

OP/ED



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Atkins needs your help



Virginia Newell
Guest Columnist

Concerned Citizens for Academic Achievement and Accountability, with permission of Superintendent Don Martin, has studied about 10 schools - elementary, middle and high schools - for one and a half years.

It was obvious after six months of visiting the schools, talking with faculty, visiting PTA meetings and observing students that the "No Child Left Behind" law was not working in these schools.

After one year, the Concerned Citizens group recommended to the superintendent to change the way the curriculum is delivered at Atkins Academic and Technology High School.

Today, S.G. Atkins Technology High School is thriving like no other school in the system. New Principal Joe Childress, along with faculty and students, are excelling. Concerned Citizens are fully aware of the needs of the school and are on board to assist the school in any way possible.

Concerned Citizens is a group of volunteers helping in the areas of mentoring and providing financial assistance for books and athletics. Concerned Citizens is planning a \$50,000 Book Campaign to help schools buy current textbooks. The group is inviting all "old" Atkins alumni to join in the effort to make the new Atkins one of the top academic high schools in Forsyth County. Atkins parents, businesses and the men and women who make up the community are also encouraged to help make Atkins the best.

In closing, I want every-

one to read what Winston-Salem State University Founder Simon Green Atkins said about education. In a radio address on Nov. 15, 1930, Atkins, who first came to Winston-Salem to lead the city's first black high school, drove home the importance of education.

"Education is the most fruitful investment of modern times. Education bears the torch that enlightens the world, fires the imagination of man and feeds the flame of genius," he said. "Let education speak for itself. I am the parent of progress, creator of culture and molder of destiny. I banish ignorance, discourage vice, and disarm anarchy. Fortunate nations and happy homes welcome me. Education is irresistible power."

Virginia K. Newell is a former educator and elected official. Call her at 336-722-4606 to help Concerned Citizens in its efforts.

Policy

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Police Chief Scott Cunningham says the number the ACLU derived was erroneous, due to "very poor data and data collection" on the Department's part. Cunningham told members of the City Council's Public Safety Committee that his department will begin a new system of checks and balances for the checkpoints. As part of the improvements, checkpoints can now only be authorized by someone with a rank of lieutenant or higher. Previously, a sergeant could approve them. The Department is also requiring an additional training session for all officers involved in the checkpoints and will feature a much more deliberate approach to data collection, Cunningham said. Each time a checkpoint is staged, the lieutenant in charge will be required to fill out a form describing the purpose and duration of the checkpoint, and the pattern of cars stopped. Any changes to the pattern must be recorded along with the reason for the change, and the entire procedure will be videotaped and monitored after the fact, the chief explained. The Department will report back to the Public Safety Committee in three months.



Dummit

Cunningham said he is hopeful the new policies will alleviate the strain that exists between the Department and some members of minority communities.

"This has become such a big issue in the community that we need to make sure that we have the right focus on it and we need to be able to ensure that it's fair and balanced," he stated. "...All of our citizens need to have comfort with the police department and the way we do business, and making these changes I think will help."

Stephen Hairston, who handles the complaints department for the local NAACP branch, said he is pleased with the changes.

"I felt that it was an exceptional compromise," said Hairston, who is retired from the WSPD. "...I think it's a great victory for the community and the police department."

The Department hasn't always been so willing to hear the ACLU and the NAACP's concerns about the issue, Hairston said, but he believes Cunningham is making a good faith effort to right its past wrongs.

"They were completely on the wrong track, but they've got a much better plan now. I'm completely on board with it," he commented.

Cunningham says the Department's only mistake was not properly recording data related to the checkpoints.

"I don't think the police department, as far as delivering a service, has done anything wrong. What we could have done better and should have done better and will do better is having the documentation," he commented. "Had we done it from the start, a lot of this wouldn't have been an issue."

Pinto said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the new measures.

"We want to see that these new reforms have the effect of not burdening minority communities anymore," said Pinto, who has led the charge to have the checkpoints reformed. "I hope it does, and I think it will."

