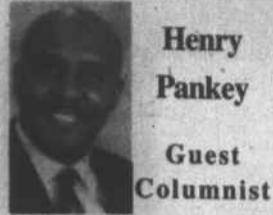


# FORUM

## It's education malpractice not to focus on students



**Henry Pankey**

Guest Columnist

If educators know of the seven intelligences, it is irrational and illogical to only evaluate a few. Those chosen may not be the strengths of students. I do not know the linguistic ability of Michael Jordan or the kinesthetic intelligence of William Shakespeare. However, based on their roads to fame, it is reasonable to surmise Michael is a kinesthetic-spatial genius and Shakespeare possessed remarkable linguistic intelligence. These are hypotheses that highlight weaknesses of limited assessment instruments. Imagine if Shakespeare was given the kinesthetic tests and his grades were a graduation requirement. Let's suppose Michael Jordan's writing ability was his ticket to job security.

What about dancers, athletes, singers, visual artists, the social butterfly, mechanics, etc.? Stevie Wonder and Jose Feliciano are musical geniuses, but today's test may have placed them in the Exceptional Children's program for the visually handicapped. Would Joan Rivers or Jay Leno's antics result in school suspension? Are African-American males doomed for out-of-school suspension because of their ability as elocutionists, rap artists, or oratorical skills? Maybe pupils are giving us hints how to teach. Are we stuck in tradition? Why do we refuse to address multiple intelligences? Maybe low

test scores represent academic rebellion or civil disobedience!

Is that Martha Graham, Fred Astaire, Judith Jamison, Beyoncé, Michael Jackson, Bill Bojangles Robinson, Agnes De Mille, Alvin Ailey, Debbie Allen, the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Usher dancing in the halls? Are Celine Dion, Leontyne Price, Pavarotti,

School districts are concerned about the large number of disciplinary referrals. Does the school have a discipline problem? The behavior may be caused by frustrated geniuses trapped in traditional status quo schools.

Twenty-first century schools of excellence require ongoing mechanisms capable of evaluating, monitoring, and nur-

ple intelligences not measured by today's limited evaluation tools. The child's real curriculum and authentic experiences extend beyond the traditional classroom into a technical stratosphere that was once inconceivable. Today's students' mechanical skills supersede those of ancestors. Elementary school children are masters of video games. They can program remote controls for adults and explain computer mechanisms to their teachers.

Students are very complex individuals with unique skills, talents, dreams, characteristics, intelligences, and knowledge not measured by linguistic-logical standardized tests. We know more than we need to know to teach and assess pupils. We have known for years that insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results. It is because it resists change that we say "pride goeth before the fall."

One hundred percent of schools may overcome the stigma of low performing. We have unprecedented levels of genius that will remain untapped if educators do not change. Schools hurt our future generation by staying in the assembly-line model. The world is different. The incomprehensible abilities and multiple intelligences of students are beyond the imagination of education leaders and test developers. We cannot afford business as

usual or testing the way we did in the "old" days. The current standardized tests have not allowed us to fully measure the multiple intelligences of our pupils. We may find millions of students with untested genius.

**Action Steps:**  
Explore new exams inclusive of various intelligences and give students credit or points that could be added to exam scores. The baby boomers need to get out of the way of the new generation of education technocrats and allow for the full infusion and utilization of E instruction and E tests that give immediate and ongoing feedback during classroom instruction. Credit visual, performing arts and hands-on projects as part of standardized tests. We may find that our teachers and students are not low performing. We can no longer ignore a multidimensional world evolving at megabyte speed!

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*"How to Turn Around Low Performing Schools," "The Eagle who Thought he was a Hip Hop Funky Chicken," "Fly on Sweet Angel" (a play), and "Hooked on Tongue Twisters" (an educational interactive speech game). His website is Henrypankey.com.*



Frank Sinatra, Diana Ross, Smokey, Stevie, Luther, Gladys and Aretha Franklin singing in the cafeteria? Michelangelo, Glenda Wharton, Gilbert Young, Maya Angelou, Tyler Perry, and Picasso are writing-painting graffiti on the walls. Richard Pryor, Lucille Ball, Eddie Murphy, Johnny Carson, Freddy Prinze, George Lopez, George Lucas, Ginger Rogers, Joe Biden, Rush Limbaugh, Steven Buckley, and Rembrandt refused to be quiet or stay in their seats. They all may have repeatedly interrupted classes and defaced school property.

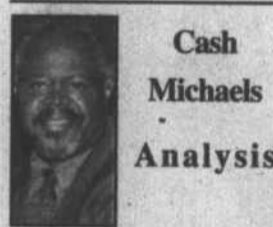
In-school suspension, time-out, discipline referrals, and parental contacts appear to be useless.

turing multiple intelligences and technological skills. Despite unwise political pressure, state, and national mandates, children deserve education activists with the unswerving courage to fight for fair, inclusive, and appropriate tests.

Perhaps, we can raise standards and increase test scores by teaching and testing multiple intelligences, too. As we analyze data, it is important to think-test outside old, nonfunctional, or limiting practices. Did we ever ask what test scores and behavior patterns certifiably tell us?

It is important that we accurately measure what students know and are able to do. Consideration should be devoted to multi-

## Spaulding aggressive in Cooper faceoff



**Cash Michaels Analysis**

If one wondered why State Attorney General Roy Cooper has consistently ignored challenges by Durham

attorney Ken Spaulding to debate prior to the March 15 Democratic gubernatorial primaries, their first, and so far only, face-off last Friday gave good reason.

