

# Integration blamed for black lag in education

RALEIGH -- Some blacks say North Carolina's school systems are to blame for disparities between the academic achievement of black and white students, but others argue that the problems extend beyond the classroom.

Charles Holland, a member of the Wake County Board of Education, said low teacher expectations hurt the academic performance of black children.

"Some of our teachers are taking a short cut," Holland said. "Rather than challenging our students and working hard with them, teachers push them into the lower-achieving classes."

But Walter Faribault Jr., vice chairman of the Orange County school board, said teachers could not be held solely responsible.

"It is fairly easy to point finger at faculty," he said. "But what if the faculty gives instruction to go home and do 10 problems and they go home and do none?"

Black educators, leaders and parents charge that school systems have failed to educate and challenge black students, but others say low family income and a variety of other social ills have led to the poor performance of black students.

"It is easy to blame somebody else," Gladys Graves, president of the North Carolina Association of Educators, told The News and Observer of Raleigh. "But all of us rightfully have to accept some of the responsibility."

Mrs. Graves and other educators, civic leaders and government officials met Saturday in Raleigh to discuss the education of black children in North Carolina and plan a state-wide conference this fall to set specific goals.

Test scores and class statistics show large gaps between black students and their white classmates. For example:

-- In Chapel Hill-Carrboro, on average, black second-graders taking the California Achievement Test in 1987 were in the 42nd percentile nationally, while their white classmates were in the 93rd percentile.

-- Durham City schools, which are predominantly black, report that black sixth-graders, on average, performed at a level that would be expected of students who are eight months into the fifth grade, according to 1987 CAT scores. The white sixth-graders, on the other hand, were performing at a level that would be expected of children who are four months into the seventh grade.

-- In Wake County, there are 356 black students in programs for those identified by the state as academically gifted -- about 2 percent of the black enrollment. That compares to 6,439 whites identified by the state as gifted, or about 15 percent of the white enrollment. Placement in such classes is based in large part on achievement test scores.

The problems have persisted despite the promises that accompanied integration.

"Black students now have access to more books, more microscopes

and better-prepared teachers," said Lloyd Hackley, chancellor of Fayetteville State University and former University of North Carolina system vice president.

"Still, they are not doing absolutely or relatively better," Hackley said.

But William Peek, senior associate state superintendent, said there had been improvements for all children since integration.

"Where we fall down is in our expectations -- we want to move faster and when we don't, we get discouraged," Peek said.

Ideally, Peek said, the state should require an individual education plan, like those compiled for special-education students, for all students. "Ultimately, we have got to look at kids as individuals, not as groups," Peek said.

But standardized achievement tests such as the CAT are benchmarks in the progress of students. Placement in advanced or remedial classes often is based on a student's score against the national norm.

Over the years, achievement tests have been challenged as culturally biased and generally unreliable. Don Locke, professor and head of the counselor education department at N.C. State University, said such tests should not be used as the primary means of determining the placement of tracking of students.

"No one will say any more that black children are intellectually inferior," Locke said. "Instead we use tests to quantify that same age-old myth."

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# Urban League chief: Supremacists' acquittal sends dangerous message

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. --The acquittal of 13 white supremacists on federal charges is just another example of the resurgence of racism in the United States, Urban League National President John Jacobs said.

"We are seeing a climate that is permissive of racist behavior," Jacobs said Thursday night. "People have become comfortable in engaging in this climate."

Jacobs was to meet later today with more than 300 Urban League representatives here for the Central Region Delegate

Assembly conference.

Jacobs told The Grand Rapids Press a dangerous message was conveyed in the acquittal Thursday of 13 white supremacists tried in Fort Smith, Ark., on charges that included a plot to overthrow the government and establish an all-white nation.

"Every time something like this happens, it sets back the whole movement for fairness, equality and justice," Jacobs said. "You can be a racist and get away with it, and that is a very disturbing

message."

Though the Urban League does not endorse political candidates, Jacobs said presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson is the only candidate who has made racism an issue.

"He (Jackson) will continue to make that an issue even if he doesn't get the nomination," Jacobs said.

He said he would urge Urban League chapters today to step up their efforts in getting blacks to register to vote.

The Urban League is a service organization that aims to promote equal opportunity for blacks and other minorities in employment, education, housing and social services.

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