

'Thank you for this opportunity; I'm hopeful'

CMS's incoming interim superintendent Tuesday declared that Charlotte-Mecklenburg has a "strong" school board and said she respected "our ability to work together for this year."

"So thank you for this opportunity," Frances Haithcock said. "I'm hopeful."

The board approved a contract and a \$208,710 salary to begin July 1 when Supt. Jim Pughsley

retires. If a search results in a new superintendent in less than a year, the board agreed to offer her an administrative post comparable to her current position, and retain her interim superintendent pay scale for the duration of the one-year contract.

CMS said employment terms are similar to Pughsley's. A summary of the contract is on Page 6.

After the board vote confirmed

Haithcock's appointment, which was announced last week, Pughsley said:

"I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate, Frances if I may.... I know that she will serve CMS well, and that she will be looking out for all



Haithcock

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West Charlotte open magnet is back on table

Reports of the death of West Charlotte High School's open education magnet program may have been greatly exaggerated.

"We are holding off on any decisions to eliminate the program," CMS Assistant Supt. Susan Agruso told the school board Tuesday.

"What we would like to see is if we can actually strengthen that program in some way, and build upon the work we do at the middle schools, with both Randolph and Piedmont, so that it does offer a viable option for students...."

That was the key course correction reported as discussion continues with parents and school-based staff across the district on possible changes in magnet programs for 2006. Those discussions are part of an overall review of the 2001 student assignment plan.

Agruso said West Charlotte's leadership team

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4 goals for district

Group asks CMS to assign top teachers, redraw school boundaries to prevent high-poverty schools

A coalition that has been meeting privately with CMS school board members went public Tuesday night with its recommendations for changing the district's resegregative assignment plan.

The group's general principles could provide a limited reversal of the trend toward concentrating low-income and underperforming students in their own schools. If implemented, the principles would give disadvantaged children a better shot at the district's best teachers.

The group, People United For Education, used the school board's open forum to present its ideas. The forum's format prevents board members from responding.

The Rev. Tonyia Rawls spoke for the group founded by former CMS educator Richard McElrath. Rawls is pastor of Unity Fellowship Church in Charlotte. The group's suggestions, as outlined Tuesday:



Rawls

– **Boundaries.** "Redraw attendance lines to reduce growth of high poverty and overcrowding in schools. Slight adjustments in the way the district's lines are drawn could have an immediate impact on the size and number of high-poverty schools and overcrowded schools."

Rawls said, for example, that moving the line between East Mecklenburg and Providence could even out poverty levels at the two adjacent high schools.

– **Teachers:** "Implement a teacher assignment plan that increases the number of high-performing, experienced teachers in low-performing schools, to improve student achievement."

"This board is charged with the task of ensuring that students, regardless of race, gender, native land or socioeconomic status be given a sound basic education. In order to achieve that goal, the superintendent must be given the backing of this body to exercise this option through various voluntary and involuntary methods."

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West Charlotte

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had expressed interest in strong magnet programs that would draw students to the underutilized, underperforming high school that was the flagship of the district in the 1980s.

Earlier, Agruso had suggested closing the open program at West Charlotte, and finding a way to combine the strengths of the open and Paideia programs at two middle schools, Piedmont and Randolph.

Here's what else Agruso said Tuesday night about West Charlotte:

"In the proposals we put forth last week we had talked about eliminating the open program at West Charlotte, but also looking to work with schools that offer both open and Paideia to... merge and clarify exactly what those programs are.

"We have had conversations with principals at these schools... and have begun the process of looking at how we would strengthen and merge programs....

"At the same time, we are looking to include West Charlotte in that conversation....

"We do have a new principal coming there. We want to talk to him about his ideas... before our final decision is made.

Oh D.E.A.R. Day

NASCAR drivers start their engines. Charlotte Reads plans to ask folks to pick up their books and read.

The literacy advocate plans a Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) Day on Thursday, June 9 at noon at Founders Hall, 100 N. Tryon St.

For supplies for your own D.E.A.R. Day event or information about how to help people who can't read now to be a part of next D.E.A.R. Day, contact Arden McLaughlin at Charlotte Reads at amclaughlin@charlottereads.org.

"I will be meeting with the school leadership team May 18th.... This is a very, very enthusiastic group of parents. They are anxious to maintain strong programs at the school for the benefit of children.... We want to work with them in whatever way we can to actually provide a viable magnet program in addition to the IB program at that school.

"So we will continue to work through that and bring you more information as that develops."

Agruso said staff was also reviewing changes proposed for Talent Development programs and the Montessori program at Park Road. Other ideas being explored include new high school magnets in business or international studies, single-gender middle schools, a second Early College magnet and expanded business partnerships for all magnets. Magnet issues come back to the board in June.

