

# Adams Reviews Outlook For Coming Year

**Q. What were some of the goals you had when you came to Forsyth County and what progress have you made toward those goals?**

**A.** Well, I had a number of goals in coming into the school system and I'll try to list some of those in order. First of all, I had a goal of just trying to assess what the situation was that I was assuming in terms of responsibility. I did a number of things to help me do that.

I organized a community assessment program which gave me a good input about perceptions of the citizens toward their schools and about their schools.

I organized a number of task forces that gave me input on a number of areas of concern in the school system. I went out and met with as many community groups as I could, to try to help me do that. I think I spoke to about 75 different groups the first year I was here.

So just knowing about the community and the school was one of the first goals I had and to get a good feel for what people really thought about their schools. I think I was able to do that very well.

**Q. You mentioned something about the k-6 plans. Will there be any k-6 schools in the black or predominantly black neighborhoods?**

**A.** That's possible, but my next major thrust will be the secondary schools. As we could organize K-6 districts anywhere be it the black neighborhood or any where else in the district it will continue to be a goal of mine as long as we can have a naturally integrated district. The k-6 districts that have been formed were districts that would balance racially and would not have to jump across districts to balance racially the districts.

**Q. I know you were not superintendent of the school system when they first began integrating, but do you have any plans to make an**

**originally black school into a senior high school?**

**A.** Yes. That's in my plans and I've stated that over and over again, except I can't speak for the board. I've stated that Carver would definitely be one of those high schools and also if we look at a plan that would require more than two additional senior high schools. Its possible that we might look at Anderson as another one or Hill. I don't know if Hill could be in that group but Hill is a possibility to form a facility that would be adaptable to senior high schools at this time.

**Q. Do you foresee anytime in the future going back to either four grades in Senior high school or three grades in senior high school?**

**A.** I'm looking at both the fourth grade structure now and the third grade, and I

plan to put that before the public and the board sometime this fall. I'm looking at both options at this time.

**Q. I know we are operating under a court order, but how much are we sticking to the race ratio in the school system?**

**A.** We generally try to keep the ratio as closely related to the community's population as we can. We are not bound by specific per cent ratios, but we have tried to use that as a reference point in our configuration through out the school system.

**Q. Right now is it one-third black?**

**A.** It is about 33 per cent black at this time.

**Q. Do you try to balance your faculty?**

**A.** The faculty is pretty well balanced with the same



general ratio. That's the mid point that we try to look at and stay as close as we can.

**Q. Does that go all the way down to the classroom level?**

**A. Yes.**  
**Q. Does that present problems in terms of ability ranking or what kind of problems does that present?**

**A.** Do you mean for students?

**Q. Yes.**

**A.** Our elementary schools are based heterogeneously.

The additional groupings that take place are for instructional purposes, like a reading group and then that's resolved. Do you believe a student should take a test before he can graduate?

Well this is something that I think we are caught up in this thing called accountability. I would suggest that if you really want to know where I really stand on this you ought to go back and get the position paper I wrote, and I was probably one of the few superintendents in the state of North Carolina, that expressed great concern about this that it can be misused and misinterpreted. It was presented to the legislature, to the governor and to any number of groups. I support testing, I've always supported assessments to determine deficiencies strengths and weaknesses.

**Q. Are you trying to less stereotype the classes?**

**A.** Yes. We have a number of coed programs. Physical education and Home Ec a whole number, no longer segregated by sex. I think we've come a long way in that regard.

**Q. Two part question. Do you see any concern about the role the federal government is playing in local education and secondly do you think that the proposed Department of education would make any changes in the relationship between the federal and public school system.**

**A.** I love to get back the federal dollars. Those are our dollars too and if we don't get them someone else is going to get them. And it has always been my position to get all the dollars for our schools because they represent our tax dollars. On the other hand anytime you get federal dollars there are a lot of strings attached. I do think that there could be less regulations and less paper work. I will continue to strive for that. I think that the Department of Education is needed. Education is such a big business in this country. Education can get more consideration as a



Dr. James A. Adams

separate department.

