

**LIFT**

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1997-98 school year.) There is some question about whether the tax bill was initially paid with state money, but officials said it was later replaced with other sources of revenue.

"LIFT Academy had a deficit of \$90,368 in the 1997-98 school year.

Kirk said Friday that LIFT Academy officials have told state officials that the \$90,000 deficit has been reduced to \$60,000.

"We want to confirm that," he said.

Kirk also said that LIFT Academy has put together a financial plan that "all sounded real good," but a state audit team will go to the school within the next several days to check into the school's finances.

Kirk said that the state has had trouble getting specific information from LIFT Academy about how the school is going to correct its financial problems.

"We don't appreciate the lack of cooperation," he said. "They've responded but not (with the specific information the state sought)."

He said the Charter School Advisory Committee raised questions about the finances of 19 charter schools, and 17 of the 19 schools have resolved the matters. LIFT was one of the two schools that did not, he said.

W.R. Dowe, a business consultant, was hired by LIFT Academy to help the school correct its financial problems.

"We have developed a very strong and justifiable plan that puts us into a positive (position) immediately," Dowe said in an interview last week.

He said the plan streamlines salaries and wages to cut costs and has strong accounting controls. For example, no money may be spent unless it is budgeted, he said. To keep tabs on the school's finances, he said, "We want to generate an income statement and balance sheet after each month's activities."

Also LIFT Academy will no longer accept students for which it receives no government funding. In the past LIFT would take in any child rather than let the child be on the streets, and in many cases the school was not paid, Dowe said.

Also the school is trying to raise its own money for certain expenses, Dowe said. For example, he said, the school's football program is doing some fund-raising.

Also, the school has delayed additional capital expenditures such as computers until the third and fourth quarters, Dowe said.

LIFT Academy "is a business all the way now," he said. "If allowed, it will be a positive business and will have a very positive impact on at-risk children."

Dowe said that if you looked at the school's balance sheet as of July 30, the school was in the black.

Dowe, former director of the Small Business and Technology Center at Winston-Salem State University, declined to give more specific information about LIFT Academy's finances, referring those questions to Earline Parmon, director of the school. Parmon could not be reached for comment late last week or this week.

The school does have a host of supporters in Raleigh.

"I'm very much in favor of LIFT... Teachers are turned on," state Sen. Ham Horton of Forsyth County, who represents the 20th District, said. "Students are learning. It's inconceivable to have any right-thinking people talking about (revoking) their charter."

Horton is a staunch supporter of the school and vowed to help LIFT keep its charter.

"Some people in Raleigh see charter schools as a threat to the 'public school monopoly,'" Horton said. "They raise one stumbling block after another (for charter schools)."

Horton said that LIFT Academy officials were not given the

opportunity to speak before the State Board of Education. "I understand it was more like a kangaroo court than a full hearing," Horton said. "They didn't give people (from LIFT Academy) an opportunity to answer questions," he said.

Kirk said that there is no need for officials of LIFT Academy to appear before the State Board of Education because the Charter School Advisory Committee represents the state board on charter school matters and officials from LIFT Academy and other schools having financial problems were given the opportunity to appear before the Charter School Advisory Committee when the committee was considering those matters.

Horton said that LIFT Academy is "a happy place. It's a place where learning can take place. The faculty are excited about teaching... Students seem to be bright. They are orderly. The place is spotless. It's a better atmosphere for learning than many of our public schools."

The school has done "a whale of a job for 18 years" taking students public schools have about given up on and turning them into really good citizens for our community," he said.

He said, "I understand things (LIFT Academy was) accused of - financial mismanagement - either were not there to begin with or have been corrected."

Horton said he plans to ask state officials to allow LIFT Academy to continue to operate as a charter school.

Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker was the only member of the State Board of Education to vote against the motion to begin the process to revoke LIFT Academy's charter.

Bob Phillips, the lieutenant governor's press secretary, said Wicker "had conversations with people who are affiliated with the school and (he) understands they have been very successful with students at the school."

Wicker is "very impressed" with LIFT Academy and wants to give the school more time to see if they can resolve their financial situation, Phillips said.

"This is a program targeting at-risk kids and is doing a very good job... He (Wicker) wanted to exhaust all avenues to make the school succeed," Phillips said.

Jane Norwood, vice chairman of the State Board of Education, said she voted in favor of beginning the process to revoke LIFT Academy's charter because she had no indication the school had answered the state's questions about the school's financial problems and she had no indication the school had provided data showing the school's success rate in educating students.

Norwood said she was concerned that LIFT Academy officials had time to ask some state legislators to intervene on the school's behalf but had not taken time to present the requested information about the school's

finances to the State Board of Education and Charter School Advisory Committee.

Norwood said the State Board of Education is responsible for education of the children and making sure schools are financially solvent. "We have to be stewards of the taxpayers' money," she said.

She said of LIFT, "When you have a place that is \$120,000 in debt (deficit), that's a pretty significant when (state) staff indicates to us they have not had open communications from the school about finances."

Philip Price, the director of school business for the State Department of Public Instruction, said in an interview in late July that his staff expected that LIFT Academy's deficit for the 1998-99 school year will amount to more than \$120,000, even though an audit had not been done for the 1998-99 school year.

