



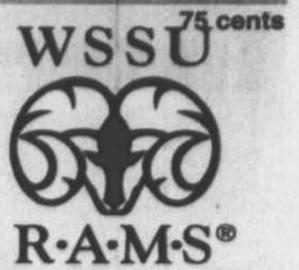
Youth teams move closer to big prize

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Topic of food brings out faith leaders

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'Core' of the Matter

New school achievement standards taking some getting used to

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

The rollout of North Carolina's new Common Core State Standards curriculum is getting mixed reviews.

Ann Petitjean, president of the Forsyth County Association of Educators, said the National Education Association supports the implementation of Common Core, which has been adopted by 45 states so far, across the board.

"NEA thinks that Common Core is definitely a step in the right direction to reform education," she said. "... I think that the kids are certainly better off this year than they have been in the past."

The new standards, which were implemented in North Carolina during the 2012-13 school year, are more rigorous than those of the ABCs of Public Education, the previous student achievement measure used in North Carolina, and are aligned with standards of other states, as part of an effort to make education more uniform throughout America.

Common Core is now the standard for English/language arts and math, while N.C. Essential Standards are used to gauge achievement in all other subjects; the two standards have been dubbed NC READY and include several measurements that were not previously required, including end-of-grade assessments in reading and math for grades 3-8 and similar assessments for grades 5 and 8 in science. NC Ready also requires end-of-course assessments in Math I, Biology and English II for all high school students.

"If they can be successful with Common Core,

then they will have some of the same skill sets as other people across the country," noted Danyelle Parker, principal of Mineral Springs Middle School. "I think that what we're teaching them are skills that they're going to be able to use in other aspects of their lives as adults."

Although the idea of making education standards more rigorous is largely well received, some believe the new curriculum was implemented too quickly, robbing students and teachers of the time they needed to properly master the new methods.



Collins



Parker

"The biggest angst is the fact that we really only had one year to prepare the teachers and the students for what the test was going to look like," commented Dr. Amber Baker, principal of Kimberley Park Elementary School. "That's been the biggest source of contention."

A.L. "Buddy" Collins, a member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools and the North Carolina Boards of Education, said he would have preferred a staggered rollout that would allow students and staff more time to adjust to the new approaches to teaching and learning.

"I don't think anybody is opposed to more rigorous standards. The question is how those standards are being implemented," he commented. "Students who have not been exposed to that rigor do not have the foundation to be successful."

As a result of Common Core's implementation, Forsyth County, like most counties across the state, experienced a drop in academic growth goals during the 2012-13 school year. Slightly more than 42 percent of Forsyth County students in grades 3-8 were

See Core on A3

STAR SIGHTINGS

Photo by Todd Luck

Union Baptist Church Pastor Dr. Sir Walter Mack Jr. (second from left) welcomed actor Todd Bridges (from left), actor/comedian Chris Tucker and Bishop Neil Ellis, senior pastor of Nassau, Bahamas' Mount Tabor Full Gospel Baptist Church, to his church Sunday. All the guests took part in the Corner 2 Corner Drug Dealers and Street Life Conference. Read more on page B1.



QEA students and teachers cheer as the parade makes it way down Carver School Road.

Photos by Todd Luck

Charter school celebrates its growth

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Quality Education Academy celebrated the opening of its new high school building last Thursday with a slate of special events, including a spirited parade.

Hundreds of QEA students marched along Carver School Road from the Carl Russell Sr. Recreation Center to Lansing Drive, where the new addition to the charter school stands. The Carver High School Band joined QEA's band along the route, pumping up the throngs of QEA students, staff and faculty who lined sidewalks along the route. QEA CEO Simon Johnson, the grand marshal, waved and smiled at the onlookers as he was chauffeured at the head of the procession.

"We wanted to celebrate this event," said Johnson. "This is a big thing for us. Charter schools don't get any

See QEA on A7



QEA CEO Simon Johnson addresses his students.

Social media community launched at Bennett

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Ten years after her graduation, Bennett College alumna Marissa Jennings returned to her alma mater last week to launch the next chapter of her career in the place where it all began.

The 32-year-old says she took the first steps in creating her company, Socialgrlz LLC, an online social community for African American girls between the ages of 13 and 17, as a senior at Bennett in 2003. This week, she enlisted the help of Journalism and Media Studies majors at Bennett to help the company raise funds to create a Socialgrlz mobile app, the latest step in Jennings' quest to empower and uplift black women and girls.

"I just feel like there's been a misstep where African American females have not been celebrated the way that other females or even males have been celebrated," said the Washington, D.C. resident. "One of the things that

See Jennings on A9



Socialgrlz's Marissa Jennings (left) and Natalie Jordan promote the company in th War Room.

Leonard wants to reach the masses with hip hop portal

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE



Ethemadassassin has appeared on the site.

For decades, hip hop music and culture has taken a beating for perpetuating what many believe are misogynistic and harmful messages.

Winston-Salem resident Lloyd Leonard Jr. is hoping to change that, through the creation of The Real Planet Hip-Hop, a Web site and online magazine that helps to brand and promote both established and up and coming hip hop artists.

"Our main objective is to really highlight different artists and help them in the branding and marketing," he explained. "It's pretty much a

See Hip hop on A8



Leonard

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