

Residents give 'marching orders': Go back to teaching the basics

By CHERYL WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

The people of Forsyth County have spoken. And they say that the basics -- reading, writing and math -- are still vital for a good education.

This conclusion comes from the results of an educational goals survey presented to the city/county school board Monday night.

"The marching orders to the schools are unmistakable: Deliver graduates who can write, read and do arithmetic, who understand something about their country, and who know the fundamentals of science," says the report on the results of the survey. "The schools should not substitute other goals for those which have been judged by so many to be most important."

The survey was conducted by Policy Studies in Education in New York in conjunction with the National School Boards Association. Funding was provided by the Winston-Salem Foundation.

Results of the survey were presented to the board by Henry M. Brickell and Regina H. Paul of Policy Studies in Education.

The major thrust of the survey, Brickell said, was to find the answer to the question, "What should students be taught?"

"We are confident these results do speak for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County," Ms. Paul said.

Brickell said that the respondents represented the people who had the greatest interest

in school affairs. "These are the people who come to school board meetings and vote in elections," he said.

Using questionnaires, 1,519 residents, high school students and graduates, and school personnel were surveyed.

Of the 341 residents responding to the survey, 15 percent were black; 30 percent of the 567 high school students were black; 23 percent of the 116 high school graduates were black, and 24 percent of the 495 school personnel were black.

"It's really good news," Ms. Paul said. "The four populations generally agree on what is very important, middle important and least important. They agree and are very clear on what you should do."

Out of 14 subjects, respondents feel that English and math are the two most important subjects which should be taught.

The next most important subject is computer education.

The other subjects, in order of importance to the respondents, are driver education, health, science, social studies, foreign languages, vocational education, industrial arts, home economics, art, music and physical education.

Ms. Paul said that black residents rated teaching vocational education and home economics higher than white residents did.

This may reflect a greater concern by the black community about immediate employability for the students when they

graduate, the report says.

The survey also asked, "What is so important that it should be required for high school graduation?"

Respondents chose 20 goals from 277 possibilities. In order for a goal to make the top 20, it had to be voted on as a requirement by at least 50 percent of each of the four groups of respondents.

The top 20 requirements were: knows the fundamental concepts of mathematics, computes accurately, reads with understanding, writes correctly, spells correctly, reads carefully, solves mathematical problems in practical situations, follows written and oral directions, speaks correctly (proper grammar), reads to learn, writes to give information, knows U.S. history, writes legibly, writes in a clear and organized fashion, reads for information, believes in having good mathematical skills, knows U.S. geography, knows basic facts and principles of biology, listens with understanding, and knows how to apply and interview for a job.

Another part of the survey dealt with the community responsibility and the shared responsibility of the schools and the community.

Brickell told the board that the results of the survey can be used as an inspection device to look at the curriculum.

"I think the results are interesting and important," he said. "You can use it to make a radar sweep over the existing curriculum."

After hearing the findings of the survey, board member Mary M. Lohr said that the school system has some rethinking to do concerning its curriculum.

Board Chairman Garlene Grogan said that she was not surprised with the first couple goals that the respondents felt should be required for graduation. But the goal of writing legibly as a requirement did surprise her.

Board member Gerald N. Hewitt was curious to know why there was a female dominance in the responses.

The typical respondent in all four groups was a white female.

Brickell said that in this and other studies he has done, he has found that women are more likely to respond to surveys.

The survey, however, may not just represent the women's views but could have been filled out with the cooperation of the male, he said.

Superintendent Zane E. Eargle said that upon the board's request his staff will study the current curriculum to see how it matches up with the results of the survey. The staff will then bring back recommendations to the board through one of its committees.

In another matter, the board unanimously approved a policy that would limit the time students can arrive at school prior to the instructional day and the time they could remain at school after the instructional day.

Under the policy, students are

to arrive at school no earlier than 30 minutes prior to the instructional day and leave within 15 minutes of the end of the instructional day.

Eargle told the board last week that the problem has been mainly in elementary schools, where parents have sometimes brought their children to school up to an hour before school started.

The policy would not require that school personnel supervise students who arrive more than 30 minutes before the instructional day or who remain at school more than 15 minutes at the end of the day unless the student is participating in a school-sponsored event.

The policy has caused concern on the part of some parents and board members, particularly as it would affect elementary school students.

One parent, Margaret Hermann, told the board Monday night that her concern is with mothers who have to be at work at 8 a.m. and do not have a neighbor or someone with whom they could leave their children.

Mrs. Hermann told the board not to penalize the working mother with the policy.

"Jobs don't wait for you to take your children to school at 8:30," she said.

Hewitt was concerned that parents be provided some alternative means of supervision for their children in the morning. He asked that the superintendent arrange, at no cost to the board, before-school care for those parents who were interested.

Teachers are applauding the policy, which will give them additional planning time.

Rob Anderson, president of the Forsyth Association of Classroom Teachers, said that his association supports the policy.

