

## Uniforms, corporal punishment not a solution for violence

Citizens view America's schools as being a war zone with students fighting against students, teachers and administrators, individually and in gangs.

School administrators search for solutions to school violence. Requiring students to wear uniforms and reinstating corporal punishment are two suggested solutions.

School uniforms replace individualism with an alternative that squelches self-expression. Uniforms are designed to create an atmosphere where students are not concerned about their clothes or the clothes of others. Instead, students can focus on school and learning. Wearing uniforms will help students develop more self-discipline, especially in their appearance. The uniform requirement will eliminate students' wearing any sloppy or obscene clothing. That is the theory. The rules, however, already regulate the dress of the students. Perhaps, it is time for the school to strictly enforce the dress code.

Corporal punishment has been approved by the school board as an alternative to short-term suspension. It is intended to influence students to be less violent and have more self-discipline. However, corporal punishment fights violence with violence. Instead of teaching the student a lesson, it teaches that the ideal way to punish is by physical force. Instead of punishing with violence, students need to be taught non-violent ways to solve problems. Students must not learn that the way to solve a problem is by physical force. That will only create more violence.

The price to pay for uniformity would be the loss of individuality, spontaneity, originality and freedom to express oneself by daring to wear clothes not worn by others. The result of punishing violence with violence will be to teach students that the answer to their problems is to use a form of physical force. These two ideas fail to target the source of the violence--the lack of education and morals and ignorance.

Who is that mysterious lady behind the computer? Recently I was in the Chill-Out room and made a surprising discovery: Ms. Martha Sykes.

Her initial duty is to assist Mr. Stephan Allen in checking in late students in the morning. Sykes is also in the Chill-Out room while Mr. Allen takes his lunch break. She helps the students with their problems and is in charge of disciplinary tracking.

What I want to elaborate on is her assisting students. While I was in Chill Out, two students were sent there, and Sykes tried her best to create a solution between the two. This is what really surprised me; she was really sincere in her work.

When I think about Chill Out, I think about people who merely supervise students who had been sent to the room by their teachers. I was surprised and delighted to see how much Sykes cared about her students.

Before I was sent to Chill Out, I had the outlook that nobody cared anymore. It's nice to see that there really are people who care. by Sarah Johnson

### Rocky Mount Senior High

## Gryphon

ROCKY MOUNT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

"Truth will free you"

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## Habari Gani... Habari Gani, Mketa Kwanzaa greeting...in African tradition

Kwanzaa is a unique American holiday that pays tribute to the rich cultural roots of Americans of African ancestry.

An interesting thing about Kwanzaa is that it is not a religious, political or heroic holiday. It is a cultural holiday. Kwanzaa was instituted in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Kerna, a black studies professor. Kwanzaa is celebrated December 26 through January 1. Kwanzaa is not a sub

stitute for Christmas.

The word "Kwanzaa" means the first, or in the African language of Kiswahili-a nontribal African language that covers a large portion of the African continent-Kwanzaa means "the first fruits of the harvest."

Linda Mosely's African American history class presented a Kwanzaa play on December 12 in the auditorium.

## Caste-like elementary school no-go in merged system

By Pat Farnsworth

Imagine a school with no academically gifted classes? What if there were no academically gifted students? On top of that, what if all of the top-ranked students left the school? It certainly does seem that the test scores would drop a whole lot.

Now imagine having a school with no failing students. Well, that doesn't sound so bad. Test scores would probably skyrocket. This would mean, however, that there would be no comparison as to who was doing well.

Now imagine two things: a school without the best and the worst and a school with the best and the worst together. Doesn't make too much sense, does it? One would be a school full of middle-of-the-road students with mediocre grades and test scores and the other would be a school full of high achieving and low achieving students. No matter what anyone may say, we have two good schools here; or, at least, schools with some potential. Why ruin them? I am not saying that these schools are perfect-- far from it. I am saying that we should work our problems out instead of adding some new school.

The Rocky Mount Charter School, if

created, would consist of 75 percent minority students and 25 percent non-minority students. This ratio is determined from current Nash County public school ratios. For this to work out, students who might be qualified, academically, for such a program might be ignored. That sounds ridiculous to me.

The Charter School will be managed by a Massachusetts based group and financed by local businessmen. One personal observation is that these businesses are simply trying to make it easier to figure out who they will hire straight out of college to work in their boardrooms and whom they will hire straight out of high school to work in their manufacturing plants.

A charter school would be bad for students who would not fully understand why they were separated from other students and put in a different school just because they made above or below average grades.

Many European countries have a three school system. One school is for college-bound students, one is for higher-grade job training and one is for lower grade training job training. I have never agreed with that caste-like system but it seems as if somebody wants us on that road.