**Q. Do you foresee in the next few years black principals at the senior high levels in Forsyth County?**

**A.** Yes this is a goal I have. I don't see any reason that their won't be.

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## Adams Statement On Competency Test

The concept of graduation competency, like testing and assessment, is one which I generally support. I believe most educators share that view. It is reasonable for legislators and the public to expect that high school graduation carries with it a level of minimum competence which will permit the graduate to function well in a job and as a productive member of society.

Here again, a number of concerns arise as I review the proposed legislation. I am fearful of the potential abuses that may accompany introduction of graduation competency unless adequate safeguards are established.

Therefore, the following observations are listed to convey my concerns:

### Observation No. 1

A careful study should be carried out before minimum achievement standards are set in the areas of reading, language arts, and arithmetic.

### Observation No. 2

Plans must be made to provide effective remedial instruction for students who do not meet the minimum test scores on their first attempt. The use of minimum competency tests could contribute to the withdrawal from school of students who fail the test or assume they will not be able to pass the test. I am also fearful that we may create undue pressure and anxiety for pupils who are unable to perform, and this pressure could be a negative force on their mental health. We must keep in focus the fact that the holding power of the public schools has increased significantly in recent years and schools are responsible for meeting more diverse needs of students than ever before.

### Observation No. 3

Competency requirements should not be so limited to communication and computation skills that the curricu-

lum is too restricted. Survival and success depend upon more than the ability to read, write, and compute.

### Observation No. 4

Too much emphasis on minimum competencies should not be allowed to restrict the development of maximum competencies. Competency cannot be objectively evaluated to the extent that success in later life can be predicted. I am greatly concerned that the established minimum could become the expected norm for high achievers.

In light of the foregoing observations, it is my opinion that minimum competency standards can be set for skills to be learned and for graduation. However, these standards can be set for skills to be learned and for graduation. However, these standards could best be set at the local level under the following structure:

1. Encourage the idea of individual pupil progress from grade to grade and skill to skill but have an established standard that must be met before going to the next level. This would necessitate special programs to meet skill deficiencies.
2. Focus the above thrust in kindergarten through the third grade. Thus retentions would be primarily limited to these grades.
3. Identify pupils who qualify for special programs and place them as early as possible.
4. Help students through effective guidance to consider all program alternatives which can best prepare them for college or a career upon graduation from high school.
5. Administer a minimum competency exam prior to graduation as a means of distinguishing the level of skill competency for potential graduates. Based on the results of the exam, consideration should be given to the type of diploma issued.
6. Consider the ability levels of individual students in setting up any minimum competency testing.

The concern about the effectiveness of education is real and demands the best efforts of all of us—educators, students, parents, and government at all levels. Assessment, accountability, and minimum competency standards for high school graduation are concepts which should be considered and possibly included in the total effort to improve the quality of education.

These concepts raise many very complex questions and we must be careful not to plunge headlong into a massive program of statewide assessment and high school competency standards without very thorough attention to the ramifications and pitfall.

## The Largest Room in the World is Room For Improvement



By Naomi C. McLean  
Business Writer

What you are, you really have. No one can take this away from you. When money and social position are lost in financial mishaps, the best of your wealth is still yours. This is your training, experience, manners, and accomplishments that in the past brought you the other material values.

Our modern age makes most of the working wisdom of the world available to all. A wise person can make a program for himself from offerings given by a city—walking in a large city and really using its schools, parks, libraries, free concerts, and other instructive facilities.

Today there are opportunities available, one might go to learn anything. It is left to the person to decide what he wants to know and

then look around. There are libraries, schools, magazines, radios, televisions and many more giving information pertaining to locations available for additional education.

There is not one of us, when he looks over that property which he calls himself, who cannot discover a lot that ought to be done with it. The next step, to do something about the weaknesses, is a harder one to undertake.

