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The child's mother said her daughter has received E's (excellent) and S's (satisfactory) on her report card for her academic work, but N's (Unnecessary) in conduct.

School officials said suspending a child, especially one so young, is done only as a last resort.

"Any student regardless of grade level can be suspended when its behavior poses problems at the school," said Eckard. "Suspending a child is the last thing we want to do, but when a child is so disruptive that the teacher is kept from teaching, that child has to be removed."

Eckard said teachers try to be attentive to the individual needs of children but they also have a responsibility to the rest of the children in their class. Eckard called the use of suspension as a disciplinary tool a "sad part of the job" which really should be handled in the home.

Susan Carson, the school system's program manager for public information, said it was very rare that a child in first grade is suspended. "Something like that happens only after other alternatives are tried, such as isolating the child in the classroom, or outside the classroom in the hallway; spanking, and several consultations with the child's parents," Carson said.

Physically abusing other children, continuously carrying on loud conversations, name calling, or being insubordinate are matters that if they occur often enough can result in a child being suspended or expelled depending on the frequency of the occurrence and the sever-

## WSSU grads

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communities," he said.

He also pleaded with students to work toward eliminating what he sees as the corrupting influence of big-time college sports on higher education.

He provided a number of examples of colleges and universities that on probation for violating the rules and regulations established by the national governing bodies of intercollegiate sports, the abuses of booster clubs and the high dollar salaries of coaches.

Although he did not mention the current investigation of Winston-Salem State by the state auditor's office and the NCAA, he said, "The professionalization of athletics must not take place at Winston-Salem State University."

The focus of that probe is to determine whether or not officials of the university gave improper financial help to members of the school's football team three years ago.

He called the nation's educational system a disaster area and asked that graduates make a "solemn vow" to improve conditions.

On the issue of racism, Franklin noted that overt racism appeared to be on the rise. And he laid the blame for that condition on the administrations of both former President Ronald Reagan and President George Bush for undermining civil-rights efforts.

In area of employment, the class of '91 is looking at scarce job market. However, the university has been able to maintain a fairly high employment rate for its graduates according to Sandy Sosnik, director of career services.

"We are usually able to place 65 to 70 percent of our seniors in full-time jobs by the end of the summer," Sosnik said. "A big help for us has been our involvement in the cooperative education program. That's the best thing since sliced bread as far as we are concerned. The corporations involved in the program have invested in these young people and know their capabilities. They are usually hired by that company after graduation."

Chancellor Cleon F. Thompson Jr., conferred the degrees on the graduates. And honorary doctorates of humane letters were awarded to Franklin; and to Paul Fulton, president of Sara Lee Corporation and a member of the university's board of trustees; and to John G. Medlin Jr., president, chair and CEO of First Wachovia.

ity Carson said. So, while rare, the suspension of young children does occur she said.

"I don't know how much more creative we (school-system) can be. When we have to suspend a child that young we have reached our creative limit in terms of discipline. We have to be concerned with the impact this disruptive behavior is having on the other children in the classroom," Carson explained.

But in this instance, according to the child's mother, the disruptive

behavior involved her daughter telling another child to stop bothering her after the teacher (who happens to be white) had instructed the class to be quiet.

The mother said she and her daughter's teacher wrote notes to each other prior to the suspension about her daughter's conduct progress. The mother had asked the teacher to inform her if there were any problems.

She admitted that her daughter had been to the office before and

had been paddled once by the principal.

But she said when she stopped receiving notes from the teacher, she assumed that things had gotten better until she received the call last Friday saying that her daughter had been suspended.

"I really don't think they took the time to find out what the problem was with my daughter," she said. "She goes to church, and is very active in the children's choir, the Sunday school, the girl scout program. And nobody else seems to have any great degree of difficulty. She is no different than any other

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child. Sometimes you have to speak to children about the way they are acting."

She said she had only one sit-down conference with her daughter's teacher prior to the suspension. She said the teacher told her at that time her daughter would do the opposite of what she was asked to do and was disrupting her class.

She described her daughter as a little "busybody" with a vivid imagination who has to stay busy all the time.

"I'm stunned and hurt that they would suspend my daughter for something like this. What worries

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me is that I think she enjoyed being suspended because she didn't have to deal with her teacher."

Her daughter was scheduled to return to her regular class at school on Wednesday. She won't be behind in her work, her mother said, because she asked that her work assignments be taken to LIFT for completion.

She is among more than 6,000 kindergarten and first grade students in the city/county school system. School officials said they have no information compiled on how many other children that age have been suspended.

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