

Black students struggle in post-Brown era

Continued from page 1A

are having difficulty are children who are poor and minority," says Mary Hatwood Futrell, dean of the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University and former president of the National Educational Association. "The facilities are bad. They don't have a good curriculum, they are more likely to have teachers who are not certified or qualified to teach, they are the ones who probably are in schools where there's a high turnover rate of teachers. They don't have the up-to-date text books, the curriculum isn't up-to-date, etcetera."

So, what should be done?

"Equalization must start with the core curricula of academic programs. The core curriculum must be restructured so that every student is being taught the same information," Futrell says. "That is an issue that most people have not addressed. When you look at the standards movement at the state level and at the federal level of No Child Left Behind, (the Bush administration's educational initiative), those mandates are saying all children must meet the same standard. If you're saying to me that my children must meet the same standard as a kid who's in the academic program and whose family is affluent. Then, my child must have access to the same basic core curriculum."

Any improvement will also require a greater commitment to teachers and teaching, says Gary Orfield, founder and director of Harvard's Civil Rights Project.

"In terms of equalizing the schools, one of the first things we should do is to get some good teachers with experience and commitment to work in high poverty schools. That's the most important thing we can put into a school from the outside," he says. "We'll have to pay them more and give them decent working conditions. With everything else we do in this capitalistic society, you would think that that matters. But, we just don't apply that to our teachers. A young lawyer gets paid three or four times as much as our teachers; then we blame them for all that goes on. And under No Child Left Behind, we punish them for it."

Bush's Leave No Child Behind Act, the first comprehensive overhaul of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, sets new testing standards and gives the Department of Education power to reduce funding to schools that don't meet the grade.

Orfield, the lead author of the Harvard study, "King's Dream or Plessy's Nightmare," says the public must insist on better schools.

"People have got to get mad and they've got to get out there and participate in the political system actively," says Orfield. "That's the problem. People who want better services for their children haven't gotten up off their rears to do anything about it."

And one of the things they should get mad about is the way schools in poor communities are underfunded, experts say.

"There needs to be school systems that are adequately and equitably funded because it is a lack of funding that keeps a lot of things from occurring," says Reg Weaver, president of the NEA. "Eighty-five percent of

the richest parents send their children to public schools. And they send them to public schools because their public schools have small class sizes, state of the art technology, qualified, certified teachers, adequate and equitable funding, safe and orderly schools, parental involvement and counselors. That's the stuff that works. Wherever they live, all children ought to be able to have that?"

Weaver says parents and public school advocates may have to take school systems to court to force equal funding. He points to a court ruling in Topeka, Kansas, last December, that declared unequal educational funding unconstitutional. The case, *Montoy v. State of Kansas*, is being reviewed by the state's high court, which overturned Shawnee County District Judge Terry Bullock's ruling this month to equalize the funding or close the schools.

President Bush has sought to improve public education through his No Child Left Behind program.

The \$29 billion authorization for the program was under funded by \$7.1 billion in the last fiscal year. For fiscal year 2004, Bush proposes under funding the \$32 billion authorization by \$7.3 billion, bringing the total

under-funding to \$14.1 billion over two years.

"We do not have a money problem in this country; we have a priorities problem," says Children's Defense Fund President Marian Wright Edelman in a CDF analysis of the Bush plan released early this year. "The administration uses the soothing rhetoric of 'no child left behind,' but in reality pushes millions of poor children even farther behind."

Secretary of Education Rod Paige disagrees, noting that while the Bush administration has insisted on better test results, it has also increased federal funding for K-12 education by 39 percent.

Wendy D. Puriefoy, president of the Public Education Network, a Washington-based national association of local educational funds and individuals working to advance public school reform in low-income communities, also says the public must become more involved.

She notes that many people do not vote in school board elections, do not understand the role of the school system's budget, and do not hold local, state and federal officials accountable for quality schools.

"The fact of the matter is that quality education serves everybody in this

community whether we have a child in it or not," Puriefoy says.

Futrell agrees. "One part of the Brown decision talked about the critical role of education to Democracy and how education will shape us in terms of who we are as individuals and understanding our culture, understanding what it means to be a responsible citizen," she says.

In order to improve public education:

- Tests should be used as

diagnostic tools to see how to better help students; not as a means to punish schools, says Orfield;

- Volunteer pre-school should be available for all children, beginning at the age of 3, then required for 4- and 5-year-olds, says Futrell. Current Head Start programs for children before kindergarten is voluntary and

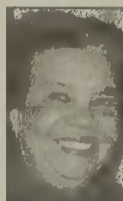
- Members of the public could also serve as mentors, tutors and role models for poor students who are often

victimized by a public that does not believe they can excel, Weaver says.

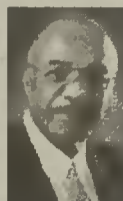
"The schools can't do it by themselves," says Futrell. "You've got to have the parents and you've got to have the students involved, understanding and accepting their responsibility as a part of the whole movement to improve the quality of education. I know this is not something that's going to happen over night. But, if you don't start, you're not going to move forward."



Weaver



Edelman



Paige



Dr. Kaplan

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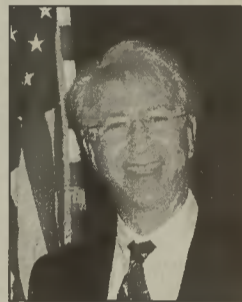
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Dr. Lawrence Kaplan, D.C.

SafeSpeed: What Photo Speed Enforcement Is And Why We Need It.

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG POLICE WILL DEPLOY PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT IN JUNE 2004.

Speed-related collisions make up more than 25% of the 27,000 crashes Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officers investigate each year.

Speed-related collisions killed or injured over 1700 people in 2003 and cost us all a staggering \$476 million.

Photo Speed Enforcement has a proven track record of reducing incidents of speeding and crashes in cities where it is currently deployed.

Changing driving behaviors is the key to reducing deaths, serious injury and financial costs while freeing up law enforcement resources to deal with other important community safety issues.

The Photo Speed Enforcement program costs you nothing if you drive at a safe speed.

Frequently Asked Questions about Photo Speed Enforcement:

Where will the cameras be located?

The cameras will be deployed on portions of 12 streets that have been designated as high crash areas. View the complete list at cmpd.org.

Will I get a warning?

This IS a warning. Also, there will be warning signs throughout the corridors as well as in advance of the enforcement vehicle.

How much is the ticket and will I get points on my license?

While no DMV points or court appearances are associated with the citation, you will receive a \$50.00 civil fine by mail. The citation can be paid over the internet, by mail, or in person at the SafeSpeed offices, 229 South Brevard St.

Will I get a citation for going 36mph in a 35mph zone?

No. Absolutely not. Officers will take into account several factors including crash history, road conditions, and weather when establishing threshold speeds.

Can I appeal a citation?

Yes.

Where does all the citation money go?

All proceeds after operating expenses go to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. The goals of SafeSpeed are to reduce speed related collisions and promote safe driving habits.

Want more information?

Visit www.cmpd.org or call 704-375-3177.



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