

75% by June

High school principals ordered to have 75% of students on grade level by June; last year, district scored 62%, 7 schools below 60%

The doctor's diagnosis of CMS's high school problems is in: Adults don't expect enough of students, or themselves.

So Dr. Jim Pughsley laid it on the line to his principals this week: Raise student achievement this school year like this school system has never seen. Or else.

In an educational environment in which most of the high hurdles are laid out for students to jump, Tuesday's announcement was focused solely on adults.

Students won't have any new tests to prepare for.

But Pughsley's announcement coincides with a new "project charter" for high schools that will encourage teachers and other staff to redouble their efforts to bolster student learning.

The only enforcement provision behind Pughsley's goal for June was implicit: Principals hold any given assignment at the pleasure of the superintendent.

"The 75 means I'm going to have blood pressure of 175," Garinger Principal Jo Ella Farrell quipped Wednesday morning.

Here's why 75

The goal of having 75% of all students on grade level links back to the 2005 goal of having 90% on grade level.

CMS is now at 62%.

The goal is two years away.

And 75% is the half-way point toward the 90% goal.

The goal thus takes no account of the reality that some schools are near the goal and others far from it (chart, Page 9). The goal ostensibly ignores that most of the biggest strides must be made by minority students (chart, Page 10).

"Every school" will be expected to meet the goal, Pughsley said.

Sea change

What Pughsley is tackling is clearly a culture change. In a system where teachers refer to the youngsters at one school as "ani-



"Fool" by Sloane Whaley, Northwest School of the Arts.

mals" and the principal at another reportedly does not mind students' use of the "f" word, the superintendent is trying to force adults to stop writing some children off.

"He's our chief executive. This is what he's supposed to do," said

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Faith community urged to embrace CMS's character education initiative

CMS would love to go to the altar with the faith community.

And the wooing began in earnest Wednesday morning at Covenant Presbyterian Church, where over eggs and coffee a number of religious leaders heard were told how CMS would pursue one of Supt. Jim Pughsley's top goals: character education.

Pughsley said he wanted the program not just in the 25 schools where it is today, but in all 145.

"My purpose is to not only let you know we are very serious about character education, but to

let you know that we need your help.

"If we have the adults modeling what is acceptable, the students will follow," Pughsley said.

Phil Vincent, a Burlington native who consults with school districts nationwide, said the \$1.8 million federal grant paying for the initiative would bring him to the district 25 to 30 days a year for the next three years, to visit schools and train teachers in the project.

The presentation was a plea for

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Stop blaming low achievement on poverty, or on school board

I am only 48 years old, yet I have steadily grown weary from the whining and complaining by some parents and all of you who are so quick to criticize the System and attribute low performance to high poverty!

As much as you would love to shift the blame for some students' underachieving or failing on the Charlotte Mecklenburg

school board, you are actually contributing to the deterioration of our education system. If you aren't part of the solution, then you are part of the problem! Unfortunately, the school board must divert its focus from strengthening our schools to address you whiners and defend its efforts.

Before you start ranting, I acknowledge not all schools are equal. I know many of the great teachers have left low-performance schools. And finally, I am aware that some students are going to fail, regardless of the schools they attend, the quality of the teachers or their family's income.

That said, can anyone show me where just complaining positively changed anything? How many of these whiners spend time each week in a school, volunteering to tutor or assisting in the classroom? Even one hour? Served on a PTSA Board or School Advisory Team? Been a substitute teacher? You don't have to have enrolled students to help make our schools better.

How many of you have tried to run for the school board and face the cowardly snipers? While I don't agree with many decisions the board has made, I respect their devotion and sacrifices. Yes, they all chose to serve but the community shouldn't be so arrogant as to deny the long hours,

the intense discussions, and the absolute impossibility of pleasing everyone! You still say you can do better? Then put your name on the ballot. The rest of us are sick of your nit-picking and complaining.

Many parents of low-achieving students are quick to place the blame for their child's failures anywhere but on themselves. "It's the school board's fault." "The schools are too crowded." "The teacher picks on my kid."

I ask those parents: How much time did you spend with your child last night, checking homework, reviewing for a quiz, practicing vocabulary words? Do you insist homework be completed before the TV or video game is turned on?

How often are you meeting with the teachers to develop an IEP for your child? Do you even know what an IEP is? If not, then you haven't done your job as a parent and do not have the right to find fault with those who ARE putting forth an effort to make our schools better.

I strongly believe the deterioration of America is due in part, to peoples' expectation of entitlement! And that includes an education.

Years ago, children and adults alike were held accountable for their actions. If they succeeded, it was because they made a conscious decision to put forth the effort to succeed. If they failed, they acknowledged they dropped the ball. There was no school board to blame. There was no pressure from the community to "dummy down" the curriculums so the test scores reflect "equality" between the ethnic groups. People were expected to learn but it was entirely up to the student.

All any of us is entitled to is a desk from which we can accept

From Readers

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more issues to publish, based on the funds on hand at the beginning of this month. A community journal must have the support of its readers. Can you help?

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Educate! is a journal on public education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg financed by individual and corporate donors and a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Our aim is to supply information useful to you in your role as student, parent or citizen interested in the welfare of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. *Educate!* is published by The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204. Leonard R. (Deacon) Jones, Lucy Bush Carter, co-presidents; B.B. DeLaine, vice president; Steve Johnston, executive director. Voice: 704-342-4330. E-mail: swannfello@aol.com. Published since September 2000; 6-week average circulation through last issue: 2,872.

Kathleen McClain and Stephanie Southworth assisted with this edition.

The Swann Fellowship, named for Darius and Vera Swann, was formed in 1997 out of several Charlotte congregations to be a witness to the value of diversity in public education and to educate the public on school issues as they relate to this and allied subjects. The Swann Fellowship is a nonprofit organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code 56-2106776. Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

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Parents must set high expectations

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the responsibility for our own learning! It is the PARENT's responsibility to set high expectations for the child and to guide him along the way. Educators are frustrated when parents make excuses for their children or get angry at teachers giving bad grades. It is NOT the school's or school board's responsibility to coddle children into learning.

And stop using poverty as an excuse! There were plenty of classmates from low-income families in all of my children's advanced classes. Fortunately, enrollment in public schools isn't based on income, and neither is learning!

If parents, the community and even some teachers expect poor

performance from students, then that is what they will get. If parents, the media and the community repeatedly give students the message that they can't learn because they are poor, then they will believe they cannot learn.

There is NO correlation between income level and ABILITY to learn. Let me state that again: There is NO correlation between income level and ABILITY to learn.

Each of us has the opportunity to help make Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools the world-class system we are striving for. Volunteer to work in your child's school. Show your child how important an education is: Go back and get your GED or high school diploma. Raise money for your school. Support the teachers when they push your child to work harder. Then, and only then do you have the right to criticize what others do!

It may take a village to raise a child but it needs to start in your own hut!

Nancy Edwards

Charlotte vigil is tonight

The Charlotte Coalition for a Moratorium Now is sponsoring a vigil for Joseph Bates, who is scheduled to be executed Sept. 26 by the state of North Carolina.

