

## FORUM

**A CALL TO ACTION**

**Daniel A.  
Piggott**  
Guest  
Columnist

I'm a math teacher at Carver High School, an alumnus of Carver and a concerned citizen of Winston-Salem.

It's with all three of these perspectives that I write to you. As a math teacher here at Carver, I've seen the challenges of teaching increase dramatically while the involvement of the community/alumni declines. We need your assistance now more than ever because it just seems that the system or powers that be haven't adequately come to our aid.

In the past 13 years, there have been three high schools started that have decreased our student enrollment severely. We were a 3A high school (enrollment around 1,200 students), but since the start of these new schools, we are now a 2A high school with 1A enrollment numbers of 650 students.

These new schools aren't the only factors that have weakened Carver. Policies such as "schools of choice" have systemat-

ically torn at the fabric of Carver for years. There's an expression: "Men lie, women lie, but numbers don't." Our numbers over the past few years have been hard to overcome. We, as a school, aren't where we would like to be academically and nobody carries this acknowledgement more than the staff at Carver. We are working tirelessly to turn things around. All high schools are judged by the state according to their test scores. The tests are scored with a range of 1 to 5 with 3 and above being proficient and a 4 and above being college-ready. The school is measured by the amount of college-ready students you have in certain courses. This has become increasingly more difficult to do over the years with the "hand that we've been dealt."

Over the past three years, 90 percent of our incoming freshmen have scored level 1's or 2's on their eighth-grade state Reading and Math tests. As an instructor, I see the need for more community/alumni involvement to help us as a staff produce as many college-ready students as possible.

Now, I know my fellow alumni "love" Carver as much as I do and most of the time wonder how they can help. Well, we can use your help in various areas. Depending upon your availability, we could use you as "hall monitors," "tutors

or "mentors." Notice how I haven't asked for any money, even though that's a great need! We need your time and presence even more!

There have always been rumors about the system trying to close Carver and I know that if we continue on the path that we are on, the state will take over! Carver is a school full of traditions and pride. I'd hate to see it lost after the state takes over.

We've prided ourselves on being Carver graduates and it's been our "us against the world" mentality that allowed us to persevere over the years. I feel now, that all we have is "ourselves" and your presence is more vital to the success of Carver than ever! Carver has been designated a "Priority School" by the state of North Carolina and it is my hope that the community/alumni can make us a "priority" also!

Even though I teach at Carver and I'm an alum, I'm more concerned about Carver as an African-American citizen of Winston-Salem. We are at a precipice as a nation on race relations, but we have our own issues locally that need to be addressed.

The "Achievement Gap" – the academic disparity between whites and minorities, is a national problem right along racial and economic lines. We are not immune to this epidemic here in

Winston-Salem.

I don't want to derail my call to action with the "race card," so let me focus on the economic disparity that exists at Carver. We are a school that is "100 percent free and reduced lunch." This unfortunate situation puts us at a disadvantage among fellow high schools and virtually stifles our ability to raise money for any endeavor. In my reading the comment of the former "National Superintendent of the Year" from Wake County, who said, "I don't have any schools on the 'endangered list,'" I have to say in Forsyth County, we cannot enjoy that claim.

Our schools have become a system of "haves and have nots (HAHN)." I personally don't think that your ZIP code should factor into the quality of education your child receives, but in Forsyth County, if you don't have the economic means to send your child elsewhere, that may be true.

However, I believe that the task at hand is doable! It's going to take the entire village! So again, whether you're alumni or not, please heed my "call to action!" I want to thank all that come to help in advance!

*Daniel A. Piggott Jr. is a math teacher at Carver High School and is a 1990 graduate of the school.*

**Caring hearts work in the school system**

BY CAREN JENKINS  
SPECIAL TO  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools system has 81 schools; five of these schools are specifically designed around an Exceptional Children's (EC) Program.

Each EC school has a health team consisting of a full-time nurse employed by the Forsyth County Department of Public Health and contracted to work in Winston

Salem/Forsyth County Schools through their EC Department.

Nurses working in only one school have the advantage of getting to know their students and the students' specific behaviors. Not all students communicate the same way that most of the population is accustomed. When dealing with EC students, no matter the child's needs, knowing his or her typical behaviors is beneficial when something is not right.

The daily schedule of a school nurse at an EC school is routinely not the same as at a traditional school.

Many of our school days must accommodate seeing children that need our direct attention. This could be due to an illness or injury. Nonetheless, it is not always an easy task letting a parent know that their child is ill or has sustained an injury. Some days there are children who need to be transported by EMS or those who may

need extra attention because they are not acting their "normal" self.

Our daily agenda may start with helping to handle a communicable disease outbreak and end with training teachers on new orders or procedures. Our days may also consist of checking immunizations, along with giving daily medications and taking care of procedures such as a tube feeding. The list is endless for what may occur during the day for a school nurse.

The EC school health team handles these cases daily with a smile, we love what we do, and the children involved. The joy of seeing our students shine and succeed at school fills our hearts.

It is important to us to keep our students healthy and at school every day. It can be vital to their health when we notice a small difference. It could be the one small key item to saving their life by acting on it. Many of the EC students' parents develop a bond

with their children's school nurse and depend on us to care for their child because they cannot be with them during the school day.

We all work as a team with the school staff and the student's family to make each student's school year is successful and the best it can be.

*Caren Jenkins, BSN, RN, NCSN, is school health supervisor with the Forsyth County Department of Public Health.*

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