Earline Parmon said in late July that the state Charter School Advisory Committee was given erroneous information about the school's deficit. She also said the state department was reporting two different deficit figures, so, obviously, one of them was wrong.

Parmon also questioned why state officials believed that the school had a larger deficit in the 1998-99 school year than the 1997-98 school year when no audit has been done for the 1998-99 school year.

Norwood said that last week Price told the state board that his office had received a phone call from a LIFT Academy official that the school's deficit had been reduced to \$60,000. Norwood said she wants state officials to verify that.

As for the criticism that some folks in Raleigh are against charter schools because they take money away from public schools, Norwood said she doesn't think the State Board of Education is against charter schools. "Charter schools were created to give choices, alternatives."

"I do think we have to look carefully at charter schools," she said.

If a regular public school had a deficit as large as LIFT Academy has had, "we would have great problems," she said.

Earline Parmon said in an interview in late July - after the state Charter School Advisory Committee recommended that the State Board of Education revoke LIFT Academy's charter - that LIFT Academy would appeal any decision to revoke its charter.

Parmon is a Forsyth County commissioner.

Gloria Upton, the chairman of the board of LIFT Academy, could not be reached for comment, nor could the principal of the school.

If LIFT Academy loses its charter, it would lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenues from state, local and federal governments.

**TAXPAYERS WHO PAID NORTH CAROLINA INTANGIBLES TAXES ON STOCK FOR ONE OR MORE TAX YEARS 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 AND 1994:**

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P.O. Box 1661  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602-1661

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**NOTICE MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is seeking minority and women-owned firms (M/WBE) to bid on upcoming highway projects throughout the State. The Locations of the projects are:

Project No.	County/Route	Division No.	Type	Location	Metric/English		
6.059001B	Dare	1	Grading, Paving, PVT Markings & Structures	US-64/264 from US-264 to SR-1105 in Manns Harbor & the intersection of NC 345.	Metric	10%	
8.1170807	Craven	2	Grading, Removal & Rehab. of structure	John Lawson bridge over the Neuse River near New Bern.	Metric	3%	
9.8043045	Halifax	4	Widening, Grading, Drainage, Paving, PVT Markings & Structure	Old Farm Rd. Exit from NC-125 to South of US-158 in Roanoke Rapids	Metric	10%	5%
8.2290402	Edgecombe	4	Widening, Grading, Draining, Paving PVT, MRKS. & STRS.	NC-43 bypass from NC-43 to US-64 alternate in Rocky Mount	Metric	12%	
9.8052034	Wake	5	Grading, Draining, Paving & Pavement Markings	SR-2036 (New Hope Rd.) From South of SR-2906 (Willow Oak Rd.) To SR-2215 (Buffalo).	Metric	10%	5%
8.1442401	Cumberland	6	Widening, Grading, Drainage, Resurfacing & PVT MKGS.	SR-3828 (Bragg Blvd.) From South of Rankin St. to South of NC-24, 87 & 210 (Rowan Street)	Metric	10%	
U492304	Guilford	7	Grading, Drainage, Paving, PVMT Markings & Structures	I-85 (Greensboro Bypass) from South of Greensboro to West of SR-3300 (Elm Eugene).	Metric	10%	
8.2663001	Cabarrus	10	Grading, Drainage, Paving, PVT Markings & Structures	Kannapolis Westside bypass from South of SR-1555 (Grand Canyon Rd.) East of I-85.	Metric	12%	
8.2731702	Caldwell	11	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Pavement Markings	SR-1001 (Connelly Springs Rd.) From SR-1933 (South West Blvd.) To US-321A (Norwood)	Metric	10%	
8.2811601	Gaston	12	Grading, Drainage, Paving, PVT, Markings & Culverts	SR-2200 (Cox Road) from South of Duke Street to Armstrong Park Drive	Metric	10%	
8.1841902	Henderson, Bamcombe	14 13	Widening, Grading, Drainage, Paving & PVMT Markings	US-25 from SR-1546 (Blake St.) in Henderson Co. to North of SR-3531 (Crescent Dr.)	Metric	10%	
8.2571301	Randolph	8	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Richland Creek & approaches on SR-2911 (Kemp Mill Road).	English	10%	
8.2801301	Cleveland	12	Grading, Drainage, Paving, PVMT Markings & Structure	Bridge over Buffalo Creek & approaches on SR-1908	English	10%	
8.2870801	McDowell	13	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Culvert	Culvert on Second Broad River & approaches on SR-1147	English	10%	
8.1404001	Wake	5	Resurfacing, Gaudrail & Pavement Markings	US-1/64 & I-440 from West of SR-1009 interchange to East of SR-1728 (Wade Ave.)	English	15%	

LETTING DATE: Tuesday, August 17, 1999

**\*\*\* MONDAY, August 16, 1999 6 PM - MIDNIGHT \*\*\***

**North Raleigh Hilton - 3415 Wake Forest Road - Raleigh, N.C.**

Prime contractors will be available to receive quotes for trucking, sub-contracting and materials. M/WBE's needing more information and/or technical assistance may come to Room 522 to meet with representatives from the Bennington Corp., NCDOT's Supportive Provider. (919)832-6027

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