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The Make It Happen Campaign

Q: Subscription fees: Why not?

A: When we last asked, a \$25 annual fee found support – but only from a handful of readers in this ‘information-is-free’ era. So we built a journal around free-will donations. That’s why we say it’s up to you: If readers support this effort, it will continue. If not, it won’t. And since your independent source of information on public education is at stake, we thought you’d want to know.

To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check to The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204. Or sign on to www.networkforgood.org, and use the keyword Swann Fellowship to make a secure donation.

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4 goals for CMS

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“While teacher preference should be taken into consideration, it must not be the only consideration. We know some teachers have threatened flight. While we would hate to lose any good teacher, we as a system must not be held hostage.”

– **Student support:** “Make AVID available in all of the IB [International Baccalaureate] magnet programs. Since the board is suggesting putting grade-level requirements on all the academic magnets, give these students the same support that is offered to students in the general student population.”

“The purpose of the AVID program is to ensure that students with the potential to do so get into college. Why would you not have it (AVID) as a standard in the college-prep environment?”

– **Board conduct:** “We challenge this school board to find a path back to itself, and begin working as a team. While each of you has shown your ability to be passionate about the students in your service area, we stand at a critical juncture in our life as a community and need a strong,

Teacher of the year

Karen Young, a fifth-grade teacher at Shamrock Gardens Elementary was named Harris Teacher of the Year last week. Young is working toward being National Board-certified and is a new-teacher mentor at Shamrock.



Young’s selection was announced at the district’s first “Educator Emmy” awards celebration last week at the Charlotte Convention Center. The event drew 800 and honored 400 staff members.

Piedmont Middle’s Tom Spivey was named principal of the year.

Thomas Moore is an educational consultant and CMS graduate.

“Some people are feeling that ‘I have to have my child in a place where there are more people who are like my child and more people who have experiences similar to my child.’



“But I beg to differ. I beg to think like this: that the educator is a person who leads people to this understanding [that] every human being can teach you something, especially those who have a different life experience.”

“And I challenge you to talk to the public about public education. What a wonderful thing we’ve done in America.... And I’m praying for all of you as guides.

Charlotte needs a conversation, a deep conversation. We don’t have to take from each other. We can give to each other....”

*Voices from
the board room*

unified board to help guide this community through, one that will make decisions that will benefit all of the children and not just some of the children in this district.

“A community builds wealth the same way a family does. It continues to build on the resources left through the inheritance. This school system, our inheritance, was placed into your hands, and we need you to work as a team to make it the best that it can be.

“We have some who say, let’s chop up the inheritance, so that they can run away with their share and forget about the rest of the family. In response to them, we say it was left to us all, and you do not have a right to take parasitic steps that hurt our best chances for success....”

Rawls described People United as “a multicultural, multiracial, economically and socially diverse group of organizations, faith leaders, educators and civil rights groups, researchers and concerned citizens dedicated to the establishment of an equitable school system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.”

“It is our belief,” Rawls said, “that equity means all students will be offered the necessary human, economic and social resources needed to receive a sound, basic education and thus opportunity for a bright, productive future.

“It is also our belief that sacrifice must be shared, and not disproportionately placed on any geographic group, socioeconomic or racial segment of the community.”

At a community group Tuesday morning, Rawls commented that the school board “is on a pretty precarious journey.”

History and court cases teach that separate schools are definitely not equal ones, she told the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum. The 2001 assignment plan has created some schools with large numbers of underperforming students, and other mostly suburban schools that are increasingly overcrowded.

Rawls said the group had decided to keep its recommendations within the board-approved “guiding principles” for the current assignment plan review for strategic reasons. “We are not pleased with the guiding principles but we must find a way to work with what we have.”

Rawls said the AVID recommendation was designed to offset the resegregative impact of having academic entrance requirements for academically challenging programs like International Baccalaureate. Support for students who might initially struggle with the coursework would “help us get anchored in there and ultimately succeed.”

'I'm hopeful'

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kids. So I congratulate you, and certainly I respect you, and I'm just happy for you."

Haithcock, who joined CMS in 2000 from Broward County Schools in Florida, then addressed Pughsley and the board.

"Dr. Pughsley, you made my day," Haithcock began. "This is the first time you've ever called me Frances."

"As you can imagine, this past week has been very interesting. And I had some doubts at a particular time when we had some discussions about whether I would consider being considered.