The vigil is tonight, Sept. 25, and will be in Marshall Park, at the MLK Jr. statue at 7 p.m. It will last about 15-20 minutes.

We need to show the leaders of North Carolina that state-sanctioned murder is not acceptable.

North Carolina has already put to death two inmates in the near past and three more executions are scheduled in the next two months.

Gray Newman

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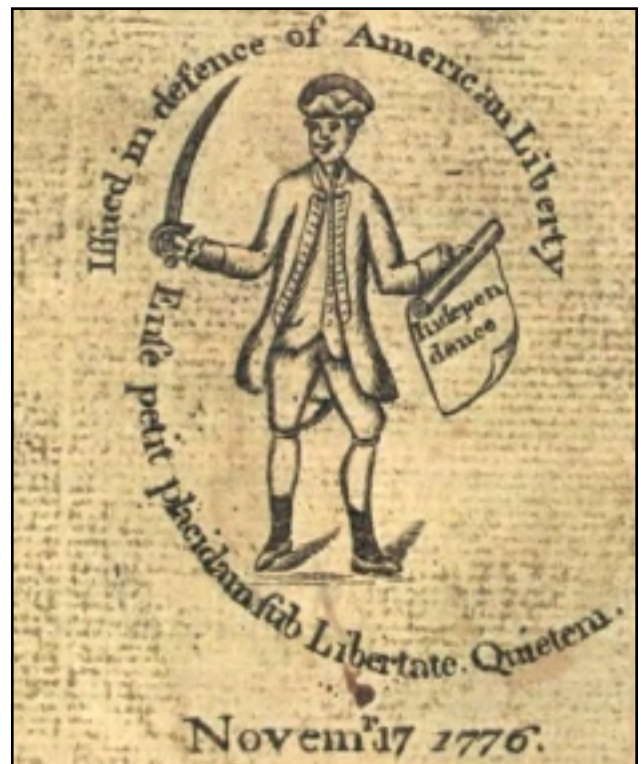
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This detail from paper money issued during the Revolutionary War is part of a teacher curriculum built from the Smithsonian's museum collection. Other parts of the museum's new www.smithsonianeducation.org site are aimed at children and families.

Faith groups asked to aid character ed

Continued from Page 1

leaders of the faith community to pick up the character theme that children would hear during the week. There were no explicit requests made of the pastors and others present.

But Briarwood Elementary Principal Olivia Givens said she thought her children “would be just as proud and eager to tell their worship leaders the trait” of the month as they are to recite

them for teachers.

The meeting started late, so to honor the 9 a.m. stop time Babb allowed no questions or comments at the end. But the audience was dominated by CMS personnel.

The character education program goes very public in October, when Bojangles’ Restaurants begins to use tray liners promoting the year’s 10 featured traits under a banner “Character Compass.”

Accentuating the theme on Wednesday morning, toy compasses were on the tables. But alas, the needles inside the China-made toys were plastic, and suit-

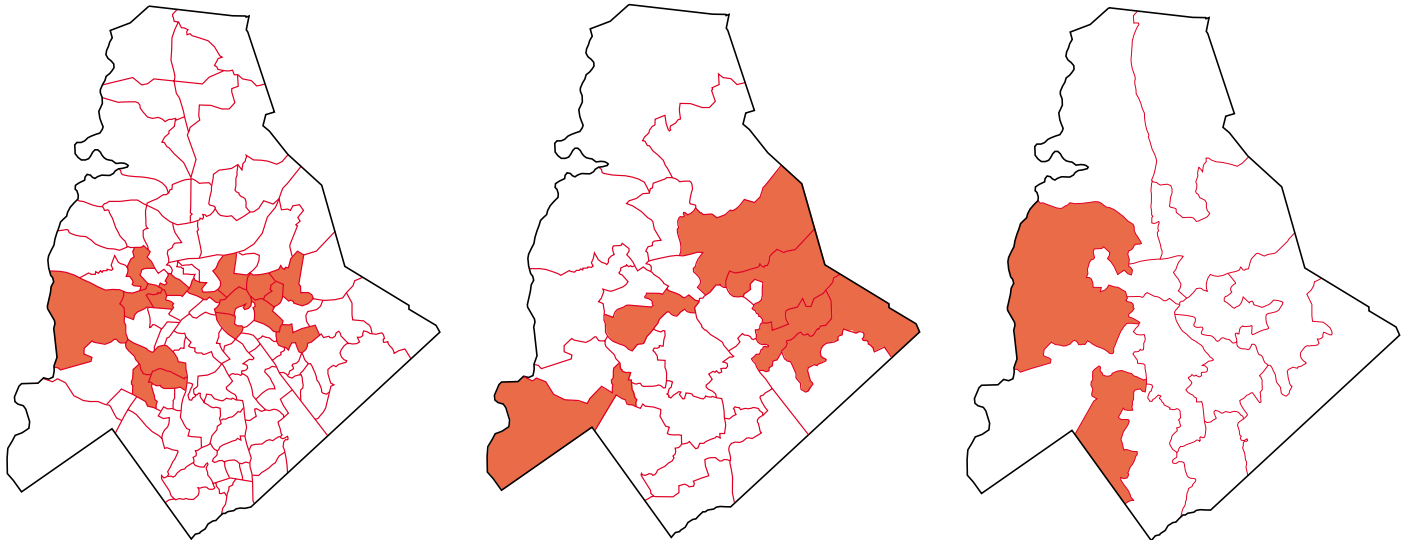
able only for finding one’ bearings in a moral Los Vegas.

Tom Tate, co-chair of Pughsley’s Interfaith Advisory Council and pastor of Plaza Presbyterian closed the meeting, saying he had spent the meeting reading the traits and listening to speakers and trying to find a reason “why we should not be doing this.

“And dern it, I just can’t find anything to complain about.”

Maybe all groups would not define the traits exactly as CMS has, Tate said, “but we can begin here and move on.

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Elementary (left), middle (center) and high school attendance areas more than 100 seats under capacity.

Where seats might be: Schools under capacity...

School	Open seats	School	Open seats	School	Open seats
Martin Middle	426	Briarwood	128	Long Creek	45
Southwest Middle	338	Shamrock Gardens	125	Pawtucket	42
Oaklawn/Bruns	321	Berryhill	117	Statesville Road	39
E. E. Waddell High	306	Montclair	116	Clear Creek	36
Marie G. Davis Middle	286	Walter G. Byers	111	Elizabeth Lane	35
Albemarle Road Elem.	229	Windsor Park	110	Bain	32
West Mecklenburg High	211	Highland Renaissance	109	Nathaniel Alexander	32
Joseph W. Grier	176	Allenbrook	108	Reid Park	23
Chantilly/Billingsville	150	Devonshire	107	Quail Hollow Middle	21
Northeast Middle	150	Winterfield	93	Eastover	20
Ashley Park	147	Thomasboro	83	Matthews	19
Westerly Hills	139	Merry Oaks	73	J. H. Gunn	17
Pinewood	135	Coulwood Middle	73	Pineville	14
Albemarle Rd. Middle	135	Mint Hill Middle	56	Lebanon Road	12
Northridge Middle	132	McAlpine	53	Piney Grove	6
Nations Ford	131	Druid Hills	51	Spaugh Middle	4

Faith groups asked to aid character ed

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“All I can say is, let’s get going. Let’s participate.”

