

Black teachers

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and the social sciences, instead of math and science, where they are really needed.

Recruitment in the county is handled by Ms. Epstein, Lee, Josephine Walser, who handles elementary teacher recruitment, and the principals.

Dr. Barbara K. Phillips, assistant to the superintendent, said that the system has a commitment to hiring qualified teachers, both black and white.

She said she hopes the present black teacher ratio does not decline.

Susan Carson, the system's school-community relations coordinator, said the total number of teachers in the city-county schools last year was 2,713.

Of that number, 666 were black, and only 125 were black males.

These figures disturb local NAACP President Walter Marshall.

Marshall said that the number of black teachers should reflect the number of black students.

There is a correlation between black student achievement and the number of black teachers the students have for role models, he said.

Over the years, Marshall said, the number of black teachers has not kept up with the increase in black students.

He said that the school system's saying that there are not enough blacks in teaching areas such as math and science is an excuse.

Even in education fields where there is an oversupply of blacks,

Marshall said, blacks are still underrepresented.

Marshall said he believes the system is not doing all it can to recruit qualified blacks.

Ms. Epstein disagrees, saying the numbers simply are not there.

This lack of black teachers can be blamed not only on the attractiveness of other fields, but on the failure rate of blacks in the state on the "professional knowledge" part of the National Teachers Examination.

Figures show that 60.7 percent of the blacks taking the test in the

state last October failed that portion of the test, while 9.4 percent of the whites failed it.

Those who failed the professional knowledge part of the test did not make the minimum passing score of 644 and were not eligible to be certified to teach in the state.

Dr. Melvin F. Gadson, director of the Division of Education at Winston-Salem State University, said that the professional knowledge part of the exam tests students for their understanding of theories and philosophies in education.

Gadson said that the test also deals with the students' knowledge of current trends in education as well as their understanding of court cases dealing with education.

Ms. Epstein said that colleges are improving teacher-education programs, which should improve test scores. But she said that the black failure rate on the test is, again, part of the larger problem that not many high-achieving blacks are going into the teaching field because of better opportunities elsewhere.

New program

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"The most important thing we do is protect and promote the best interest of the child," Mrs. Bennett said. "We just concentrate on the child."

Mrs. Bennett said that the program averages about five cases each month.

"Although many more cases are reported, we only become involved in those cases (in which) the Department of Social Services feels it is necessary to petition the

court," she said.

Once the petition comes to her attention, she assigns a volunteer to the case. The volunteer has until the hearing to gather his information.

The volunteer might begin his investigation at the Department of Social Services with a Protective Services worker.

Mrs. Bennett said this is a good place to begin because this person knows what has been alleged in

the case. "The worker could tell the volunteer who he needs to contact," she said.

During an investigation, a volunteer interviews many people, including the child, parents, school officials, friends, church members and neighbors.

The volunteer might also review medical and school records, Mrs. Bennett said.

In trying to make recommen-

dations for the child, the volunteer GAL will confer with different service agencies in the community, she said.

Mrs. Bennett said that any information gathered is confidential. All volunteers must take an oath of confidentiality, she said.

After the information is gathered, Mrs. Bennett said she, the GAL and one of the attorneys will sit down two or three days before the case comes to court to

prepare a written report that will be presented to the court. The report contains the volunteer's recommendations about what should happen to the child.

These recommendations could include whether to leave the child in the home or remove him to another environment and what kind of services might be needed for the child.

Although the GAL appears in the courtroom, he does not have to prove whether any allegations are true or not, Mrs. Bennett said.

After a case is decided, the program's involvement does not end.

"We monitor the case as long as it's still an open case," she said. "We monitor it until the child is adopted, returned to the parents or until some other permanent plan is enacted."

Before volunteers are allowed to work on a case, they must go through 16 hours of training, Mrs. Bennett said.

The volunteers are trained to research and gather information, she said. They also get some training in interviewing techniques.

Another training session is scheduled for September.

"One of the things I feel is unique about the program is (that) it gives volunteers the opportunity to make a difference in a child's life.

"This is not for everybody," she said. "It takes a special person to do this."

Volunteers in the program have to be at least 21 years old.

"I'm real proud of my volunteers," Mrs. Bennett said. "I have old and young, men and women, blacks and whites. Some are housewives, and some are retired."

One volunteer is Bert Grisard, executive director of Big

Brothers/Big Sisters of Forsyth County Inc.

Investigation into child abuse cases is not new to Grisard, who said that he worked with the child custody unit of the Department of Social Services before it had a Protective Services Division.

"I did a large percentage of the child abuse investigations," he said. Grisard said that there were not that many reported cases of child abuse in the county then.

Grisard, who is married and has a daughter and a stepson, said that he has always been concerned about children.

Describing the GAL process from his point of view, Grisard said, "I get to know the kids, the parents, the relatives and the other people involved. I reach my own conclusions about what's in the best interest of the child. As far as forming my own opinion, all I have to deal with is what's in the child's best interest."

Grisard is working on his second case now.

One thing he has observed so far is that parents tend to see him as an ally and a resource for them. The family is generally hostile at the Department of Social Services, he said.

"So you start out with an advantage," he said. "The tricky part is to maintain it."

