data to drive reform

“During the past 15 years, state and federal education policies have focused primarily on elemen-

tary and middle schools and have contributed significantly to achievement gains at those levels.

“For the needed changes in high schools to occur, state leaders must now set goals for improvement, measure progress, and hold high schools and post-secondary institutions accountable for student success.

“Governors, business leaders, and secondary and post-secondary educators and officials need to work together to set measurable goals for improving the performance of high schools and colleges and universities. Those goals should include raising high school graduation rates, increasing the percentage of students who are prepared for college and work, and improving post-secondary enrollment and completion rates.

To accomplish these goals, states need to dramatically improve their ability to collect, coordinate and use secondary and post-secondary data. Few states have data systems that can gauge how well high schools prepare students for college and work....

“Florida is among the few states that have created a unified data system to enable combining information on the performance of students in high school with data on their performance in post-secondary education. Kentucky is moving down a similar path, setting clear statewide targets and building a stronger data system.”

– “An Action Agenda for Improving America’s High Schools,”

2005 National Education Summit on High Schools

What states should do to improve high schools

Excerpts from remarks prepared for the National Governors Association/Achieve Summit Saturday by Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates:

Thanks to dedicated teachers and principals around the country, the best-educated kids in the United States are the best-educated kids in the world. We should be proud of that. But only a fraction of our kids are getting the best education.

Once we realize that we are keeping low-income and minority kids out of rigorous courses, there can be only two arguments for keeping it that way – either we think they can't learn, or we think they're not worth teaching. The first argument is factually wrong; the second is morally wrong.

Everyone who understands the importance of education; everyone who believes in equal opportunity; everyone who has been elected to uphold the obligations of public office should be ashamed that we are breaking our promise of a free education for millions of students.

For the sake of our young people and everyone who will depend on them – we must stop rationing education in America.

I'm not here to pose as an education expert. I head a corporation and a foundation. One I get paid for – the other one costs me. But both jobs give me a perspective on education in America, and both perspectives leave me appalled.

When I compare our high schools to what I see when I'm traveling abroad, I am terrified for our workforce of tomorrow. In math and science, our fourth-graders are among the top students in the world. By eighth grade, they're in the middle of the pack.

By 12th grade, U.S. students are scoring near the bottom of all industrialized nations.

We have one of the highest high

“The idea of tracking low-income and minority kids into dead-end courses is so offensive to our sense of equal opportunity that the only way the practice can survive, is if we hide it. That’s why we need to expose it.”
– Bill Gates

school dropout rates in the industrialized world. Many who graduate do not go on to college. And many who do go on to college are not well-prepared – and end up dropping out. That is one reason why the U.S. college dropout rate is also one of the highest in the industrialized world. The poor performance of our high schools in preparing students for college is a



Gates

major reason why the United States has now dropped from first to fifth in the percentage of young adults with a college degree....

This kind of change is never easy. But I believe there are three steps that governors and CEOs can take that will help build momentum for change in our schools.

Number 1. Declare that all students can and should graduate from high school ready for college, work, and citizenship. How would you respond to a ninth grader's mother who said: "My son is bright. He wants to learn. How come they won't let him take Algebra?" What would you say? I ask the governors and business leaders here to become the top advocates in your states for the belief that every child should take courses that prepare him for college – because every child can succeed, and every child deserves the chance. The states that have committed to getting all students ready for college have made good

progress – but every state must make the same commitment.

Number 2. Publish the data that measures our progress toward that goal. The focus on measuring success in the past few years has been important – it has helped us realize the extent of the problem. But we need to know more: What percentage of students are dropping out? What percentage are graduating? What percentage are going on to college? And we need this data broken down by race and income. The idea of tracking low-income and minority kids into dead-end courses is so offensive to our sense of equal opportunity that the only way the practice can survive, is if we hide it. That's why we need to expose it. If we are forced to confront this injustice, I believe we will end it.

Number 3. Turn around failing schools and open new ones. If we believe all kids can learn – and the evidence proves they can – then when the students don't learn, the school must change. Every state needs a strong intervention strategy to improve struggling schools. This needs to include special teams of experts who are given the power and resources to turn things around.

If we can focus on these three steps – high standards for all; public data on our progress; turning around failing schools – we will go a long way toward ensuring that all students have a chance to make the most of their lives.

Teacher effectiveness

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ference.

“To have that teacher before a kid who is in this kind of a situation for three consecutive years relates to a tremendous gain – or loss if you don’t have that quality teacher in place.

“If you take two kids who start off at the same place, one has a quality teacher and another doesn’t, one continues to gain. The other actually loses.”