"And of course my first reaction was like every reaction I've ever had when I took the opportunity to do something that turned out to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

"I can remember I said, why in the world would I do this? And I remember saying that when I was first asked to be a principal of a high school. I thought, why would I do this? And then I loved it more than anything I'd ever done.

"And then I was asked to be an area superintendent, and I thought, how can I leave the school, why would I do this? And again, it really gave me an education that I had never had, in the school, even though my most important education was in the school.

"And when I moved here I remember so well when I got a number of phone calls asking if I would consider moving to Charlotte and I said why in the world would I do this? And the minute I came and met the people in Charlotte and talked about where we were at that point in time, and that was in 2000, I thought this is the only place that I want to actually end my career.

"And it has been the most

Carolyn Allred has children at Piedmont Middle and Park Road Montessori, and serves on the Piedmont School Leadership Team.

"In order for this system to duplicate a program like Piedmont, you must allow our teachers to teach, and our administrators to lead.



Allred

The pacing guides, the mini-assessments, the requirements that are placed on Piedmont as an Equity Plus school are driving some of our best teachers out of our school and out of our system. There are many avenues to success and, in my opinion, the robotic requirements of the pacing guideline is hardly the best solution for creative, bright, ambitious, qualified teachers like those we have at Piedmont. Give us the freedom to teach the open philosophy. We can and we will achieve the same results. Just trust us to do the job."

Voices from the board room

rewarding part of my career, and I've had a very long and happy career in education.

"But it has really given me the opportunity to grow. The main reasons I feel like that, very succinct reasons why I feel like that it was a good decision for me to accept this was because of the people that I work with.

"I had a lot of team here. Most of them have hung around. And there are parts of that team that aren't present. There's a part of that team in our deputy superintendent, who even though he has given us the sad news that he will be retiring, has given me the assurance that he will be with us to get us through the beginning of the school year.

"The rest of the team is the absolute best I have ever seen, and therefore I said to myself, why wouldn't I do this, because I love this system. I feel like it needs some consistency during this year when you are going out for a search.

"I feel like the team can give you that consistency. I feel that we're not only going to do one of my favorite expressions is stay the course, we're not only going to stay the course that has been started here in Charlotte-Mecklenburg by some very fine superintendents and that we're going to actually move in a very positive direction.

"Fortunately I went to church this Sunday, and the minister preached right to me. Of course he had no idea I was in the congregation. But he talked about being hopeful, and I think that's what I feel about this system.

"[Not] hopeful in some kind of blind optimism where you just know everything is going to be perfect. I've been around large systems and I've been around this system long enough to know that we may not work everything out to the highest of our expectations.

"But I am very hopeful that with the community that we have to work with, which is having wonderful conversations about organizational courage, that I am hopeful that we are going to be at a place that Dr. Pughsley and some of the people that will be leaving us at this point in time will be proud that they were models for us to take it to a different level.

"So I want to thank you. One of the other main facets that I feel that helped make my decision, and I know there is discussion and people are going to think this is a funny statement at this point, but I think this school board is strong. And I believe very sincerely that there is a value in this school system about student achievement and what we have to do for students, and what the



Haithcock

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'I'm hopeful'

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common good is.

"I've had the opportunity to work closely with many school board members. We've worked on committees. We've worked on programs. We've worked on projects. And I respect our ability to work together for this year.

"So thank you for this opportunity. I'm hopeful."

'Furious'

At-large member Kaye McGarry offered unsuccessful contract amendments to require detailed standards for a performance bonus, and to cut the base salary 12% below Pughsley's to \$183,000.

McGarry said the \$183,000 would be a 25% increase over Haithcock's current salary as associate superintendent for education services.

District 3 board member George Dunlap denounced McGarry's proposal: "If you think about the... motion," Dunlap began, "let's think about what's being suggested. "It's being suggested that a woman who performs the exact same job as a man deserves less pay.

"What message does that send to our children? You can work hard and achieve, but you're still not worth as much.

"Women across this country ought to be furious. They ought to be furious.

"When we live in a society where we value one person's worth much less than another person's worth because of their gender, then we have some problems. We have some serious problems....

"Let me go back to [former Supt.] Dr. Smith.... There was narry a peep about his separation agreement. When he left... Dr. Smith's salary was \$196,567.56. He received a merit bonus over



Dunlap

Larry Bosc spoke for Partners for Highest Quality Schools, a parent group promoting the East Mecklenburg feeder school area.

"Please note that McClintock [Middle] is situated between two solid CMS magnets in Carmel and Randolph. It is also located within a stone's throw of three private schools:



Bosc

Charlotte Christian, Charlotte Prep, and Providence Day. For the parents in this community,

McClintock is like an apple placed between Krispy Kreme donuts. Though the apple may be good for you, it's hard to resist the pull of Krispy Kreme. We need help from CMS to market McClintock. Please give careful consideration to McClintock as you discuss and place solid magnet programs throughout the district...."