The character traits:

September: **Respect** – showing high regard for self, others and

property.

October: **Responsibility** – being accountable for your own behavior.

November: **Honesty** – being truthful in word and action.

December: **Caring** – Showing concern for the well-being of others.

January: **Justice and Fairness** – demonstrating impartial, unbiased and equitable treatment for all.

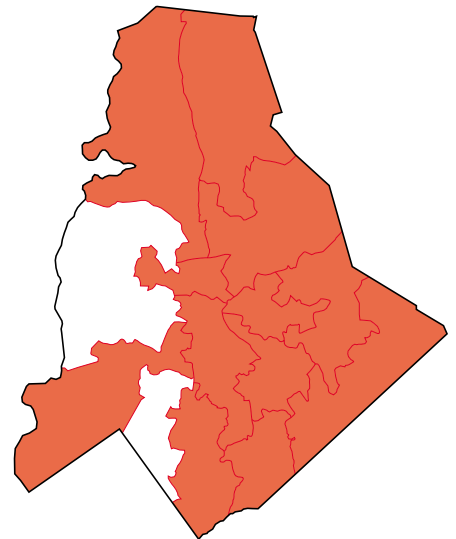
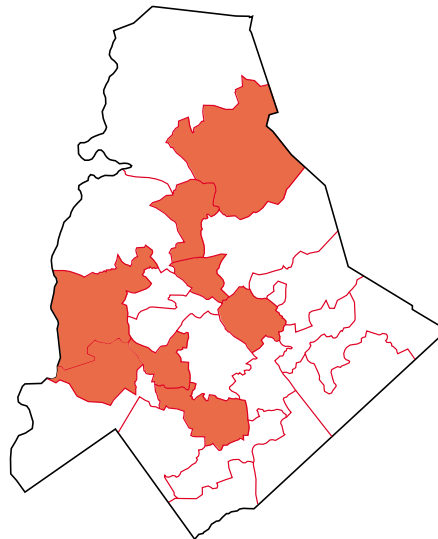
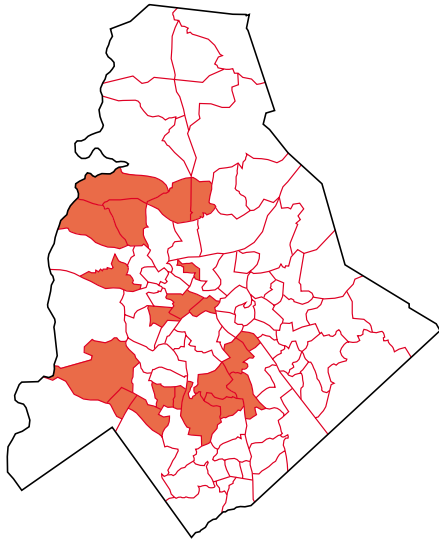
February: **Citizenship** – being an informed, responsible and caring

participant in your community.

March: **Courage** – doing the right thing in the face of difficulty and following your conscience instead of the crowd.

April: **Perseverance** – staying the task and not giving up. Demonstrating commitment, pride and positive attitude in completing tasks.

May: **Hope** – believing you will be successful.



Elementary (left), middle (center) and high school attendance areas more than 100 seats over capacity.

... and where they aren't: Schools over capacity

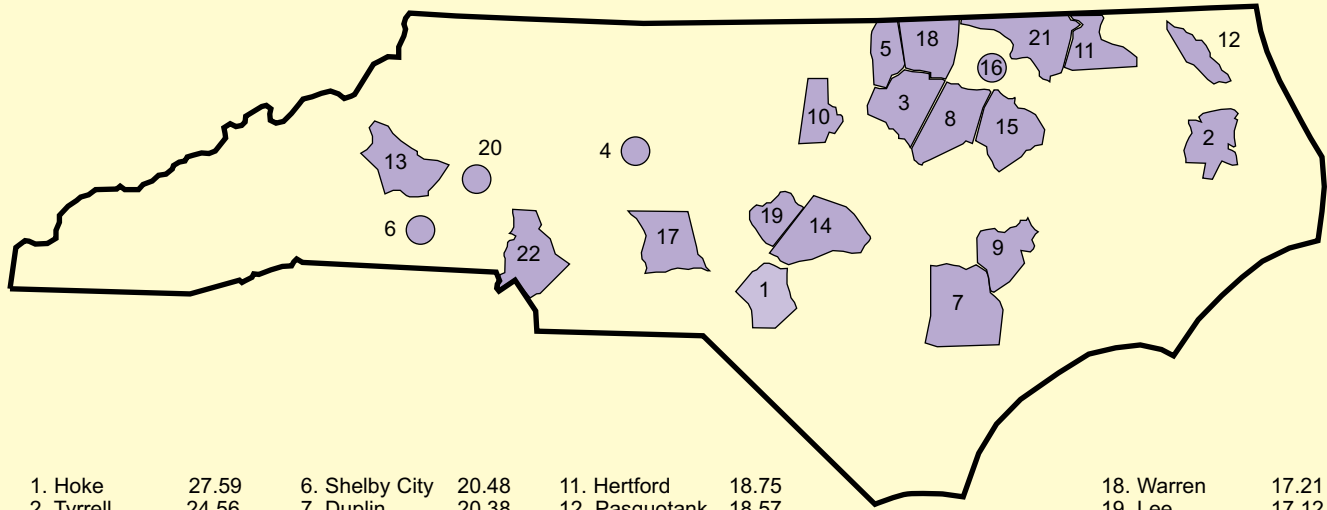
School	Over capacity	School	Over capacity	School	Over capacity
Myers Park High	1,085	Ranson Middle	210	Crown Point	60
North Meck High	942	J. T. Williams Middle	183	Huntersville	58
East Meck High	679	Cotswold	174	Idlewild	52
Olympic High	502	Wilson Middle	174	Olde Providence	44
Independence High	482	Oakhurst	173	Cornelius	40
Hopewell High	468	Huntingtowne Farms	170	University Meadows	32
Garinger High	426	Sharon	163	Blythe	31
First Ward	388	Sterling	158	Hickory Grove	31
Butler High	388	Tuckaseegee	149	Newell	30
South Meck High	356	Kennedy Middle	149	McClintock Middle	28
West Charlotte High	343	Mountain Island	126	Rama Road	27
Lansdowne	336	Lincoln Heights	120	Crestdale Middle	26
Providence High	316	Steele Creek	104	Sedgefield Elem.	24
Paw Creek	312	Robinson Middle	93	Cochrane Middle	24
Barringer	298	David Cox Road	89	Greenway Park	17
Beverly Woods	282	Alexander Graham Middle	89	South Charlotte Middle	14
Eastway Middle	276	Oakdale	75	Providence Spring	13
Carmel Middle	272	Bradley Middle	69	Mallard Creek	12
Sedgefield Middle	253	Endhaven Lane	66	Reedy Creek	11
Hornets Nest	238	Smithfield	66	Hidden Valley	9
Irwin Ave.	234	Lake Wylie	65	Davidson	8
Alexander Middle	227	McKee Road	64	Hawk Ridge	8
Vance High	220	Selwyn	64		

Districts equal to or worse than CMS's '03 teacher turnover rate

Mecklenburg saw its teacher turnover rate decline last year, and 21 N.C. districts have higher rates. But most of the districts struggling even more with high teacher turnover are small city districts or are in the poorer eastern part of the state.

