



Photo by Kevin Walker

Darrell and Cora Sydnor listen to Dennis Walker, principal of the Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy, speak about his school's magnet program. Also pictured is one of the Sydnor's children, Tierra.

Magnets

system's first high school magnet programs. These days, Piggott said, parents have so many educational options that a brand-new school alone will not automatically attract students. Magnet programs offer the standard course of study with a strong infusion of a specialized program in such areas as the arts, leadership or technology. The school system opened its first magnet program in the 1970s at Moore Elementary. In recent years, federal grants have created several more. Superintendent Don Martin said the aim of many of the magnet programs opened with federal dollars is to bring racial balance to schools that lost it after the school system did away with cross-town busing in the late 1990s. Martin is confident that over time, magnet programs will achieve that aim.

He points to Paisley Middle as an example. The school — which offers the academically-challenging International Baccalaureate program — had a student population that was more than 90 percent African-American soon after the system implemented its neighborhood schools concept. With the creation of its magnet program, Paisley's student body slowly became more racially diverse. Today, about 50 percent of the school's students are white, Martin said.

Mineral Springs Middle is hoping that its newly-implemented magnet program will have similar results. The school offers an innovative arts and leadership program that focuses on the strengths of each individual student.

Mineral Springs Middle's student population is overwhelmingly black and Hispanic. The school also has space to accommodate dozens of additional students. Mineral Springs Middle became a magnet school as a result of a \$7.1 million federal grant the system received last year.

Mineral Springs principal Urban League

him apart. He was approved unanimously by the board of directors.

Grandberry has directed community relations strategies for various international firms and Fortune 100 companies, such as EchoStar, AT&T, and Lockheed Martin. He's worked for former White House adviser Robert J. Brown. He's also conducted workshops on organizational development for the National Urban League CEO's affiliate orientation and the Whitney M. Young Leadership Development conferences.

Before accepting the Urban League position, he was director of America's Families United in Washington, D.C., where his responsibilities included voter education, strategic planning and membership development initiatives.

Grandberry has big shoes to fill. Over the last 16 years Wylie transformed the agency by having it tackle issues facing families in a "holistic" manner. The local Urban League developed programs for all segments of the population from young adults to seniors.

The Urban League has been involved in helping people train for and find jobs. This year the organization hosted its first job fair for seniors. The Urban League along with other agencies opened a discount pharmacy for seniors this year.

Grandberry will begin his official first day at the Urban League on Jan. 17.

Most black board members say they will seek another term in '06

BY SANDRA ISLEY
THE CHRONICLE

Three of the four African-Americans who sit on the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Board of Education and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners say they definitely plan to seek re-election this year.

County Commissioners Walter Marshall and Beaufort Bailey say that as the only two black members of the seven-member board, they want to continue to ensure that the voices of minorities are heard on the board.

"I wish more blacks would show up at the county commissioner meetings. A lot of times, as blacks, we wait for something to happen, then we react," said Bailey, who will be seeking a second term.

But Marshall's and Bailey's presence on the board did not stop their fellow members from drastically cutting the county subsidy for the Downtown Health Plaza, a clinic run by Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center that provides essential health services at either low or no cost to patients. The clinic was forced to cut some of its services as a result.

Marshall said the county was put into a bind because the state needs to do more to provide for low-income patients.

"The state passes a lot of issues down to the county," Marshall said. "Right now, the local county is having to fund things that should be the responsibility of the state government,



File Photo

Victor Johnson, right, and Walter Marshall disagree over a proposed school bond after a public forum last year at Carver High School.

which is really overtaxing the local economy."

Marshall and Bailey sense a battle this year over a proposed school bond. The school system wants commissioners to OK tens of millions in bonds to pay for new schools and renovations to existing schools.

Bailey said he may support some bond money, but not the nearly \$50 million the school system may seek. Bailey believes that the majority of school funding is being allocated to schools in the suburbs and that inner-city schools are being neglected. Marshall feels the same way.

Like Marshall and Bailey, Victor Johnson and Geneva Brown are the only two African-American members of the city-county School Board. Johnson says he will definitely seek

another term. Brown is still iffy. She said she will make a decision about her future on the board before the filing window for candidates closes on Feb. 28.

Johnson, who fought for years for the construction of the new multimillion Atkins Academic and Technology High School, said he wants to be around to ensure that other new schools open and that existing schools get makeovers. Johnson said a school bond is needed to renovate 24 schools and pay for the construction of 13 new ones. The school system cannot handle the current surge in students with its existing schools, he said.

"Our enrollment has gone from 39,000 to almost 48,000. Every time you get 1,000 new students that come into your school system, there's a possibility that you need another

school," said Johnson. Brown's greatest concern continues to be the gap between majority achievement and minority achievement.

"We need to have our kids, minority kids, close to where everybody else is scoring on tests and everything else," Brown said.

Johnson claims to have seen a shift for the better in test scores for minority students. He cites Kimberley Park Elementary School as an example of scholastic achievement, where 90 percent of the student population passed the end-of-grade test.

Brown says the quality of education still can be enhanced. It is one of the things she plans to work on if she seeks another term.

Brown says more money is not always the answer to fixing the achievement gap. As a former principal of trailblazing Moore Elementary School, Brown has seen innovative teaching methods do the trick.

"Money doesn't answer all the questions. You got money, you got to know how to use it and what to use it for," Brown said. "It all comes down to teaching. In education, the bottom line is teaching and how it's done."

Filing for the 2006 election will begin on Feb. 13. This year's primary will be May 2. The general election will be on Nov. 7.

Several countywide offices will be on the ballot, including sheriff, district attorney and some district judgeships.



Brown



Bailey

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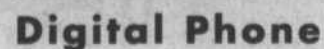
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