

FORUM

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Winston-Salem Chronicle

75 cents

"The Twin City's Award-Winning Weekly"

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28% of gifted students in Greensboro are minority

Local school board looks to Task Force

AG Project results in 184% increase

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Staff Writer

In Winston-Salem, 38% of the student body is minority, but only 5.6% of those in AG classes are minority. When asked what Winston-Salem is doing about the low numbers of minority students in gifted classes, Garlene Grogan, chair of the school board, noted that she was not familiar with the Greensboro AG Project, but felt that the AG Task Force would study a number of successful programs in deciding how to address the problem.

The AG Task Force is composed of teachers, administrators, parents and individuals who will meet regularly throughout the year to address issues surrounding gifted students.

Emily Simeon, the new program manager for exceptional children, responded, "I feel sure we will have some strong recom-

mendations in that direction from our AG Task Force."

Board member Grace Efird also pointed to the AG Task Force, and said, "I think this will be the year for some great research on that. I will follow the Task Force with great interest, and I think they will do a thorough study."

Dr. Lee Bernick, a member of the Greensboro board of education, notes that more than study is required.

"It does take a special effort. If you truly believe all races and cultures have the potential to have gifted children, then you have a responsibility to find them. It's not enough to acknowledge the problem. It's not enough to say we don't know what to do about it."

Dr. Bernick was on the board when it budgeted \$96,000 for the AG Project, which is now in its fifth year.

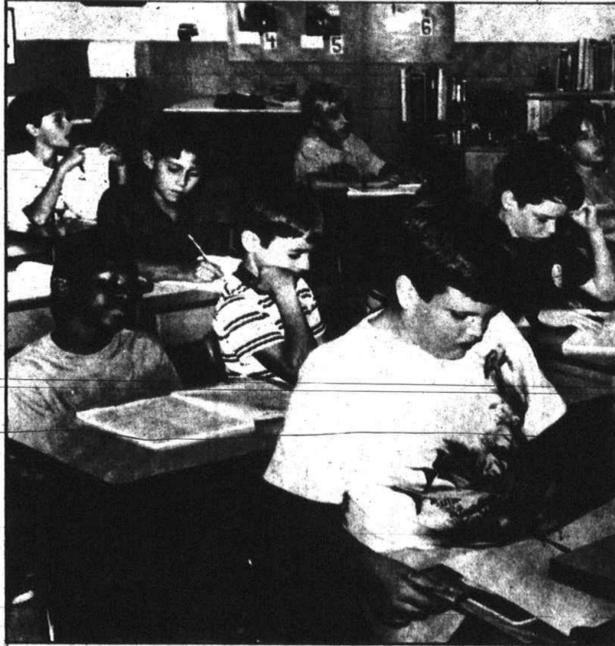


Photo by Mike Cunningham

In Winston-Salem, 5.6% of students in gifted classes are minority, compared to 28% in Greensboro.

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Staff Writer

When the Greensboro Board of Education decided to address the problem of too few minority children in gifted classes, they didn't fool around. They designated nearly \$100,000 to find out why, and to determine how to increase opportunities for identifying gifted minority students.

It worked. In 1986, when the AG Project was initiated, 55% of all students were minority, and 13% of those in gifted classes were minority. In the first three years, the number of minority students in gifted classes in grades 2-5 increased by 184%, from 28%.

To achieve this success, no standards were changed, no requirements were made easier. School officials say that the key to the acceptance of the project is the fact that every student who

comes into the gifted program has met the same standard.

How did they do it? They provided access. Key components of the AG Project include: a systematic review of existing test scores, educating teachers about identifying and referring students, educating parents on how to access the gifted program, and a systematic evaluation sequence for minority students.

Minorities uninformed

According to the findings of the AG Project, white parents are generally more informed about the gifted program, including the right to ask for their child to be retested. Many minority parents simply have very little information about the program.

"We found that white parents were accessing all of the opportunities," says Mike Joyce, lead AG

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ON THE AVANT-GARDE

By TANG NIVRI

Fighting with ham hocks

You know it's amazing how many of us will do things we know that we aren't suppose to do — as long as nobody is looking.

Like all of the white folks who read last week's column — even after they knew they weren't suppose to peek. Well anyway, welcome back.

Sitting in Sunday school class the other morning I was reminded of how powerful words really are. During the discussion, a woman remarked that if a person stole several million dollars such as in the recent S&L scandal, we refer to it as embezzlement. If one were to steal several thousand dollars, it would be termed as misappropriation. But if one were to steal a 49 cent piece of chewing gum, the whole world would call you an outright thief — a rogue!