The combination of more job opportunities and a more mobile population may account for a portion of Mecklenburg's rate.

Data source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction



1. Hoke	27.59	6. Shelby City	20.48	11. Hertford	18.75	18. Warren	17.21
2. Tyrrell	24.56	7. Duplin	20.38	12. Pasquotank	18.57	19. Lee	17.12
3. Franklin	21.53	8. Nash	20.34	13. Burke	18.52	20. Newton-Con.	16.81
4. Thomasville	21.14	9. Lenoir	20.13	14. Harnett	18.34	21. Northampton	16.78
5. Vance	21.04	10. Durham	18.76	15. Edgecombe	18.33	22. Mecklenburg	16.73
				16. Weldon City	18.28		
				17. Montgomery	18.05		

Number of teachers

N.C.	92,729	Caldwell	877	Elizabeth City/Pasq.	463	Bertie	247
Mecklenburg	7,352	Moore	855	McDowell	441	Ashe	239
Wake	6,964	Chapel Hill-Carr.	834	Davie	441	Newton-Con. City	226
Guilford	4,987	Wilson	818	Watauga	437	Greene	218
W-Salem/Forsyth	3,886	Henderson	790	Person	424	Madison	216
Cumberland	3,283	Lenoir	780	Dare	398	Warren	215
Durham	2,324	Brunswick	775	Halifax	398	Clinton City	210
Gaston	1,855	Lincoln	772	Bladen	377	Avery	209
Union	1,816	Wilkes	749	Hoke	377	Roanoke Rap. City	203
Buncombe	1,739	Stanly	730	Alexander	375	Yancey	196
Robeson	1,704	Rutherford	724	Montgomery	360	Whiteville City	191
Johnston	1,676	Cleveland	683	Martin	353	Washington	189
Pitt	1,604	Haywood	591	Macon	349	Polk	185
New Hanover	1,600	Franklin	590	Kannapolis City	342	Edenton/Chowan	180
Alamance-Burl.	1,568	Carteret	587	Hickory City	330	Thomasville City	175
Cabarrus	1,565	Duplin	584	Asheville City	314	Gates	169
Rowan-Salisbury	1,530	Surry	573	Asheboro City	313	Mitchell	163
Onslow	1,385	Beaufort	563	Kings Mountain City	308	Pamlico	157
Wayne	1,343	Edgecombe	562	Yadkin	307	Swain	148
Iredell-Statesville	1,270	Stokes	557	Cherokee	299	Perquimans	145
Davidson	1,240	Granville	556	Anson	296	Jones	140
Nash-Rocky Mt.	1,228	Vance	556	Currituck	295	Alleghany	132
Burke	1,188	Sampson	552	Mooresville City	288	Mount Airy City	127
Randolph	1,119	Scotland	543	Northampton	286	Camden	100
Craven	1,068	Chatham	541	Jackson	274	Clay	95
Harnett	1,058	Richmond	527	Hertford	272	Graham	94
Rockingham	1,037	Pender	526	Transylvania	269	Weldon City	93
Catawba	1,031	Lee	520	Caswell	258	Elkin City	88
		Columbus	504	Shelby City	249	Hyde	76
		Orange	465	Lexington City	249	Tyrrell	57

'03 turnover (%)	County	Turnover (%)
	Caldwell	12.66
	Transylvania	12.64
	Cleveland	12.59
	Kannapolis City	12.57
	N.C.	12.49
	Cabarrus	12.14
	Granville	12.05
	Yadkin	11.73
	Washington	11.64
	Rockingham	11.57
	Iredell-Statesville	11.50
	New Hanover	11.50
	Pamlico	11.46
	Polk	11.35
	Mount Airy City	11.02
	Lincoln	11.01
	Haywood	11.00
	Clinton City	10.95
	Alexander	10.93
	Beaufort	10.83
	Pender	10.65
	Moore	10.53
	Whiteville City	10.47
	Richmond	10.44
	Elkin City	10.23
	Wake	10.22
	Anson	10.14
	Scotland	10.13
	Union	10.08
	Gaston	10.03
	Jones	10.00
	Guilford	9.95
	Stanly	9.86
	Cumberland	9.81
	W.-Salem/Forsyth	9.75
	Stokes	9.69
	Ashe	9.62
	Mooresville City	9.38
	Buncombe	9.32
	Mitchell	9.20
	Watauga	9.15
	Davidson	9.11
	Alleghany	9.09
	Roanoke Rap. City	8.87
	Dare	8.79
	Rutherford	8.56
	Pitt	8.54
	McDowell	8.39
	Macon	8.31
	Perquimans	8.28
	Columbus	8.13
	Swain	8.12
	Bertie	7.69
	Carteret	7.50
Hoke		27.59
Tyrrell		24.56
Franklin		21.53
Thomasville City		21.14
Vance		21.04
Shelby City		20.48
Duplin		20.38
Nash-Rocky Mt.		20.34
Lenoir		20.13
Durham		18.76
Hertford		18.75
Elizabeth Ci./Pasq.		18.57
Burke		18.52
Harnett		18.34
Edgecombe		18.33
Weldon City		18.28
Montgomery		18.05
Warren		17.21
Lee		17.12
Newton-Con.		16.81
Northampton		16.78
Mecklenburg		16.73
Chapel Hill-Carr.		16.43
Davie		16.10
Johnston		15.81
Chatham		15.71
Jackson		15.69
Alamance-Burl.		15.11
Surry		14.83
Hyde		14.47
Brunswick		14.45
Caswell		14.34
Hickory City		14.24
Robeson		13.97
Edenton/Chowan		13.89
Catawba		13.58
Randolph		13.58
Wilson		13.57
Orange		13.55
Asheville City		13.38
Greene		13.30
Onslow		13.29
Bladen		13.26
Lexington City		13.25
Sampson		13.04
Martin		13.03
Person		12.97
Madison		12.96
Wilkes		12.95
Halifax		12.81
Rowan-Salisbury		12.81
Asheboro City		12.78

Losing experienced teachers

Teacher turnover is greatest among those new to the profession. But across N.C. school districts last year, about a third of all teachers leaving were tenured, meaning they had three or more years of experience. Among large N.C. districts with 1,000 or more teachers (below), the percentage ranged widely. Heading the list is Wake, where 61% of teachers leaving were tenured. Wake, however, has an overall turnover rate (last column) that is below the state average, and substantially below Mecklenburg's. Winston-Salem/Forsyth, N.C.'s fourth-largest county, did not report its tenured turnover rate.