Let us not take our intellectual wisdom too seriously and become a bore to our friends and those we meet. Knowledge should bring joy and wit into conversation. It should help us to be interesting. Therefore, the more knowledge we have should bring joy and improve our conversational background, so those

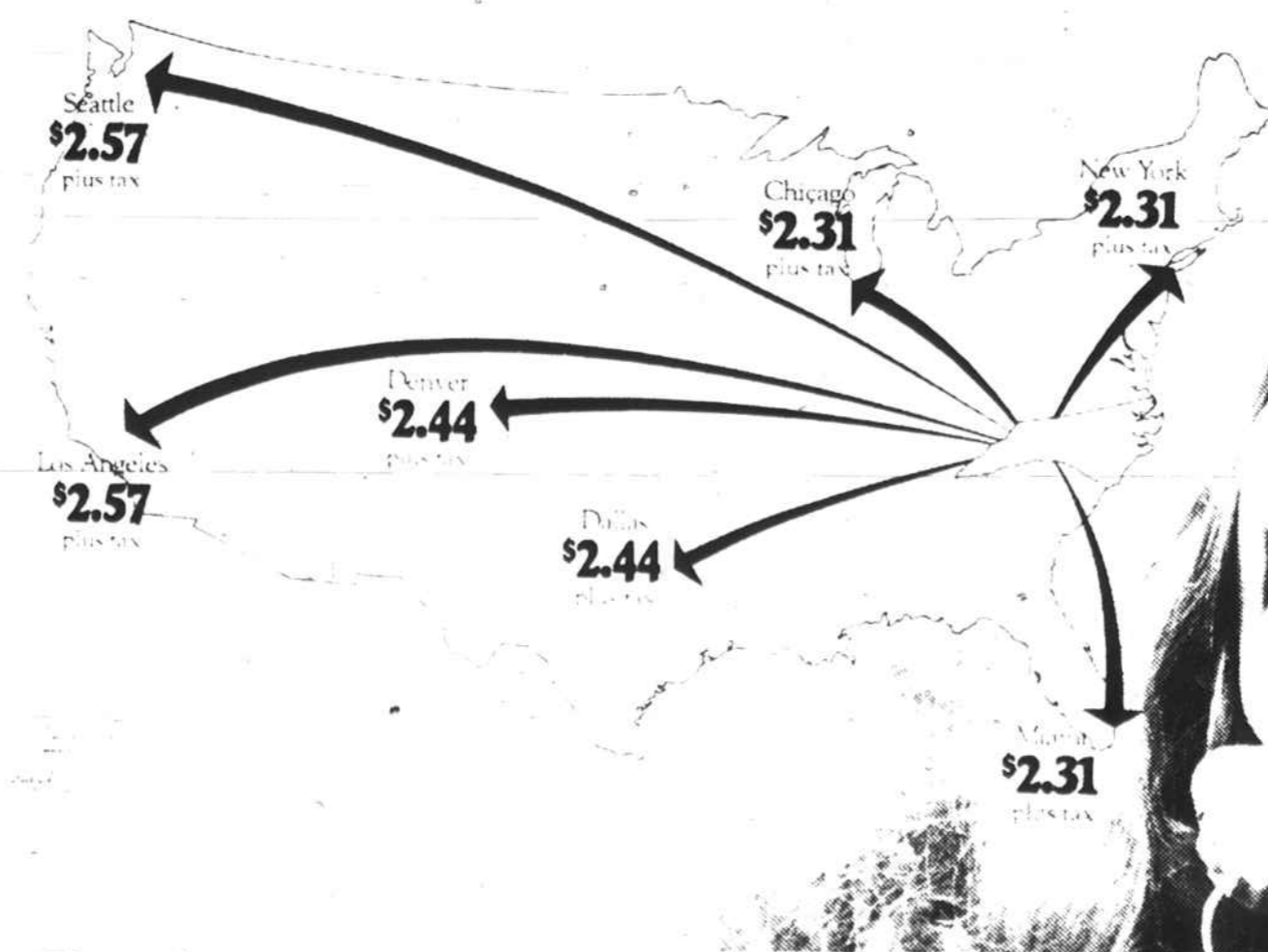
with whom we come in contact will enjoy our company.

The education offered in the schools and universities has the value of continual practice. Your real education is something you have to get for yourself, and much of it must be in the years that follow the time of graduation.

Of course, a person of forty or even older, may appear ridiculous, but there is some schooling that can only begin at forty. Frankly speaking, it isn't the age that should hold a person back or keep him from improving his knowledge if his health allows him to do so. If there is a desire for more knowledge, time, energy and money will be well spent.

The room for improvement is a large one and can accommodate many people.

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