Funny, isn't it, how we use words to promote certain ideas, to perpetuate certain images, and to protect certain people.

I first learned the true meaning of the word vacancy. I remember seeing the word flashing on the outdoor signs in front of the many hotels my family passed as we traveled on our way to New York City.

It was when we tried to stop at one of the hotels that I understood what that vacancy sign really meant. If you are white and have the money, come on in. If you're colored and have the money keep on driving. Later on I learned the meaning of the term, "state's rights" which on the surface appeared to suggest that states simply wanted more autonomy. But of course what "state's rights" really meant was "Jim Crow, now, and Jim Crow forever more."

But despite efforts to rid ourselves of the many double entendres hidden within our language, we still have a long way to go.

For example, over the past few months, the whole world has focused on the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fact that many of the Baltic republics want their freedom.

The resulting unrest, and the violent conflict that has followed this drive for independence has been characterized by the media as "ethnic violence." That is to say, when the Serbs, Estonians, Croates, Lithuanians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, decided to somehow fight it out, the media quickly called it "ethnic unrest."

Yet, when the Russian people decided to

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Are gifted students obedient?

Stereotypes may hinder student referral process

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Staff Writer

Charles asks many questions during class, and often his questions don't seem to be related to the topic.

He challenges statements that the teacher presents as fact. He constantly makes jokes in class.

His teacher feels he is disruptive and disrespectful. Charles is black. His teacher is white, and not likely to perceive him as a gifted child.

How do gifted children act? Are they always high achievers? Aggressive? What about the student who sits in the back of the class and doesn't want to be noticed?

Charles is a fictional student, but the situation is quite common.

The current notion of a gifted child is that he/she is compliant, and does exactly what the teacher wants. Some educators maintain that it's time to challenge the notion of gifted behavior.

"We have known for a long time, but failed to internalize, the fact that sometimes the biggest pains in the rear are gifted students because they're sitting there bored out of their skulls," insists Mike Joyce, lead AG teacher for Greensboro public schools.

Assisting teachers and professionals in rethinking their concept of how gifted students behave is one of the critical elements in the Greensboro AG Project.

Characteristics of gifted students

First and second grade teachers in Greensboro Public Schools use a screening checklist to help identify gifted students. Teachers are asked to list children who exhibit the following characteristics. They may not list students already classified as AG, and each characteristic must have at least one student's name used.

As part of the checklist, teachers are also asked to name the brightest minority child. We have separated the characteristics into two columns: those you might expect from a gifted child, and those that might surprise you.

- Characteristics of gifted children include:**
- Avid reader
 - Learns easily
 - Creative and imaginative
 - Alert
 - Resourceful
 - Uses common sense
 - A leader
 - Verbally fluent
 - Analyzes well
 - Versatile

- Independent
- Expresses himself/herself well in writing

- But gifted children can also be:**
- Inquisitive
 - Have diverse interests
 - Excellent sense of humor
 - Able child but a nuisance
 - Shows unusual insights
 - Sometimes skeptical

Conducted race relations seminar for LW-S

Dr. King, reknowned activist, dies

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Rev. Charles H. King Jr., a race relations seminar leader, author, and civil rights leader, died Saturday of liver cancer. King, who was 66, founded the Atlanta-based Urban Crisis center and presented encounter seminars across the country, including five in Winston-Salem. He was scheduled for a return visit this fall.

Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, he was one of nine children of Richard Rembert, who changed his name to Charles H. King. Between 1943 and 1953, Charles King Jr. served in the military and studied at Virginia Union College. Then he entered the ministry and served as pastor of Liberty Baptist Church until 1966.

In 1959, he was arrested for requesting a shoe shine in an Evansville barber shop. The charges were dropped.

His 1983 book, *Fire in My Bones*, described his life and civil rights efforts, including the 1963 marches on Washington, D.C., and serving as president of the Evansville, Indiana NAACP. He also served as executive director of the Gary, Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

"Black power is song, a rhythmic song, contagious and black, with a message that whites can never understand," he wrote.

Many in Winston-Salem feel the loss
Nearly four hundred people in Winston-Salem attended King's seminars and are greatly saddened

"I pray that there will be some boy or girl who will look down upon my grave and thank God that I lived."

— Dr. Charles King Jr.



Dr. Charles King Jr.

by his passing. King was first asked to come to Winston-Salem by Building a Bi-Racial Community, a sub-committee of Leadership Winston-Salem. After researching different approaches to racial aware-

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