Both men sat next to each other during the N.C. Democratic Party African-American and Hispanic Caucuses debate on Jan. 29 before a packed room at the Goodwin House. Spaulding stayed in the hunt, accusing the state attorney general of everything from colluding with the Republicans in defending the controversial Voter ID law in court, to not doing his duty in deciding not to retry a Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer who fatally shot an unarmed black motorist in September 2013.

Cooper, for the most part, remained calm and stoic amid Spaulding's blistering attacks, showing virtually no emotion at all. Spaulding, however, remained fiery, not only taking his opponent to task, but also assuring voters that he is a man of the people, not a career politician, and that North Carolinians would have a fair man as governor if he was nominated after the March primary to defeat Republican incumbent Gov. Pat McCrory Nov. 8.

At stake during the debate were black and Hispanic Democratic voters, who comprise over 40 percent of North Carolina's Democratic base.

For Hispanic voters, both Spaulding and Cooper said they supported President Obama's immigration policies, despite Republican opposition in Congress. They also objected to Gov. McCrory joining a lawsuit against Obama's Executive Action on immigration.

Both Cooper and Spaulding vowed that if elected, they would strive to make their respective cabinets and administrations as diverse as possible.

"That's what we should be about, being inclusive," Attorney General Cooper said, indicating that he already has a diverse office. "The first thing we have to admit is that racism does exist."

"I see nothing wrong with having an



**Roy Cooper**

African-American being the governor of North Carolina," Attorney Spaulding said to applause. "Those who serve in my administration are going to be African-American, going to be Latino, going to be within the white community. [They] will be very qualified people. Even unaffiliated."

When asked what they would do as governor to improve the economy of North Carolina without hurting low-income and middle-class families, Spaulding said he was already doing it by helping to attract an estimated \$2 billion in investments to the state, bringing with them thousands of jobs.

He added that he supported business incentives, including film industry incentives in Wilmington.

Attorney General Cooper blasted Gov. McCrory for signing legislation that provided "... big tax giveaways to out-of-state corporations at the expense of the middle-class and our public schools." Cooper accused McCrory of supporting a "... tax structure that makes it harder on everyday hard-working people." Cooper said if elected, he would stop that, invest in North Carolina's public schools, pay teachers more, and promote economic development plans in "minority communities" and rural areas.

The political fireworks began when both candidates were asked if they supported the reinstatement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) in Congress, and



**Ken Spaulding**

if elected governor, would they lead the fight to have the 2013 N.C. voter restrictions repealed if Democrats take back the N.C. General Assembly.

Spaulding said that he would "absolutely" have the N.C. voter restrictions repealed, calling them "unconstitutional." But then the Durham attorney and former state lawmaker lit into Cooper.

"My opponent sitting with me today, he's been in court with the Republicans, fighting on behalf of them, and against the NAACP, the League of Women Voters, the people of North Carolina, on a constitutional issue he did not have to represent the state on," Spaulding charged.

"So I want you to understand, there is a clear distinction here. My opponent has been on the wrong side of this issue."

Unfazed, the state attorney general told the audience not only does he "strongly" support efforts in Congress to reinstate the 1965 VRA, but that his office joined with the N.C. NAACP in filing an amicus brief in court supporting the VRA.

"There is no question that I'm very much opposed to the voter restrictions that were put in place by Gov. McCrory and the Republican leadership," Cooper said, reminding all that he sent a letter to McCrory to veto the law.

The state attorney general indicated that despite his personal opposition to Voter ID, his office is obligated to defend the state any time it is taken to court, as in the case of the federal trial in Winston-

Salem where the voter ID case wrapped up Feb. 1.

"It is the duty of the office of attorney general to defend the state when it gets sued. One of the reasons why I am running for governor is I am sick and tired of the laws that are being passed by this governor, and this General Assembly. What I want to do is change it," Cooper said.

As to how, as governor, each man would address high unemployment rates among African-Americans and Latinos, Cooper said beyond investment in improving education, he would push for a living wage to help lift people out of poverty, and better employment opportunities.

Attorney Spaulding said he supports raising the minimum wage to \$15.00/hour. "At the end of a Spaulding term, we will have that done," he pledged.

In his closing remarks, Cooper thanked people for coming out to "this spirited and very informative forum," a clear reference to the attacks from his opponent, Ken Spaulding. Cooper did state categorically that "Gov. McCrory has the wrong priorities for North Carolina."

Spaulding, in his closing two-minute remarks, continued to put heat on Cooper. The Durham attorney denied being "an angry black man," but did describe himself as "... having passion about these issues."

"I'm a fighter for the people. I'm a fighter for those who are voiceless. I don't run away from my ethnicity. Black lives do matter. As an African-American or black man myself, my life does matter. And I disagree with an attorney general, who in Charlotte with the [Police Officer] Kerik [shooting unarmed black man] case, where you had an opportunity to have a second trial, when a young man who graduated from Florida A & M, was shot 10 times and killed, and they couldn't summon up enough energy, enough effort, to be able to have a second trial. That's not right!"

Spaulding went on to openly challenge Cooper to "stand up strong, and make sure that our criminal justice is one for all North Carolinians."

Attorney General Cooper was offered the opportunity to defend his decision not to pursue a second trial, but he declined.

Currently, Cooper is leading Spaulding substantially in the polls, and neck-and-neck with Gov. McCrory. Attorney Spaulding has been campaigning for governor for the past two years.