Later in the board’s conversation, Kindberg said, “The schools that seemed to have the highest turnover rates seemed to be those that had experienced some kind of significant change in the last two or three years – a change of a principal, a relocation of a facility... How do these factors come together to influence student achievement?”

Said District 5 board member Molly Griffin, “I think we all know that in general these things matter – how long you’ve been teaching, your advanced degrees. But we also know that there are people with advanced degrees who have been teaching for a long time who aren’t any good – and that there are brand new teachers who don’t have any of those things who are really hitting it.... That’s the data I would really like to see.”

“There may be a way of doing that,” Pughsley replied. “Once we complete this school year and we

see the results (from teachers in a pay-for-performance pilot) then we can analyze it to the point where those teachers that are hitting it, what are their characteristics versus those who are not. We can pull some of that information together, and obviously that would be a help to everyone.”

Perhaps not everyone, particularly some teacher.

CMS is headed toward what Tennessee did many years ago – tracking individual student growth back to the teachers who made it happen. At-large board member Kit Cramer said such data “would be wonderfully helpful.”

Assistant Supt. Susan Agruso replied, “There are several models that are being investigated nationally by researchers.... We’re working on a project with a company who is looking at large school districts trying to find out if they can develop a value-added model also.”



On the general issue of staff effectiveness, Agruso detailed several components of the issue:

Clear licensure: “We are in fairly good shape” at all but a few schools, Agruso said. Personnel hiring has brought up those numbers, particularly at Title 1 schools that are under federal mandate to have “highly qualified” teachers.

Years of experience: The vast majority of schools fall in the range of 6-15 years of experience schoolwide. And all 32 elementaries with 70% or more children on subsidized lunch have averages in that range.

It is at middle school, she said, that “you begin to see differences” between low-poverty and high-poverty schools.

None of the 15 high-poverty middle schools had average teacher experience in the 6-15 year range.

“What we are seeing in the high-poverty middle and high schools is a skewing towards

On teacher turnover

While much teacher turnover is due to death, dismissal, disability and retirement, CMS administrators are focusing on reducing “discretionary” departures – specifically, those in which teachers cited “job dissatisfaction” or “accepted other employment” as reasons for leaving. Here are the numbers for schools reporting four or more such departure explanation for the period July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004 for those two categories. Numbers do not include teachers who left classrooms for other positions in CMS, or those assigned to other departments who later resigned.

Total	Dissatisfaction	Other with job empl.
14	Hopewell H.	11 3
10	Garinger H.	4 6
9	Nath. Alex. E.	9
9	Vance H.	2 7
7	Independence H.	1 6
7	W. Charlotte H.	2 5
6	Myers Park H.	2 4
6	West Meck H.	6
5	Alexander M.	5
5	Alex. Graham	3 2
5	Lake Wylie E.	1 4
5	North Meck H.	1 4
5	Univ. Park E.	5
4	Briarwood E.	4
4	Bruns Ave. E.	1 3
4	Cornelius E.	1 3
4	Crestdale M.	1 3
4	Crown Point E.	4
4	Lebanon Rd. E.	1 3
4	Martin M.	4
4	Northwest H.	3 1
4	Reid Park E.	4

Source: CMS

Turnover data

CMS loses about 1,200 teachers annually. More than half of those leaving in 2003-04 fell in these categories:

- 131 Retired
- 80 Completed temporary assignment
- 180 Moved
- 75 Were dissatisfied with job
- 178 Obtained other employment

higher levels of turnover among their teachers,” Agruso noted.

“And, again, that data all fits together:

“Where you see some of these schools that have teachers with less experience, more teachers who are new teachers who are new to teaching, and a greater turnover rate, because... when you are filling those positions you

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www.roanokevalleymag.com

Roanoke Rapids High, in a four-school, all-Paideia city district in rural northeastern N.C. The high school was built in 1907.

Signals from the top that can attract teachers

From an Education Week profile of a rural North Carolina district that has halved its teacher turnover by ramping up professional development opportunities for teachers. In the excerpt below, Carla Ledford is a Chaloner Middle School teacher new to the district. John Parker is superintendent of the 3,000-student Roanoke Rapids city school district in northeastern North Carolina:

“Ledford was equally attracted by Parker’s de-emphasis on standardized testing, evinced by an e-mail he sent in spring 2004 about the upcoming statewide end-of-grade exams. Many North Carolina schools spend an entire month prepping for the high-stakes tests, on which schools are graded and teachers’ bonuses are based, but Parker’s note simply told his charges to relax – he knew they’d done a great job. ‘Testing is defi-

nately just one small piece [of a student’s education],’ Ledford says. ‘That’s one thing that drew me here.’