He pointed out that many teachers are parents too and will be faced with the same dilemma as other parents when the policy takes effect.

Annette Beatty told the board last week that she is glad that the school system is putting the responsibility back where it belongs, with the parents.

"I agree 100 percent that there is a limit that the public, and especially parents, can expect of a schoolteacher," Miss Beatty said. "Parental accountability and responsibility is of the essence in the education of our children."

The board, after approving the policy, requested that the superintendent give a report on how the implementation of the policy is proceeding to the board in October.

NAACP tutorials to begin

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Blacks, on the average, did not score above the 56th percentile in any of the testing areas.

The scores of white students in the county declined as well, but remained above the 50th percentile in all areas.

Something is wrong in the education of black children, Marshall said.

"One of the philosophies of the NAACP is, if our children are to be educated, then we need to do it ourselves," he said. "The educational system is not going to do it. We are best equipped to educate our children. All groups, other than blacks, educate their own."

"It's the whole idea of, 'I am my brother's keeper,'" he said. "We have to help each other."

Black children's poor performance on standardized tests also is being addressed by the city/county school system.

Superintendent Zane E. Eargle is organizing a task force to look at the problem of both black and white underachieving students.

Meanwhile, the NAACP tutorial program is open to students of all academic levels, though it will target underachieving students, Marshall said.

The "learning centers" in the churches will place emphasis on math, reading and communication skills.

Registration for the program will be held when the program starts on Sept. 16, Mrs. Allen said.

The centers will be open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays of each week from 2:30 p.m. until 6 p.m., Mrs. Allen said.

Parents whose children participate in the program will be expected to attend regular parents' meetings, she added.

"The parents don't know their role," Mrs. Allen said. "One of the reasons for the formation of the learning centers is to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children."

Marshall agrees, saying that parents need to be aware of their responsibility.

"They need to know they don't have anything to fear," Marshall said. "They are going to have to start taking a stand."

Tutors for the program will come from a variety of sources.

Wake Forest University has promised to provide 15 tutors and Winston-Salem State University 25, Mrs. Allen said.

Approximately 20 retired educators also have volunteered their services, she said.

Rudolph V. Boone, the coordinator of the program's recruiting committee, said that tutors are still needed in all five areas.

Prospective tutors have to fill out an application that is reviewed by the recruiting committee, he said.

Chairmen of each of the recruiting areas are Sarah Oliver, primary; Pauline Jackson, elementary; Marjorie Gregory,

middle; Mavis Miller and Adele Burney, high school, and Modesta Earl, testing.

Funding for the program so far has come from church contributions, Mrs. Allen said.

Ten churches have agreed to sponsor learning centers. The centers and their directors are: Spencer Memorial Christian Church, Daisy Chambers; Grace Presbyterian Church, Doris Moore; Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Hazel Brown; Galilee Baptist Church, Anna Gilliam, and United Progressive Baptist Church, Tony Jarrett.

Also Emmanuel Baptist Church, Annette Beatty; True Temple Holiness, Lee Faye

Mack; St. James Methodist AME Church, Nigel Alston; Shiloh Baptist Church, Bobbie Stewart, and Antioch Baptist Church, Ronald Wilkins.

A learning center will also be located at the Winston Lake Family YMCA. Paulette Evans is the director.

Any church that would like to join the program can call the NAACP office at 748-1072.

Mack denies charge

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her. I read *The New York Times* story and laughed."

Mack said Monday that he knows Ms. Bennett, but he never visited her home. "She is a tool of the union," he said.

Neither Ms. Bennett nor her physician, Dr. Fred McQueen of Rockingham, could be reached for comment.

Mack's role with the firm came under scrutiny when Robert J. Brown, owner of B&C Associates, withdrew his name from consideration for nomination as the first black U.S. ambassador to South Africa after White House officials raised questions about his background.

The newspaper's story discussed two other anti-union activities that allegedly involved Brown. Union leaders say Brown's company has engaged in anti-union activities in North Carolina, a charge that Brown and Mack deny.

"Jim told me that he did not go to Ms. Bennett's house and I believe him," Brown said in a recent interview. "I don't know why she would say something like that about him."

Mack left B&C Associates in 1980 to start his own firm, Human Resource Consultants Inc., in Winston-Salem. Both firms provide management advice to local corporations, including Hanes.

"We are not doing anything that is anti-union," Mack said. "If the management of a company decides to resist a union, we give advice on how to do that."

Nancy Young, manager of corporate affairs for Hanes' parent company, Sara Lee Corp, said Brown and B&C assisted Hanes in resisting union pressures.

The National Labor Relations Act prohibits corporate officials from intimidating their employees, Mack said. "Most companies know if they violate that act, they will get in trouble," he said.

North Carolina's right-to-work law allows employees to work without joining a union, Mack said.

"There is no union movement in this state," he said. "Most Southern states have right-to-work laws."

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