County	Total teachers	Left	Tenured	Pct.	O'all turn.
Wake	6,964	712	435	61.10	10.22
New Hanover	1,600	184	100	54.35	11.50
Rowan-Salisbury	1,530	196	94	47.96	12.81
Guilford	4,987	496	233	46.98	9.95
Nash-Rocky Mt.	1,228	250	117	46.80	20.34
Rockingham	1,037	120	52	43.33	11.57
Davidson	1,240	113	48	42.48	9.11
Gaston	1,855	186	72	38.71	10.03
Pitt	1,604	137	53	38.69	8.54
Catawba	1,031	140	51	36.43	13.58
Cumberland	3,283	322	116	36.02	9.81
North Carolina	92,729	11,581	3,797	32.79	12.49
Cabarrus	1,565	190	61	32.11	12.14
Randolph	1,119	152	47	30.92	13.58
Durham	2,324	436	133	30.50	18.76
Union	1,816	183	53	28.96	10.08
Craven	1,068	72	19	26.39	6.74
Mecklenburg	7,352	1,230	312	25.37	16.73
Alamance-Burl.	1,568	237	60	25.32	15.11
Onslow	1,385	184	45	24.46	13.29
Harnett	1,058	194	44	22.68	18.34
Burke	1,188	220	48	21.82	18.52
Robeson	1,704	238	41	17.23	13.97
Iredell-Statesville	1,270	146	25	17.12	11.50
Johnston	1,676	265	43	16.23	15.81
Buncombe	1,739	162	11	6.79	9.32
Wayne	1,343	48	0	0.00	3.57
Winston-Salem	3,886	379	NR	NR	9.75

Data source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

Gates	7.10	Cherokee	5.35
Camden	7.00	Graham	5.32
Craven	6.74	Currituck	5.08
Henderson	6.32	Wayne	3.57
Avery	6.22	Clay	3.16
Yancey	6.12		
Kings Mt. City	5.84		

Rates for last 5 years, with average rate '99-'03 and number of teachers

Districts showing an increase in turnover since 1999 are indented.

District	Tot. teachers	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	5-yr.
Yadkin	307	13.96	10.86	10.44	9.62	11.73	11.32
Washington	189	18.32	19.00	11.27	15.34	11.64	15.11
Rockingham	1,037	15.71	14.89	10.09	14.16	11.57	13.28
Iredell-States.	1,270	10.91	10.78	13.91	10.71	11.50	11.56
New Hanover	1,600	15.39	16.48	11.68	13.50	11.50	13.71
Pamlico	157	8.11	12.03	11.80	11.46	11.46	10.97
Polk	185	16.57	20.37	16.98	13.77	11.35	15.81
Mount Airy City	127	6.85	11.52	19.08	13.01	11.02	12.30
Lincoln	772	11.77	15.99	14.36	10.10	11.01	12.65
Haywood	591	7.23	4.01	6.16	9.78	11.00	7.64
Clinton City	210	11.11	18.72	12.50	11.73	10.95	13.00
Alexander	375	8.31	12.58	13.48	17.65	10.93	12.59
Beaufort	563	12.21	11.11	13.57	12.95	10.83	12.13
Pender	526	12.84	15.11	11.84	9.63	10.65	12.01
Moore	855	16.24	17.84	13.74	14.39	10.53	14.55
Whiteville City	191	8.78	11.06	9.09	11.27	10.47	10.13
Richmond	527	16.92	10.64	13.52	16.12	10.44	13.53
Elkin City	88	9.89	14.74	13.48	14.77	10.23	12.62
Wake	6,964	13.07	10.78	9.20	9.48	10.22	10.55
Anson	296	13.69	23.10	13.68	13.27	10.14	14.78
Scotland	543	18.46	16.04	9.90	7.75	10.13	12.46
Union	1,816	16.44	15.91	17.62	11.12	10.08	14.23
Gaston	1,855	11.78	13.81	10.53	9.04	10.03	11.04
Jones	140	19.20	21.49	22.05	18.11	10.00	18.17
Guilford	4,987	11.81	12.29	9.77	10.06	9.95	10.78
Stanly	730	14.29	11.42	13.46	12.38	9.86	12.28
Cumberland	3,283	4.89	8.33	11.36	9.71	9.81	8.82
W.-Salem/For.	3,886	12.26	14.17	13.47	10.19	9.75	11.97
Stokes	557	14.29	13.64	13.30	10.28	9.69	12.24
Ashe	239	6.87	6.28	9.13	3.54	9.62	7.09
Mooresville City	288	14.11	11.45	15.81	11.50	9.38	12.45
Buncombe	1,739	7.38	8.62	9.95	8.57	9.32	8.77
Mitchell	163	4.71	5.75	6.92	5.63	9.20	6.44
Watauga	437	9.72	12.96	11.50	12.73	9.15	11.21
Davidson	1,240	10.45	11.36	11.03	9.22	9.11	10.23
Alleghany	132	7.26	8.73	5.60	2.99	9.09	6.73
Roanoke Rap.	203	16.22	17.19	12.62	11.42	8.87	13.26
Dare	398	12.64	8.24	11.11	9.09	8.79	9.97
Rutherford	724	5.02	8.35	8.61	6.46	8.56	7.40
Pitt	1,604	13.10	11.05	9.24	8.58	8.54	10.10
McDowell	441	6.90	12.00	13.57	13.46	8.39	10.86
Macon	349	5.71	8.02	4.73	9.43	8.31	7.24
Perquimans	145	14.49	12.06	10.34	8.28	8.28	10.69
Columbus	504	13.50	9.98	8.58	6.49	8.13	9.34
Swain	148	7.63	9.02	9.56	5.96	8.12	8.06
Bertie	247	18.06	12.72	14.98	20.34	7.69	14.76
Carteret	587	9.17	5.72	13.17	6.97	7.50	8.51
Gates	169	6.80	7.36	10.26	5.99	7.10	7.50
Camden	100	5.62	14.77	15.22	6.25	7.00	9.77
Craven	1,068	10.51	10.50	11.46	7.89	6.74	9.42
Henderson	790	9.74	11.07	11.27	8.76	6.32	9.43
Avery	209	9.79	10.09	5.03	7.55	6.22	7.74
Yancey	196	4.00	1.65	2.22	2.63	6.12	3.32
Kings Mtn.	308	11.43	9.46	10.44	11.41	5.84	9.72
Cherokee	299	2.02	7.94	4.59	9.67	5.35	5.91
Graham	94	2.13	3.00	1.60	3.92	5.32	3.19
Currituck	295	7.27	9.71	15.07	14.29	5.08	10.28
Wayne	1,343	14.66	9.70	12.89	7.46	3.57	9.66
Clay	95	10.00	7.00	5.00	3.16	3.16	5.66
Hoke	377	24.52	28.21	23.55	23.43	27.59	25.46
Tyrrell	57	10.81	27.87	20.34	12.07	24.56	19.13
Franklin	590	27.57	15.98	21.23	17.61	21.53	20.78
Thomasville City	175	12.90	16.67	18.52	18.18	21.14	17.48
Vance	556	19.82	25.38	20.00	13.60	21.04	19.97
Shelby City	249	16.80	17.55	16.41	17.57	20.48	17.76
Duplin	584	15.07	22.24	15.47	13.22	20.38	17.28
Nash-Rocky Mt.	1,228	13.97	15.07	18.24	13.76	20.34	16.28
Lenoir	780	10.00	12.63	15.14	17.89	20.13	15.16
Durham	2,324	16.26	16.93	18.12	14.21	18.76	16.86
Hertford	272	17.73	11.75	15.64	30.57	18.75	18.89
Eliz. City/Pasq.	463	15.89	13.53	19.03	9.39	18.57	15.28
Burke	1,188	16.07	14.81	14.33	13.63	18.52	15.47
Harnett	1,058	12.72	12.80	14.08	16.37	18.34	14.86
Edgecombe	562	17.12	24.22	23.36	20.04	18.33	20.61
Weldon City	93	25.00	21.18	20.45	22.34	18.28	21.45
Montgomery	360	10.75	17.83	19.44	16.67	18.05	16.55
Warren	215	31.82	19.80	30.46	13.27	17.21	22.51
Lee	520	14.96	9.52	14.89	15.36	17.12	14.37
Newton-Con.	226	18.63	18.57	17.27	17.59	16.81	17.77
Northampton	286	17.19	13.81	17.33	24.71	16.78	17.96
Mecklenburg	7,352	19.18	19.44	21.77	19.31	16.73	19.29
Chap. Hill-Carr.	834	17.14	14.58	12.38	14.51	16.43	15.01
Davie	441	11.95	13.22	12.98	13.53	16.10	13.56
Johnston	1,676	14.82	11.66	17.41	11.90	15.81	14.32
Chatham	541	16.35	18.88	17.48	16.09	15.71	16.9
Jackson	274	9.80	8.47	9.09	14.40	15.69	11.49
Alamance-Burl.	1,568	14.57	18.13	16.43	16.19	15.11	16.09
Surry	573	8.87	14.21	13.04	10.24	14.83	12.24
Hyde	76	22.08	13.70	12.00	12.16	14.47	14.88
Brunswick	775	12.54	12.55	12.25	13.18	14.45	12.99
Caswell	258	14.29	11.90	16.30	13.89	14.34	14.14
Hickory City	330	21.14	19.12	19.00	16.62	14.24	18.02
Robeson	1,704	14.38	14.15	16.18	13.41	13.97	14.42
Edenton/Chowan	180	13.33	16.40	13.89	13.89	13.89	14.28
Catawba	1,031	11.23	15.34	18.17	12.52	13.58	14.17
Randolph	1,119	15.42	13.13	15.12	12.92	13.58	14.03
Wilson	818	17.83	12.34	22.79	16.56	13.57	16.62
Orange	465	15.47	13.58	15.32	12.31	13.55	14.05
Asheville City	314	12.49	15.38	16.58	13.54	13.38	14.27
Greene	218	21.39	16.16	18.45	12.90	13.30	16.44
Onslow	1,385	16.60	18.36	15.60	14.62	13.29	15.69
Bladen	377	10.07	8.96	11.04	19.80	13.26	12.63
Lexington City	249	21.40	20.44	18.72	16.25	13.25	18.01
Sampson	552	9.16	11.31	14.77	15.21	13.04	12.70
Martin	353	9.41	19.86	12.89	13.61	13.03	13.76
Person	424	19.00	19.45	21.26	20.96	12.97	18.73
Madison	216	9.90	7.73	9.22	9.36	12.96	9.83
Wilkes	749	14.91	6.98	9.63	15.43	12.95	11.98
Halifax	398	14.17	18.67	19.78	13.93	12.81	15.87
Rowan-Salis.	1,530	11.89	12.94	14.41	14.04	12.81	13.22
Asheboro City	313	19.81	16.25	15.61	9.84	12.78	14.86
Caldwell	877	11.26	12.80	14.89	7.56	12.66	11.83
Transylvania	269	11.81	12.11	14.12	8.27	12.64	11.79
Cleveland	683	11.43	10.37	12.92	14.07	12.59	12.28
Kannapolis City	342	19.50	18.49	18.30	14.20	12.57	16.61
N.C.	92,729	13.41	13.59	13.96	12.49	12.49	13.19
Cabarrus	1,565	13.45	11.42	13.52	12.04	12.14	12.51
Granville	556	19.04	16.16	17.45	12.17	12.05	15.37