“Not that the district’s scores are anything to be ashamed of: 79% of all Roanoke Rapids students scored at or above reading and math grade levels in 2003-04, a higher percentage than in neighboring districts. In an era when teaching to the test is almost an instructional axiom, prioritizing learning ahead of assessment wins a lot of hearts and minds – and a lot of teacher recruits, as it turns out.

“‘We think, in this day and age, that sets us apart,’ Parker says with characteristic understatement. ‘Are you trying to tell me that a test knows more than a teacher who has worked with that kid for 180 days?’

– www.edweek.org

Teacher effectiveness

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are likely to get inexperienced or new teachers coming into those positions. So these factors go together, and indicate that there are some challenges for these schools because of these turnovers.

The issue is not just one of statistics: It illuminates how well schools operate.

“By having fewer experienced teachers,” Agruso told the board, “you have a greater challenge to the school because you need that balance of the new blood of the new teachers coming in, but also those very experienced people, to serve as mentors to serve as guides and help indoctrinate, and bring people into the teaching profession, give them the guidance they do need.”

Agruso cited Spaugh Middle, which has only 9% of staff brand new to teaching, but a schoolwide average of only 7.7 years of experience. “That again contributes to the challenges of that school to meet the needs of all children,” she said.

But Agruso said the district deserved praise for a “significant drop in the turnover rate.” CMS annual turnover topped 21% several years ago.

Teacher turnover, Agruso said, is “not strictly a high-poverty school issue. Some of our high-poverty schools, as you’ve seen,

have wonderful retention rates.... There are others that have greater challenges.

“We also have schools that are not high-poverty that have challenges to deal with. So it’s not as absolute and cut-and-dried as some folks thought.”

Calendar

MARCH

- 4** Equity Committee, 8 a.m., Board Room.
- 7** School board’s Policy Committee, 3:15 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 10** School board meets, 6 p.m., Government Center Meeting Chamber. Change of date due to Leandro hearings in Raleigh.
- 16** School board’s Safety Committee, 3:30 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 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
- 17** School board’s Personnel Committee, 2 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 17** School board’s Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Board Conference Room.
- 22** School board’s Curriculum Committee, 3:30 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.
- 22** School board meets, 6 p.m., Government Center Meeting Chamber.
- 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.

Marching orders

State Board of Education considers new policy on academic rigor, relevance

The N.C. State Board of Education had before it Wednesday a proposed policy statement on "Defining Academic Rigor." It might make useful reading during lulls in Leandro court hearings, for it sets high standards for what the state expects of its students, teachers and administrators.

It also mandates huge new state efforts: access by every student statewide to Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses; adherence by districts to the coursework time lines in the N.C. Course of Study; guidance in choosing college or career; and a "school day based on student needs," a possible reference to how teens' brains aren't awake if the first bell rings at 7:15 a.m.

All students will graduate from a rigorous, relevant academic program that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to succeed in both post-secondary education and 21st Century careers and to be participating citizens.

Academic rigor and relevance are based on established expectations that ensure that all students develop the capacity to master content that is complex and challenging. In every subject, at every grade level, instruction and learning must include commitment to a knowledge core and the application of that knowledge core to solve complex real-world problems.

To ensure academic rigor and relevance and to guarantee supportive relationships for each student in the public school setting:

Students must:

- Demonstrate content mastery and application of appropriate skills and critical thinking
- Become engaged learners who actively and responsibly participate in the learning process
- Raise questions, solve prob-

lems, think, reason, and reflect

- Complete rigorous, relevant, high-level assignments in every subject

- Demonstrate learning through portfolios, exhibitions, service-learning projects, and senior projects that use state standards for evaluation

- Communicate effectively and appropriately for a variety of purposes

- Understand their own learning styles and strengthen their own affinities

Administrators must:

- 1) Examine their own belief systems toward children and learning and expect that all students will learn and achieve at high levels

- 2) Provide an environment that supports children's reflecting on their own learning and affinities

- 3) Work collaboratively with other faculty members and staff

- 4) Cultivate positive relationships with students, parents, and community

- 5) Provide opportunities for educators to collaborate and plan

Educators must:

- 6) Examine their own belief systems toward children and learning and expect that all students will learn and achieve at high levels

- 7) Demonstrate mastery of their content area and make it relevant for all students

- 8) Provide an environment that supports children's reflecting on their own learning and affinities

- 9) Use a variety of assessment methods to inform daily instruction

- 10) Engage students in active reasoning and critical thinking

- 11) Work collaboratively with other faculty members and staff

- 12) Cultivate positive relationships with students, parents, and community

- 13) Provide students with necessary academic and social supports

All North Carolina public school students shall pursue a rigorous and relevant academic course of study as defined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The following strategies and standards set by the North Carolina State Board of Education will assure that each and every student receives a rigorous and relevant academic program:

