

The Candidates

Ten Candidates Running For Five School Board Seats

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Among the many offices on next week's ballot are those for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. The Board of Education is comprised of nine members who each serve four-year terms. Elections are held every two years, so that only half the Board's terms expire at one time.

There are 10 candidates, including five incumbents, running for five seats on the Board this year. Here is The Post's run-down on the candidates and what they consider to be the key issues facing the Board at the present time.

Ward McKeithen is an incumbent presently serving a second term. Mr. McKeithen has been a Charlotte-Mecklenburg resident for 17 years and has children in both junior and senior high schools in the system. He believes his biggest contribution on the Board has been his "support of the superintendency of Jay Robinson." The main issues facing the Board, in Mr. McKeithen's eyes, are "the successful implementation of the teacher career development plan and securing adequate funding for the schools."

Elizabeth M. (Betsy) Bennett, a 12-year Charlotte-Mecklenburg resident, has two children in public elementary school. She has served five years on the Board and believes that, as a former teacher, she has brought to the Board an interest in curriculum and teacher concerns, a sincere interest in what goes on in the classroom, and a basic sense of fairness. Ms. Bennett sees the implementation of the career development plan, adequate funding, the new promotion-retention policy, and strengthening the curriculum in certain areas as the biggest issues facing the Board.

Carrie Winter, another two-term incumbent, has lived here since 1960. Her two children graduated South Mecklenburg High School. She feels she has been especially sensitive to the implementation of Board policy as it relates to the expectation that all children can learn and will be given the opportunity for their maximum growth within the school system. With regard to the issue, the candidate explained, "I think the issues of financing the school system appropriately at both State and local levels is important, particularly in light of our going forward with



Sarah Stevenson
...School Board candidate

career development and our commitment to improving capital maintenance and repair methods."

Incumbent Sarah Mingo Stevenson is finishing her first term on the Board. Ms. Stevenson has been a local resident for more than 40 years. Her four children went through the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system, and now her grandchildren are doing the same. She feels she has been a cooperative member of the Board, carrying the concerns of teachers, parents, and students alike to the superintendent, who implements the policy set by the Board. Ms. Stevenson believes financing is the most pressing issue because the Board has adopted a budget of over \$200 million, which includes 10 percent increase for teachers. This increase could come to more than 10 percent, depending on the State, she explained. The teacher career development plan is another important issue. "We will implement the career development plan with 150 teachers and perfect it as we go along," Ms. Stevenson stated.

The fifth incumbent, Donald Austin, is a native Charlottean who has served one term on the



Arthur Griffin
...School Board candidate

Board. His youngest child graduated high school last year, making this the first time in 26 years he has not had a child in the public school system. Mr. Austin thinks his contributions to the Board have included his support for the career development plan, his support of the program for handicapped children, the discipline policy and free summer school for low achievers to start this year, and the traditional junior high school. He sees the career development plan and pay raises for teachers as the main issues facing the Board.

Martha Isom, another native Charlottean, has two children in public high school. Not an incumbent, Ms. Isom believes her previous work with school committees and reading and math labs help qualify her to serve on the Board of Education. She feels she would work well with other Board members and would contribute both ideas and "common sense." The career development program, a study of vocational education, and funding for the schools are the main issues in Ms. Isom's view.

Maggie Nicholson, a 16-year resident of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, has two grandchildren in the school

system. Ms. Nicholson would bring to the Board "years of trying to help people in education" and "a knowledge of children." In addition, she described herself as "a clean Christian woman and a minister of the Gospel who doesn't believe in shady deals." Ms. Nicholson believes illiteracy is a primary issue for the Board to face. "It seems everything else is put ahead of this," she said. "We don't have equal educational opportunity."

Life-long Charlottean Arthur Griffin presently has one child in the school system. A 10-year veteran education advocate and Board observer, Mr. Griffin believes his knowledge of the many matters the Board deals with, as well as the political environment in which the issues must be resolved, eminently qualifies him for a seat on the Board. In addition, he feels his position on the Board of Social Services would bring an added dimension to his ability to serve the educational interests of the county. Mr. Griffin believes the prime issue right now is the challenge to get parents and the community involved again in public education. "Obviously, that's lacking right now," the candidate stated.

Alice Torres has lived in Charlotte-Mecklenburg for 32 years, and has four children in public elementary school. When asked what qualifies her for the Board of Education, Ms.

Torres cited her seven years of involvement with PTA, including her present term as president of Barringer PTA, and her former work as an assistant pre-school teacher at Calvary Church Pre-School. She also believes her promotions and public relations experience lends itself to leadership on the Board.

Harvey E. Sadoff has been a local resident since 1971. Dr. Sadoff has three children in the public

schools. His qualifications include 20 years in education, both as a classroom teacher and as a professor of education. He is in touch with people in various segments of the community and described himself as "flexible, reasonable, and a good listener." "What you need," he said, "is someone dedicated to being in touch with the community who can translate community concerns into policy."

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