"As we step back and analyze the big picture effects of the past three years of our student assignment plan, we in the East Meck feeder area are hopeful that it has become obvious that there have been significant negative, unintended consequences due to non-magnet choice. In particular we want to emphasize the detrimental effects of the continuation guarantee, which guarantees a student the elementary-to-middle-to-high-school feeder pattern of their choice-into school whenever they choose out of their home school into a non-magnet setting. It is simply a promise that this district cannot keep....

"By studying the dot maps provided by the planning department you can quickly gain a sense for the snowball effect of the continuation guarantee. As an example, look at the dots outside the home school boundaries for Bain and Matthews elementary schools. As it stands right now, the continuation guarantee has promised every one of these students a seat at the already overcrowded Butler High School.

"We have created a ripple effect with significant ramifications. We are overcrowding our high-growth outer-ring schools, and ultimately underfilling our inner-ring schools. This is poor stewardship of taxpayers' money, and if the current assignment plan continues with non-magnet choice included, we believe the continuation guarantee should end...."

and above his salary that year of \$49,000. He received an additional \$57,403 the same year for a total compensation of \$302,971.

"This is a male performing the same job.

"We have asked Dr. Haithcock to run this district for one year at a hundred thousand years less, for the same job, expecting student achievement to continue, expecting the performance of the students to increase.

"How dare you degrade a woman to the point that you think she's less than a man for doing the same job?..."

"My friends tell me to treat peo-

ple the way you want to be treated. And when you can't do that, when you can't say something good to somebody, don't say anything at all.

"But it amazes me how people want silence, silence so that we can say we're working together.

"There's an undercurrent in this community, and I've lived here all of my life, and I've never seen it as bad as it is today.

"I used to teach young people: The only reason evil prevails is because good people do nothing.

"And it's time for the good people in this community to stand up

Voices from the board room

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'I'm hopeful'

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and say something about the injustices and the inequities that exhibit in this community.”

Abstained

McGarry abstained from the final vote.

“It is not the person.... Dr. Haithcock... has the qualifications, the broad experiences for many years, in Broward County as well as here....

“But it is the process. And the process was flawed. And the May 3rd closed session last week, it gave the board chair the authorization to negotiate this contract; however, it gave that with no discussion, and to me that was a lack of professional conduct, and games were played to prevent public disclosure.”

District 1 member Larry Gauvreau voted no.

Contract summary

CMS issued the following summary of the major terms of Haithcock's contract:

- Dr. Haithcock will be employed by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education as the Interim Superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for a period commencing July 1, 2005 and ending on either (a) June 30, 2006 or (b) such time that a permanent Superintendent is appointed and assumes his or her assigned duties, whichever is earlier (“Employment Term”);

- She will be paid a base salary of \$208,710.50 (“Base Salary”) for the Employment Term.

- Should a permanent Superintendent be appointed and assigned his/her duties during that Employment Term, Dr. Haithcock will continue to be compensated the Base Salary through the end of the Employment Term (June 30, 2006) and the Board will reassign her to another senior administrative position (comparable to Assistant or Associate Superintendent level

Amanda Raymond *lives off Providence Road.*

“Blueberry Lane consists of one street.... To access any of those three [home schools] requires us to come out of Blueberry Lane. We can only take a southbound turn on to Providence, and we must make a U turn at the gas station....

Our one other choice... is to drive south on Providence and try to



make an unprotected U turn somewhere between Olde Providence Road and the Arboretum. It's virtually impossible in the morning. It's very dangerous at any time of the day and those are the schools we consider to be our home schools. We recognize we are a small street. We are only 18 homes. We have three CMS students.... What we are asking is... home schools that are accessible from our homes.”

Voices from the board room

Connie Carpenter *addressed the board about local winners in the annual North Carolina Reading Association's Young Writers Contest.*

“We have, are you ready for this? Coach, we have 17 state writing winners in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. That's not all: We have an additional 28 state entry-level and local winners. So we have an abundance of prolific writers.... I encourage you, before you go to bed tonight, read this cover to cover. It is the best-seller. It is priceless....”

Said board chair Joe White, “Thank you, Connie. It's indeed good to hear good news, but unfortunately you won't get a lot of press in Charlotte, North Carolina for good news. And I'm out of order, so I'll hush....”