Source: N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

Pughsley pressures schools to improve

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Assistant Superintendent Lloyd Wimberly.

If staff looked only at where students are today, the system would never make progress, Wimberly said. They'd be too discouraged.

Indeed, even in this week's supercharged environment, one principal said the goal would not be met this year. "Maybe next year."

"That's the problem," one official said. "We have too many people saying 'maybe next year.'"

The new 3 Rs

The project charter, dated August and already under way, was presented to the school board Tuesday night for information. It lays out the new teaching programs being put in place, sets goals for implementation, and outlines how the district will check up to be sure programs are working as planned.

Associate Supt. Frances Haithcock says research over the last decade on how to create successful high schools has coined a new three R's: rigor, relevance and relationships.

Those words were used a lot Tuesday night, as staff offered board members a glimpse of how they will reshape the high school experience to improve achievement.

To achieve relevance, districts nationwide have created schools that are "more thematic," Haithcock says. Often, the design calls for emphasizing career pathways.

But nothing seems to create rigor and relationships quite as effectively as smallness.

Haithcock remembers her own days at Winecoff School in Cabarrus County, when graduating classes were smaller than 100. She doubts CMS could pull

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'We got an offer we couldn't refuse'...

Harding High Principal Curtis Carroll on how Supt. Jim Pughsley told principals to raise student achievement:

"Have you ever received a certified letter from the superintendent? The [high school principals] over there know what I'm talking about...."

"Sometimes you get mail, you pretend you didn't get it. Well, when you get certified mail from the superintendent, that means that something very serious is going to happen in the 2003-2004 year. We got an offer we couldn't refuse in that letter."

"High school is, above all else, a learning community. Each school must commit to demonstrating academic achievement, for every student, that will stand up to national scrutiny."

"That was what was in the letter from Dr. Pughsley... that all high schools will have 75% of our students on grade level. That is the goal, and we plan to accomplish that goal."

