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## Middle Schools Are In

By Pamela Banks

In Durham City Schools, junior high school died in May, and when school reopens next week, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students will attend middle schools.

The middle school concept is a new and growing approach for improving the education of students caught in the limbo between childhood and adolescence. The concept seeks to produce better students by broadening the educational objectives.

The middle school concept also attempts to address many of the emotional and physical pressures that plague students who are developing from childhood to adolescence.

For example, a key component of the middle school guidance and counseling program assigns each student an advisor who helps him gather and understand school rules and regulations and other information vital to success at that school.

During regular twice a week or weekly meetings with students assigned to them, advisors will also discuss approaches to personality development, and other issues that encourage the value of education.

In another example, math in middle school is not taught as an isolated subject, but teachers try to demonstrate math's relationships to other subjects, such as English and social studies. Proponents say his method stimulates students to have more interest in education, and to see its value more clearly.

In Durham's new middle school classrooms,

students will have no more than three teachers for the basic courses. The basic courses are language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. Each teacher will specialize in one or two subjects.

For other subjects, such as music and art, students will have different teachers.

As a practical matter, what this means is:

- Students will change classes less often. Among other things, this will reduce the number of distractions they face.

- Students will be taught to understand the various ways that subjects relate to other subjects.

- Students will benefit from the fact that each teaching team plans together with the same objectives in mind for their students. Therefore, more attention is focused on magnifying strengths and correcting academic weaknesses.

But though the concept receives high marks in Durham where it was adopted by the board of education earlier this year, the approach does have its critics.

Some critics contend that the concept pampers students and does not place sufficient emphasis on pursuits.

However, supporters of the middle schools including Dr. Frank Weaver, Durham City Schools associate superintendent are equally as critical of junior high schools. Weaver says in many cases junior high schools are just "little high schools," and are too heavily subject-oriented, and do not put

enough focus on the needs of adolescents. He also says junior high schools create too wide a gap between elementary school and the next grade level.

The criticisms notwithstanding, middle school proponents in the Durham City school system believe switching from the junior high to the new concept solves several problems these students and their teachers face.

"The junior high age has always been a difficult population for school systems to handle because of the many changes youngsters are going through," said City Schools superintendent Dr. Cleveland Hammonds.

The middle school program will be implemented at Brogden, Holton, Shepard and Rogers-Herr schools.

Weaver says the plan has not caused any extra expenses and officials believe the plan can be operated without additional costs. For example, the switch does not require any extra teachers. Since the first of the year, according to Weaver, middle school teachers have been involved in intensive staff development workshops to prepare them for the new approach.

Among the features the teachers must adjust is "time block scheduling."

Time block scheduling is one of the unique functions of middle schools and differ significantly from the standard 55 minute instructional periods

in junior high schools.

This allows teachers to devote instructional time to areas as needed.

The Durham plan schedules 200 minutes per day for the basic courses. Other courses such as music, art, reading, physical education and occupational awareness will be taught during the remaining 100 minutes.

The basics will be taught each day of the school year. The school year has 180 days.

On 45 of those days, students will study reading, art, music and other electives, along with the basics. In addition, students will get physical education and career awareness instruction on 90 days of the school year.

Each of the three grades will operate on a different daily schedule. The sixth grade classes will have longer time blocks, with fewer class changes. The eighth grade students will have the shortest time blocks and more class changes as a method of preparing them for the 55-minute, seven-period school day in senior high school.

Currently, plans are being finalized to hold open house at all middle school centers on August 22, a day before school opens.

School officials will announce the specific times for these sessions later. The sessions are designed to give parents and others a chance to better acquaint themselves with the new program.

### Haircuts And Checkers

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### Deltas Hold Reunion

See Page 4

### "Dips" Is The Best In Chapel Hill

See Page 8

## Heavy Campaign Debts Dim Chances of Michaux Write-In

By Joseph E. Green throughout the 2nd district, said that blacks Durham lawyer H.M. that she has talked to say "Mickey" Michaux to run that they are going to support Marin over Valentine if Michaux does not go with a write-in.

"Marin is clearly a Republican. You know where he stands. Valentine is wearing democratic clothing, but that is about all," she added. "At least

with Marin you know Ted Kennedy, of Massachusetts, and Senator Gary Hart, of Colorado. They have all expressed their disappointment."

Since his defeat, Ms. Gill said, "Kennedy Michaux has been getting told Mickey that he understood what happened to him. Fauntroy, chair of the Congressional November," she added.

Black Caucus, Senator Walter Fauntroy, chairwoman of the Congressional November," she added.

So the chances of running a spirited and successful write-in campaign that would lead to victory in the fall over the Democratic candidate I.T. Valentine and the Republican hopeful, Jack Marin, appear to be mostly wishful thinking.

Yet Michaux, broke though his campaign may be, still holds the balance of power in the November election and everyone from Valentine to Marin to Governor Jim Hunt is trying to win his support and the following of the more than \$100,000 in debt.

