

Grievance panel denies Parkland parents' appeal

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

A three-member grievance panel of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools board of education supported Superintendent Don Martin's decision to reinstate Parkland High School teacher Charles A. Schoderbek.

A group of Parkland parents, represented by attorney and parent Jasper Brown, filed an appeal March 4, two weeks after Martin announced Schoderbek would return to Parkland.

On Jan. 9, Schoderbek was suspended without pay for striking a student, and later removed from his position as Parkland boys varsity coach. The group of parents and students approached Principal James Brandon with a list of 22 allegations. These charges stated



Charles Schoderbek



Jasper Brown



Jane Goins

that Schoderbek used profanity, made sexually suggestive remarks and touched students inappropriately.

Three years ago, Brandon issued a written warning to Schoderbek for similar misconducts.

"I can't help but feel if the same situation occurred at West Forsyth or Mount Tabor, for that matter, that the outcome would have been different," said Brown.

Brown presented the case on behalf of the approximately 20 parents and their children at the March 11 hearing. The committee reached a decision Friday.

School board vice chairman Richard Bagley said that the parents "really did not have standing." Bagley served as the chair of the

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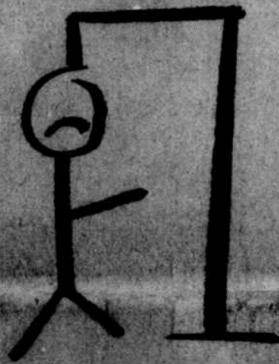
Minorities represent highest suspension numbers

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Suspension Statistics

Fifth Month Figures, 1996-97 School Year

Minority presence
in all schools:

Minority representation
of suspensions:



Number of Suspensions by grade level

Elementary	
total suspensions:	897
total days:	684
White Males	136
White Females	38
Minority Males	540
Minority Females	163
Middle School	
total suspensions:	3,154
total days:	10,164
White Males	749
White Females	197
Minority Males	1504
Minority Females	704
High School	
total suspensions:	3,089
total days:	8,062
White Males	871
White Females	10
Minority Males	1278
Minority Females	630

▲ Forsyth county reports five-month stats

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

Minority students represent more than four out of five suspensions meted out in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools. Though they comprise 42 percent of the total schools' population, minority students accounted for 82 percent of suspensions in the first semester of the 1996-97 calendar year.

Minority males, especially African-American boys and young men, make up the largest percentage of disciplined students. Even in ele-

mentary school, African-American males are put out of school for a variety of offenses.

Three of the five elementary schools comprising Zone 1 of the new redistricting plan lead in suspensions: Diggs, Forest Park and Hall-Woodward. Those three are also schools where a majority of the population are minority students.

Diggs, the smallest school in the system, has the highest suspension percentage.

"Most suspensions are for fighting," said Bobby Robinson, principal of Diggs Elementary

School. Robinson said that repeat offenders drive up the number of suspensions. "The majority of our students are the normal, wonderful, caring students who get along," she said.

Eighty-five percent of the students at Diggs are on a reduced or free lunch program, but Robinson doesn't believe that economics plays a leading role in suspensions. "I try to look at it on an individual basis," she said.

Diggs' numbers may be up because of a new "zero tolerance" policy toward fighting introduced this year. "I told them, 'If you fight, you're going home,'" said Robinson.

Students in grades three through five who are involved in a fist fight are suspended; those children in lower grades who fight are allowed more chances.

Suspension is not usually the first resort. Schools attempt to involve parents in the discipline process as early as possible, and even offer them an opportunity to "stand in" for their children. The parent of a student facing suspension may come into the school for part of the day and observe his or her child in the classroom, in place of out-of-school suspension. Other forms

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Part I of II Parts

Local charter schools get go-ahead from state board

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

The state board of education recently approved charters for four schools in Winston-Salem. Three of the charter applicants are African Americans.

"We're ecstatic about it," said Simon Johnson of the approval for his Quality Education Academy (QEA). "It seems like the state has pretty much given us what we wanted." QEA will take an academic lead from the existing private school, Quality Education

Institute's (QEI) curriculum and offer an enhanced program with a nine-hour day for students in grades six through eight.

The new academy would remain separate from QEI, which leases space from the Carver Road Church of Christ. A clause in the state legislation that restricts charter schools from leasing church space may soon be adjusted.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school attorney Doug Pungler said that the legislation, passed in June 1996, could soon be opened to individual

interpretation.

In the past, the local school system has leased buildings owned by church nonprofits. As long as a non-secular curriculum was offered and all religious paraphernalia were removed from the space, Pungler said, church-owned space could potentially be leased by unaffiliated charter organizations.

Johnson has indicated that QEA would have remained separate regardless of the legislation. Construction of a new building to house QEA will be completed by Sept. 2; in the meantime,

applications for QEA can be obtained at QEI.

Charter schools are publicly funded institutions governed directly by the community. Teachers, parents and other community members may comprise a charter's board, and the schools are freed from many of the regulations of traditional public schools.

This sentiment encouraged the other two approved applicants, attorney Hazel Mack and county commissioner Earline Parmon.

Parmon's Lift Academy, currently

operating as an alternative school for students who have been expelled or suspended from public institutions, will now be open to all students in grades six through 12. Lift will continue to maintain a 65-seat capacity "school within a school" for those students with disciplinary problems.

Lift Academy will expand to serve 160 students, said Parmon, but plans to preserve a small classroom atmosphere, with a maximum student-to-

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RHC staff proposal seeks new image for center

By BRIDGET EVARTS
Community News Reporter

Reynolds Health Center administrators admit that in the past, the facility has not been managed as well as it could have been. But they think their new action plan deserves serious consideration as an alternative to Baptist Hospital's proposal.

"If I could tell you that everything at Reynolds Health Center was perfect, I'd be lying and you'd know that," said administrator Dennis Magovern at a presentation held at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church March 13.

"We're not doing the same things today as we did one year ago. We've been able to adapt," Magovern stated.

The new action plan addresses many of the facility's financial and management prob-

lems, said Magovern, and predicts a decrease in county funding of \$3-3.3 million by 2001.

County subsidies to Reynolds Health Center average between \$4 million and \$4.5 million. Last year, Forsyth budgeted \$4.6 million for the health center.

Magovern assured the audience that the county would continue its tradition of subsidizing health care. Board of Commissioners chair Peter Brunstetter has stated that the current board is dedicated to health care, but warned that Forsyth's tradition of providing health services is no guarantee for the future.

Baptist Hospital's proposal promises to invest \$5 million into a new, state-of-the-art facility on East 14th Street and decrease county support to \$4.1 million in the first year of operations. Increased services would be offered at the new facility, and the new build-

ing would occupy less than one-fifth of the space taken up by the health center.

The health center now devotes a large portion of space to social service departments. Magovern called the facility's 142,000 square-foot building "convenient — not ideal, but convenient," and said that Reynolds should market this as a "one-stop" convenience for clients.

Updating fee schedules, adding minimum co-payments and pursuing delinquent collections from Medicaid and Medicare patients would contain costs, and thinning out the number of medical students would lend a new image to Reynolds Health Center.

Bowman Gray provides about 20 doctors

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RHC administrator Dennis Magovern (left) and advisory committee chairman Bill Tatum present their proposal to the audience at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church.