EOC high school composite score, percent on or above grade level

	2001	2002	2003
Berry Tech , all students	–	–	50.3
Black students	–	–	–
Butler , all students	60.3	63.3	72.7
Black students	40.7	45.7	–
East Meck , all students	64.7	63.5	62.6
Black students	39.7	41.1	–
Garinger , all students	32.4	35.9	38.9
Black students	28.2	32.4	–
Harding , all students	59.2	62.9	62.4
Black students	46.1	52.3	–
Hopewell , all students	–	65.9	69.0
Black students	–	39.4	–
Independence , all students	58.9	58.9	57.5
Black students	48.1	45.2	–
Midwood , all students	33.5	30.6	–
Black students	22.9	22.5	–
Myers Park , all students	64.9	69.0	73.4
Black students	27.8	30.9	–
North Meck , all students	61.4	64.7	70.7
Black students	32.0	30.0	–
Northwest Arts , all students	57.9	59.8	67.1
Black students	32.2	38.9	–
Olympic , all students	38.6	48.2	57.0
Black students	26.7	32.7	–
Providence , all students	75.5	77.9	83.8
Black students	36.6	42.9	–
South Meck , all students	64.8	65.3	71.8
Black students	35.4	34.3	–
E.E. Waddell , all students	–	39.0	42.4
Black students	–	29.9	–
West Charlotte , all students	26.1	30.2	25.5
Black students	21.5	27.7	–
West Meck , all students	47.6	46.9	44.0
Black students	37.8	38.5	–
Vance , all students	56.5	56.6	50.4
Black students	38.6	39.9	–

Note: Dashes for Hopewell and Waddell in 2001, and for Berry in 2001 and 2002, represent data unavailable because the schools had just opened. Other dashes represent data unavailable from CMS or the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

Pughsley pressures schools to improve

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off schools that size these days.

“School systems can operationalize one or two, but they don’t seem to be able to do more,” she said.

And she concedes that CMS has no plans to attempt small schools in a large way.

A small high school planned in conjunction with the Johnson & Wales culinary arts institution in downtown Charlotte could be one such effort.

But board members, under pressure to build suburban schools, expressed reservations about the culinary high school idea as recently as last week.

The ninth-grade academies (Story, Page 10) are the only effort under way to create the intimate environments that Haithcock and many other graduates of small high schools remember with fondness.

One of the key drawbacks of small high schools was a key argument made for consolidation in the 1940s and 1950s: Small schools couldn’t support lab sci-

ences and upper-level coursework for advanced students.

Haithcock concedes that Winecoff was “not a wonderful academic experience.” Only four in her graduating class of 94 went to college. She remembers being identified as a having a bright future in the mills because of her nimble hands.

In her case, in large part because of a well-educated mother, she enrolled at Women’s College (now UNC-Greensboro). But she credits Winecoff’s nurturing high school experience with making her ready to wrestle with tougher college academics.

Thousands of Mecklenburg students graduated from small high schools, at places named Plato

Price, J.H. Gunn, Thomasboro, Bain and Sterling. Some of the schools were white and poorly equipped. Some were black and barely equipped.

East Mecklenburg High opened in 1949, followed by North Meck in 1950, West Meck in 1951 and South Meck in 1958. The small high schools phased out their graduating classes.

At Winecoff, as at several Mecklenburg high school sites like Thomasboro, Bain, Gunn and Sterling, school districts now operate elementary schools. In some cases, as at Winecoff, alumni groups keep the high school spirit alive.

Indeed, today’s focus on high

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Changing how adults ‘look at students, work with them and treat them’

Viewers of Tuesday night’s school board meeting were treated to a rare unscripted sequence after board member Lee Kindberg asked about the 9th-grade academies set up this fall to deal with, as she put it, “the bulge in the boat – with almost 3,000 more students in ninth grade than in the eighth or 10th grade. And I’m concerned about a lot of those kids.”

Supt. Jim Pughsley said action under way was “somewhat different at the various high schools. Then, with a wry smile, he added:

“If you’d like to get a little flavor of it, there’s probably at least a half-dozen principals just seeking this opportunity.”

“Was that another certified letter?” Kindberg quipped. (Box, Page 9.)

Excerpts from four principals’ comments:

–
 “We’re doing academic advisories. We have students in grades 9 through 12 in those [academic] advisories that work together... We have a card and for every child we write the progress report – what they did well in, what they need help in – and we

conference them. It has been a most amazing experience, that simply looking and writing has made such an impact on our kids. The upperclassmen are supporting the freshmen and sophomores in so many positive ways.”

“Of the three Rs, that’s the relationship part.”

– Pam Espinosa, Olympic

–
 “We have re-arranged our 9th-grade classes so they are primarily in the main building... they’re all together... the students don’t feel like they have to show out for upperclassmen.”

– Craig Witherspoon, West Meck

–
 “What we’ve discovered is, to take from a book title, if you don’t feed the teachers they’ll eat the kids. We’re focusing on a lot of professional development through the academy model.”

– David Baldaia, Berry Tech

–
 “Our biggest emphasis at this time is... retraining the adults, the way they look at the student, work with them and treat them.”

– Jo Ella Ferrell, Garinger

2003 CMS composite

Percentage of high school students at or above grade level on composite score based on all end-of-course tests taken.

All students	62.0
Female	62.2
Male	61.8
American Indian	58.8
Asian	71.1
Black	42.4
Hispanic	50.6
Multiracial	69.2
White	78.8
Free/reduced lunch	41.1
Not free/reduced lunch	68.9
Limited English	45.0
Not limited English	63.2
Not migrant	62.0

Pughsley pressures schools to improve

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schools is the direct consequence of opportunities missed at elementary school.

For Haithcock, reading is the key.

Research, she says, verifies that the most cost-effective thing communities can do to keep children out of jail later is to be sure they can read by the end of first grade.

The children who can't read by then leave first grade knowing a secret about themselves: "They understand that they are a failure at their job," Haithcock asserts. Every year thereafter, course after course reinforces their sense of failure, because every course requires reading.

The new programs instituted in CMS in the last six or so years will create "a completely different district," Haithcock believes. But it will take another three years to implement.

Pughsley is impatient. At least with the high school piece. "I know we can do better," he said Tuesday night.

The pressure Pughsley is exerting is not just to help lagging students. It is also to push high-achievers, and to graduate more of them.

The district's 2005 goals state only that 90% of all high school students will be grade level. But there's a second part – that 50% of all high school students will be on level 4, the top rung of the state's testing program.

For 2002, the actual numbers inside CMS were as low as 18% in geometry and U.S. history.

The principals "have heard the second part as well," Pughsley said.

Small is big

In New York City, the Gates Foundation will invest \$51.2 million in new, small high schools, some in new, small, free-standing buildings.

Decisions made daily signal what's valued

"Even amidst crisis, the best principals consider the long-term interests of the school, continuously touch on intangibles like vision, mission, and motivation as they proceed....Any decision – whom to hire, how to handle a dispute among teachers or a student disciplinary incident – can either reinforce or blur the school's basic commitments...."

"Every judgment made in the school either advances the schools goals and commitments or sends a signal that the goals and commitments are, if not irrelevant, perhaps at best contingent."

– From "Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship," by Bradley Portin and others for the Center on Reinventing Public Education, September 2003, downloadable from www.crpe.org/pubs.shtm#leadership

In Seattle, Gates money is erecting small academies within large high school buildings.

Raleigh-based N.C. Public School Forum will manage an \$11 million grant from Gates that is designed to create up to 45 new high schools. The spigot might be extended to \$32 million if matching money is located.