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Valentine has been trying to meet with Michaux since the run-off according to a Michaux aide, Ms. Pat Gill, but a meeting has not been set up.

In a related matter, one political expert who was close to the Michaux camp said that it is not going to be easy for the governor to mend the political fences that he damaged by not supporting Michaux during the campaign.

"Everybody is kind of upset with Hunt," she said, "he sat on his hands and that is not going to be easily forgotten. He could have helped us and when we needed him and he disappeared on us. The next time around we just might disappear on him."

Ms. Gill said that Michaux has not made up his mind concerning a write-in. Many of his supporters are still urging him to do so, she added.

"Valentine really made a race issue out of the campaign," Ms. Gill said, "he complicated things for himself by saying shortly after the election that our support of his campaign was not essential. People heard that and they are not going to forget it," she added.

Ms. Gill, who coordinated the voter effort

## City Schools Open Monday; County Schools Follow Next Week

By Pam Banks

Over the next two weeks, more than 24,000 Durham County students will flock back to school, re-enacting an annual ritual of mild chaos and confusion before education settles into its normal, nine-month pattern.

Durham City Schools will open for students Monday, though teachers began working a week earlier. In the county, schools open August 30, and county teachers started working Wednesday.

Ms. Cindy Gardner, county schools public relations officer, said the county schools have no new instructional programs this year. But on the other hand, dozens of students are being transferred from schools they attended last year to other schools to help relieve overcrowding and long bus rides. County school officials believe these transfers will enhance the educational environment.

In the city schools, the major change is the new middle school program for grades six through eight. Under this program, last year's fifth grade students will attend the sixth grade at one of four former junior high schools — Shepard, Holton, Brogden and Rogers-Herr.

"We are looking forward to a real good year in spite of salary freezes and lunch program increases," said Dr. Cleveland Hammonds, Durham City Schools

superintendent. "We're getting off to a very fine start."

The city schools will conduct an open house program Sunday in all schools to kick off the new school year. Open house hours for middle schools and high schools are 3-5 p.m., and open house hours for elementary schools are 2-4 p.m.

Some 777 classroom teachers and other education professionals, including principals, guidance counselors, media specialists and librarians make up the faculties and staffs of the

Durham City Schools. Hammonds said the system begins classes Monday for its 8,500 students, about 12 teachers short of what the system should have.

According to Hammonds, the shortage is caused by the method the state board of education uses to calculate the number of students in each of the state's school systems, and the birth rate decline that has been around since about 1968.

For the past two years, Hammonds continued, the state has underestimated the city teacher allotment and later had to assign more teachers to the local city system after a tally of students during the first ten days of the school year revealed the state's undercount.

However, Hammonds is not sure the state will grant additional teachers this year, even if the estimate is short, primarily because of the legislatively imposed freeze on teacher salaries. If the state does not provide the additional teachers, then the local school board will have no alternative but to provide for them out of local funds alone.

The Durham County school system had to hire 120 teachers last year with local money because the state's teacher allotment does not allow the county system to have the quality of junior high school programs it desires, according to Ms. Gardner.

Ms. Gardner noted (Continued on Page 3)



City School Superintendent Cleveland Hammonds

## Dr. James A. Clarke Named Halifax County School Superintendent

With Dr. Clarke's appointment, there are now three black superintendents in North Carolina school systems. Durham City and Northampton County are the other two.

Since his employment with the Department of Public Instruction in December, 1977, Clarke has worked in the area of community education and community schools which includes com-



DR. CLARKE

The 180-page report points out that the AAAs are not actively involved in outreach activities to include more minority elderly in their programs. It also notes that these agencies are not collecting data efficiently, which would allow for effective monitoring and evaluation of their programs to determine the extent of program participation by elderly minorities. The report further notes that minority elderly are often excluded from aging program planning and implementation processes; that there are limited written materials available on aging programs in a language other than English; and that there are almost no bilingual employees to assist non-English speaking elderly.

The Commission's study was undertaken following the issuance of a 1977 age discrimination study by the Commission. That study indicated that older members of minority groups were often victims of age, as well as racial or ethnic discrimination. This new report is based on six

case analyses. An Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is responsible for developing and administering plans for a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for older persons.

The Commission's findings and recommendations for the entire study will be included in Part II, which will be published later. Part II will also contain the results of a national survey of state and area agencies covering minority experiences in connection with employment, grants and contracts, and service delivery of older Americans act programs.

The Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding agency concerned with discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

The six cities selected for the study have, among them, substantial representation of

American Indians, Alaskan natives, Asian and Pacific Island Americans, blacks and Hispanics. They are: Bridgeport, Connecticut; Cleveland, Ohio; Honolulu, Hawaii; San Francisco, California; Tucson, Arizona; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Commission also attempted to include Euro-Ethnic Americans in the study but found, without exception, data were unavailable.

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