Wes Settlemeier *spoke for TEAM, Together for Excellence at Middle Ring Schools.*

“Even though we are talking about middle ring schools, our emphasis is really on excellence at all schools. We're hoping to help you develop a [student assignment] plan that will address the issues of growth in the suburbs without making a big disruption for those of

positions/duties) for the remainder of that Employment Term;

- The Board will consider whether to pay her any additional compensation based on her performance at or after the end of the Employment Term; however, the payment of any such compensation will be in the sole discretion of the Board, will be no more than 10% of her Base Salary and may be subject to criteria established by the Board; and

- During the time she serves as Interim Superintendent, Dr. Haithcock will receive benefits comparable to those given to Dr. Pughsley and which include the following: provision of a car to be

used for business purposes; payment of premiums for medical, dental and vision benefits for Dr. Haithcock; payment of membership dues and reasonable expenses in civic and professional organizations.

- The Agreement also contains a “buy-out” clause in the event of a “no-cause” termination of employment that would be equal to the then applicable, remaining part of the Base Salary through the end of the Employment Term.

The text of Haithcock's employment contract has been posted for a time on the Educate! website at www.educateclt.org/contact.asp

Briefly...

'Success' studied: The first study of its kind shows that the popular but controversial "Success for All" reading program pushes young readers ahead of peers who do not learn in the scripted environment of Success for All, Education Week reported. Students in the program for two years were 1.3 to 4.7 months ahead of peers in various reading skills. The study was unusual in that it used randomized methods and control groups traditional in noneducational research. The program is used by 1,200 mostly Title I schools in 47 states and focuses on having all disadvantaged children reading on grade level by grade three.

www.edweek.org

No to credits: A South Carolina bill designed to give tax credits to parents who transfer their children from public to private schools was struck down in the House, the State newspaper in Columbia told its readers. Supporters of the bill believed that it would help children move out of underperforming schools. Opponents asserted that the bill undermined the public education system. Gov. Mark Sanford, who proposed the bill, said he would continue to look for ways to increase school choice.

www.thestate.com

Growth only: Wake County schools might get \$17 million less than they asked for from county commissioners, the News & Observer reported. Manager David Cooke tentatively recommended that the school budget increase proportionate to student growth, plus the cost of new modular schools and renovations. That equation ignores inflation and all new programs.

www.newsobserver.com

Parents are key: New research by former and current researchers from the RAND Corp. found that 54% of the decrease in

DidYaHear?

✓ Note to the Legal Desk: The next time a superintendent's contract is written, let's call that performance bonus simply a good will bonus. That's clearly what it is. Why force the board to tinker with numbers for months? Either they like the incumbent or they don't, and that's what the bonus reflects. The school board sidestepped the performance review when it awarded retiring Supt. Jim Pughsley a \$25,000 bonus last month.

✓ An Asheville correspondent writes, "CMS's predicaments certainly help us justify (at least in our minds) our 'smallness' as an urban public school system. And we certainly felt some angst last week when the N.C. Senate attempted to fly some 'let's make the 15 city school districts become extinct' legislation under the radar. Asheville City Schools: Small. Family-friendly. Safe. Academically excellent. You'd probably find little of (controversial) interest to write about here."

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com

the black-white achievement gap from 1972-1992 could be explained by the increasing education levels of black parents, Education Week reported. The study also found that the gaps were largest in racially segregated schools.

www.edweek.com

Openings galore: Minnesota is seeing musical chairs among superintendents, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reported. A salary cap that led to numerous non-salary perks has been lifted, so perks are going away and candidates are seeing higher salary offers. The paper quoted one experienced hand as saying, "Sometimes I can see a bigger picture and more points of view... Maybe I get a little less frustrated, although like everybody else, sometimes I close the door and curse the Legislature."

www.startribune.com

No rebellion: U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings told a Florida audience last week that No Child Left Behind is helping to close achievement gaps, and complaints or lawsuits from a few states do not constitute a rebellion against the 2001 law, the St. Petersburg Times reported.

Spellings called narrowing the achievement gap "the moral imperative of the 21st century."

www.sptimes.com

Relevance: A state legislative analysis office has suggested California raise high school achievement in part through eighth- and 10th-grade counseling on how to meet the requirements of either college or workplace, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. The report also suggested that the the state's public universities base acceptance decisions on results of the state's high school exam, and that the state lower its standards for "proficiency" under No Child Left Behind.

www.sfgate.com

Calendar

MAY

18 School board's Safety Committee, 3:30 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.

19 School board's Personnel Committee, 2 p.m., Board Conference Room.

19 School board's Finance, Capital & Facilities Committee, 4 p.m., Board Conference Room.

24 School board's Curriculum Committee, 3 p.m., Room 414, Education Center.