Whether the North Carolina effort will focus on small buildings or simply small learning units hasn't been determined, says Forum Executive John Dornan.

But it's pretty clear where the focus will be.

"There's virtual unanimity among educators, and that's rare," that big schools aren't good, Dornan said. The problems show up in lower grades and attendance, higher dropout rates and in lower teacher morale. "We defy that understanding every time we build a big high school."

And with countywide districts, North Carolina's high schools have tended to be bigger even than those of other states. In North Carolina, "we really have created very large high schools," Dornan said.

Dornan said he is most enthusiastic about the programs that create job-based theme schools. In Greenville, Pitt County's school district is pursuing a health sciences academy. The school would

adjoin a hospital and be focused on supplying employees to the city's large medical services industry.

But small schools are fragile, no matter the construction techniques. "They are vulnerable to turnover in the principalship and superintendency," Dornan notes. And success stories seem difficult to share with other educators.

"I'm sure you have some very promising projects in schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. But nobody's heard about them. We have a terrible ability to share good ideas across the state."

One local example of the industry-focused academy model is Berry Academy of Technology, which opened in August 2002 and plays its first home football game Friday night. Principal David Baldaia was reporting to the school board Tuesday night on its five work-oriented academies. The \$51 million school is not well known even in Mecklenburg County.

The movement for smaller high schools has another Achilles heel: Dornan acknowledged that there is insufficient research thus far to prove the value of such smaller academies within larger buildings.

But he acknowledged that programs that don't require ripping up yesterday's big-box schoolhouses-

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Pughsley pressures schools to improve

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es “are much less threatening to the people who pay the bills.”

Academically, the best proposals “lead to a clear economic pathway... there’s an opportunity at the end of the road.” He cites academies sponsored by computer-related that include job offers for successful students. “It gave students a very tangible, real dream of a well-paid job.” And with that prize identified, “school looks a lot better” and holds youths’ attention, Dornan said.

Dornan is particularly enthusiastic about “middle college,” a melding of high school coursework with the freedom of community college.

A middle college might operate between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., accommodating youthful habits – and of course the research that shows that teens perform better academically if they sleep later than 7:15 bell schedules in high schools allow.

Middle schools have a niche, Dornan said. “These kids don’t fit the mold, but they are anything but stupid.” He thinks students may learn more “because they are treated like adults.”

Dornan acknowledges that education is faddish. There is also a hint in the current trend that schools are for sale – that private interests willing to invest millions that local school systems don’t have may be able to shape not just the name of a school, but the skills of its graduates.

Dornan believes the Gates push for smaller schools will have an impact.

“I have never seen as much effort by a foundation to build momentum behind an idea,” Dornan said.

Other foundations like Ford and Annenberg have committed millions to pilot projects on various educational reform ideas. The Gates project was unusual in “getting leadership support at the top” by giving grants to trade associations that then lobby local educators.

Dornan was part of a high school graduating class of 200 in

Word count

Word count from Tuesday’s presentation by Lloyd Wimberly, CMS assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, on a new Academic Excellence Charter for high school students:

“Relevance”	5
“Relationships”	3
“Rigor”	2
“Very very exciting”	1
“Very exciting”	1
“Very very excited”	5
“Very excited”	4
“So excited”	1
“Very very thrilled”	3
“Very thrilled”	1
“So thrilled”	1
“Very very involved”	1
“Very very pleased”	1

western Pennsylvania. Last June, CMS graduated 5,600 at 18 ceremonies, several of which were very small.

– Steve Johnston

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 27** International Festival (the 28th annual), 10 a.m.-6 p.m., UNCC Barnhardt Student Activity Center. Volunteers needed on Thursday-Saturday: Call 704-687-2521 or e-mail mswalsh@email.uncc.edu. Full schedule at www.uncc.edu/ifest
- 29** District 2 parent leaders meeting, 6 p.m. Berry Tech, 1430 Alleghany St.
- 30** Joint meeting of school board and county commissioners to discuss bond sales, 1 p.m., Government Center.

OCTOBER

- 2** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Government Center, Room CH14.

- 9** Equity Committee, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 13** Board work session on transportation, 11:30 a.m., Board Room.
- 14** School board meets, 6 p.m., Board Room.
- 15** Education Budget Advisory Committee, 7:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce, 330 S. Tryon St.
- 16** Charlotte Advocates for Education annual meeting, 7-9 a.m, Hilton uptown, 222 E. 3rd St., Piedmont Ballroom. Speaker: Dr. Michael D. Usdan, senior fellow, Institute for Educational Leadership, on “Re-Thinking School Board Governance;” followed by moderated panel with school board candidates. Cost: \$25. For reservations, call 704-335-0100 ext. 14 or message annualmeet-

- ing@advocatesfored.org.
- 16** Finance, Capital & Facilities committee of the board, 4 p.m., Board Conference Room.
- 25** “Do Children/Youth Need Our Time?” sponsored by Parents on the Move, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., UNCC Cone Center. Information, Blanche Penn, 704-890-4101.
- 31, Nov. 1, 2** Faith and Literacy Weekend, a project of the Charlotte Reads Literacy Coalition to encourage faith groups to partner with schools in improving reading.

NOVEMBER

- 8** Education Fair, exhibits by area nonpublic, charter and public schools, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Merchandise Mart. Free admission. Sponsor: Bessire & Associates.

Dropping out of school is a 'long-term' process

"According to Research- Brief, research shows that 'Students who felt they were engaged in school (based on a self-assessment) were less likely to drop out, while student engagement in school (as evaluated by their teachers) was an even stronger predictor of school success.... Dropping out of high school is the culmination of a long-term process of disengagement from school.'

"Children cannot meet our high expectations if we do not provide adequate support for their learning. The first step in providing that support is to focus more on the children we educate and less on hollow statistics."

– Gene Carter, executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, www.ascd.org



Carter

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Based on the funds on hand at the beginning of this month, this journal will be able to publish just six more issues.

A community journal must have the support of its readers. Are you doing your part?

To make a tax-deductible donation, send your check to The Swann Fellowship, 1510 E. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28204-2410.

Or if you prefer to donate online or anonymously, go to www.networkforgood.org. Use keyword Swann Fellowship.

Thank you

DidYaHear?

● Retired Regional Supt. and ex-principal John Fries is reported enjoying his "endless summer" – and an occasional break via consulting. He told a gathering that he no longer dreads Sunday nights, which for decades preceded the dawn of a new school week.

● Does Hugh McColl really show up at schools half-shaven these days? Absolutely, says one fan of the cowboy-booted education advocate. One side of the ex-banker's face was smooth on a recent school visit. Maybe the other side was enjoying "endless summer."

● The child brought home a book from elementary school. It wasn't named "Green Eggs and Ham." It was just green. Before school opened, PTA volunteers and staff had swabbed the school's 60,000-book collection with bleach. But mold was left to grow inside. Yuck, Sam-I-Am. "I would not, could not, in the rain. Not in the dark. Not on a train."

– Send intelligence to swannfello@aol.com