- Require the College Tech Preparatory or the College/ University Preparatory curriculum as the default for all students except for those who have an exception documented by an Individualized Education Program;
- Ensure that all students have access to and the support necessary to take one or more Advanced Placement (AP) courses or be enrolled in an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program;
- Provide appropriate academic and social support for each student;
- Ensure that all K-12 students have the opportunity to master a challenging curriculum;
- Deliver courses consistent with the timeframe established in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study;
- Eliminate elementary and middle school level tracking that could restrict access to rigorous and relevant curriculum;
- Ensure that all students have early access to post-secondary and career planning for the 21st Century;
- Ensure that student placement decisions are not solely based on test scores;
- Schedule the school day based on student needs; and
- Establish and monitor the quality of instructional delivery to ensure a rigorous and relevant education for every student.

www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/0503_sbagenda.html

Briefly...

Gap widens: A study by the Public Policy Institute of California found that although the graduation rate gap between whites and Asians and blacks and Hispanics in California narrowed in the 1970s, it grew again in the 1990s. The Mercury News reported that policies aimed at educational equity are not enough to close the gap, although reducing the concentration of low-income students in low-performing schools would help. The PPI study also recommended policies aimed at providing families basic needs such as food stamps, housing subsidies and adult education.

www.mercurynews.com

No to scripts: A committee of 50 Chicago teachers, principals and literacy experts decided to cut the controversial Direct Instruction reading program currently in use, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. The highly scripted program has proved successful in several low-income Chicago schools and educators there are reluctant to let it go. In other schools, however, the results are less conclusive. The committee found that the Direct Instruction method requires too many rote responses, does not give room for teacher flexibility, and is weak in teaching comprehension.

www.suntimes.com

Quick teaching credentials: Florida will address a teacher shortage crisis through teacher bootcamps housed in community colleges, the St. Petersburg Times reported. The program is aimed at generating new teachers quickly. People with bachelor's degrees and a desire to teach will go through the yearlong programs. Those programs are aimed at training them more quickly than traditional programs. Due to teacher retirements and population surges, Florida is predicting a need for 30,000 new teachers by 2006.

www.sptimes.com

'The biggest boost, morally'

Franklin McCain, now of Charlotte, reminiscing about the 1960s Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins for last summer's Voices of Civil Rights project organized by AARP, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the Library of Congress, as mentioned in a Houston Chronicle article posted to the National Association for Multicultural Education listserv:

"She strode toward me and I said to myself, 'Oh my, someone to spit in my face or slap my face.'

"But she puts her hands on our shoulders. She said, 'Boys, I'm so proud of you. I only regret that you didn't do this 10 years ago.'

"That was the biggest boost, morally, that I got that whole day, and probably the biggest boost for me during the entire movement."



McCain

— www.chron.com

Internships: In an effort to prepare students for the real world outside of school, Miami-Dade County Supt. Rudy Crew is seeking to require internships as a requirement for graduation, the Miami Herald reported. The internships would require students to spend a semester in a career-oriented internship for some or all of their school day. Crew told high school students, "Your senior year is nearly a waste. For 180 days, if the only thing you get out of that is taking a couple more courses or passing another [Advanced Placement course], that's insufficient."

www.miami.com

Voc ed: President Bush's fiscal 2006 budget recommends cutting the billion-dollar-plus vocational education program for high schools, Education Week reported. According to a 2004 federal study, vocational education is the largest single source of U.S. Department of Education spending on high schools. Although not all vocational education programs are successful, those that are depend on federal funds to succeed. Successful vocational education programs have seen enrollments climb and test scores increase. Some lawmakers are doubtful that Congress will approve the

cuts.

www.edweek.org

Bus safety: The Prince George's County school district is installing global positioning systems on 1,300 buses, the Washington Post reported. The satellite-assisted system is intended to better inform parents as to the location of buses and estimated time of arrival. In case of accidents, the tracking system will also aid rescue workers. CMS is installing donated GPS units on a few buses this year.

www.washingtonpost.com

Zero-bound: President Bush's proposed budget eliminates Upward Bound, the Los Angeles Times reported. Upward Bound is one of the largest and longest-running federal education programs aimed at helping low-income students enter college and succeed, "Upward Bound helps kids trying to be the first in their families to go to college," said Rep. Lois Capps, a California Democrat. "Instead, the Bush administration proposes to zero out this program and leave these kids to fend for themselves. That's just wrong." Nationwide, 92% of Upward Bound high school graduates in 2000 enrolled in college.

www.latimes.com