Another observation Grisard has made is that a significant number of the kids going through the court process are black.

"We're dealing with kids in crisis period," he said. "We are going to make decisions that will affect them the rest of their lives. I think it is imperative that if placement is made and it is not the right one, the guardian is on top of it."

"These kids need advocates or somebody who will see them as individuals," Grisard said.

Young bus drivers

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said that whether or not a child is taught at home, he may act differently when he's away from his parents and with his peers.

"We all did things behind our parents' back," she said. "I know I did."

Mrs. Bailey, along with her grandson, helped in Farrell's petition drive. She said she has an idea of how she wants to solve the issue of student bus drivers.

Mrs. Bailey said she believes that adults should be driving the buses. But whether or not the system switches to having all adult drivers, Mrs. Bailey said that she would like to see monitors on the school buses.

A similar sentiment has been expressed by some school board members.

"It's a job to drive a bus," Mrs. Bailey said. "I'm 54 years old, and I can't do it. We need monitors so we can leave the driving to the drivers."

Both James and Teresa Henry of 2046 Lash Road feel that students should not drive the bus. The Henrys' 7-year-old son, James Henry III, was injured in the accident.

Mrs. Henry said that if students are to drive school buses, then they need intensive training, not only in driving but also in handling children.

She said that while the students were rowdy that day, the driver showed a lack of maturity in his actions. She said he lacked self-discipline.

She said, however, that all the blame shouldn't fall on the bus driver.

"He's no more at fault than the school system that trained him," she said.

Henry said that driving a bus is too much responsibility for a young person.

"As far as I'm concerned, there is no difference between

driving a school bus and driving a Greyhound," he said. "They don't let 16-year-olds drive Greyhounds."

Nineteen-year-old Burchette Williams of Route 1, Highway 65, said that she drove a school bus last school year.

"My bus was fine," she said. "When bus drivers first start out at the beginning of the year, they should lay down their rules."

"My students had assigned seats, and probably the only time they didn't sit in them was when I wasn't there," she said. "They talked, but not to the point where I couldn't hear myself think."

Ms. Williams said, however, that her bus was not free of trouble. She said that during the year she wrote several conduct slips for misbehavior, such as sticking an arm out the window or standing up in the seat.

Ms. Williams said she feels that there should be more training for

all drivers of school buses because driving a bus is a lot of responsibility.

The parents interviewed said that the accident continues to have an effect on their children.

Mrs. Bailey said that her grandson has expressed a great deal of apprehension about riding the bus.

"He just got hit by a car last year, and now this," she said.

Mrs. Henry said that her son's fear carries over even when he's a passenger in her car.

"He's always afraid he'll turn over," she said. "He'll tell me, 'Mama, don't go around that curve too fast.'"

Farrell feels that something positive will come out of the accident. He said that next year he thinks there will be some changes, including a look at the training of bus drivers and increased emphasis on discipline.

Ohio historian retraces African ancestor's sojourn

The unveiling of the restored Statue of Liberty is a celebration of America's immigrant history. In this portrait, a descendant of slaves traces a forebear's path to the United States and back to Africa.

By JERRY SCHWARTZ
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Misfortune brought an African warrior named Tamishan to the New World. He stayed only briefly but left behind a family in slavery.

Now, almost 200 years later, a descendant has rediscovered Tamishan. In doing so, John Fleming has recaptured his family's history from the slave traders and slaveowners who plucked his ancestors from Africa.

Memories of his grandfather led Fleming, a historian and organizer of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center to be built in Wilberforce, Ohio, to initiate his search for his past in the early 1970s.

"I remembered my grandfather talking about my family and an African ancestor, and I had just kept it in the back of my mind," he said in a telephone interview.

He went to the Carolinas and interviewed older relatives. He examined the notations in the family Bible, kept by an aunt. He perused state, county and local records.

And at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in the papers of a family that once owned his ancestors, he found the story of Tamishan.

The story starts somewhere in West Africa. "He was captured in battle and was enslaved. Then, sometime in the 1780s or 1790s, he was brought to Charleston and purchased by a slave trader," Fleming said.

This entrepreneur brought Tamishan to Burke County in North Carolina. There he was sold to Waightill Avery — a lawyer, the first attorney general of North Carolina and the county's largest slaveowner.

North Carolina in 1790 had about 100,000 blacks, a quarter of the state's population and one of every eight blacks who lived in the United States. They had been brought to the colonies to work the fields; it was not a happy life, and Tamishan did not hide his displeasure.

"The story is Tamishan was very unhappy, discontented, and he was viewed as a troublemaker," Fleming said.

Tamishan apparently spoke several languages, including Arabic, and the townspeople assumed he was a Moslem. Avery was intrigued; he wrote a paper about this slave "descended of a more noble race than the Guinea negro."

But Tamishan repeatedly complained and asked to return to Africa. Finally, in about 1800, "they agreed to send him back, and he agreed to exchange in his place four other slaves," Fleming said.

He was taken back to Charleston and placed on a ship for Africa. The ship's captain

came to respect his intelligence and to trust him; when they arrived, the captain allowed him to go ashore alone.

Days passed before Tamishan

returned with several of his people. He produced \$400 worth of gold dust and gave it to the captain.

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