The ACLU and NAACP had threatened to file a lawsuit against the Police Department if it did not address the organizations' concerns about the checkpoints. Pinto added that the ACLU would continue to monitor the checkpoints and reports from community members regarding their implementation.

"It is important for the community to know about these changes, look for these changes, and if they're in any way suspicious that these new measures are not being followed, to please contact the ACLU," Pinto said. "We're here to keep track of what's going on."

After years of litigating against stationary license checkpoints - which he says are largely unconstitutional - Attorney E. Clarke Dummit, who addressed the issue at a recent NAACP meeting, said he is not happy to see the ACLU's months of data collection lead to just a change in policy.

"Getting a higher supervisor on board doesn't change the fact that they are violating the constitution," said the Wake Forest School of Law alumnus.

According to Dummit, staging license checks for any reason other than apprehending drunk drivers who pose an immediate threat to the lives of the public is illegal.

"I have been litigating it for the past 15 years and I'm certain that I'm right on the constitutional standards," he stated. "...to begin to set up those checkpoints for general enforcement of regulatory laws just moves us into a gestapo state."

Dummit has won several criminal cases regarding the checkpoints, but says it will take a civil lawsuit to change the state's policy on the issue.

"It's time for the people to come forward ... and say, 'We want this changed,'" he said.

The Department had put the checkpoints on an "unofficial hold" pending Cunningham's appearance before the Public Safety Committee, and will begin to roll them back out again in March, after officers are trained, Cunningham said.

Taking Responsibility

Delron White-Bey
Guest Columnist

My name is Delron Eric White-Bey. I was introduced to the newspaper by a friend. I'm a 24-year-old young man who is currently incarcerated at Marion Correction Institution. I've been serving time now for 6-going-on-7 years. And it's sad to say it took receiving a 20-year sentence just for me to wake up out of a dark mind-frame, but it did.

I wanted to write and reply to a guest columnist Calvin Michael Smith. In his January 26, 2012 column, he quoted a statement from the one-time Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory said: "Many African Americans live in a moral sewer."

Now, to many the statement may offend, but to the very few who can actually look outside the box and keep it real will say that it's the truth. Now I'm no saint. No one walking God's green Earth is. A two-time loser to this prison system that is quickly killing off our population, an ex-gang member, fool, dummy - you name it

and I'll take responsibility for my past.

It's true that there were many people who played roles in helping blacks get the chains removed from our ankles, but it's a proven fact that as we got free, the powers that be got smarter and started placing the chains on our minds, leaving the majority of us in mental slavery.

I see the effects from it 24/7. I represent a generation where more than 90 percent have no morals for themselves or others. This is a time in civilization where money is more important than a person's life, where there's no honor for our mothers and fathers and no respect for our females. It wasn't our forefathers or fore mothers who were hit the hardest by slavery and racism. It was the offspring. Because now there is no beneficial or obligatory pursuits in life.

What can be done to save a generation that respects nothing, not even themselves? Well, first you must start by teaching them to be themselves. Like Calvin, it offends me to see so many brothers and sisters suffering from mental slavery. Even more so the older brothers because they are the ones that the younger generation looks to for that positive

guidance. Only when men and women start being themselves will they gain the knowledge, wisdom and understanding it takes to deal with their condition.

The road to recovery is going to be long. It's not going to happen overnight. What this issue needs is men and women who are willing to take the initiative to help correct the situation. Conscious men and women who are not afraid of taking on the responsibilities. The reason why so many kids turn to gangs is simple: either they didn't have someone to look up to or someone gave up on them. Brothers and sisters, we can't give up. We must keep fighting for our people. Because in the end, we are all we have. Don't let mental slavery be the cause of our nation dying. In unity we shall stand, and one by one we shall piece this puzzle together. All praises go to God and Noble Drew Ali for saving me and opening my eyes to the light. I'd also like to thank The Chronicle for your services inside our communities. May God continue to bless you all.

Delron Eric White-Bey is serving time in Marion Correction Institution in Marion, N.C.



Photos by Todd Luck
The children and parents who participated in Chef and a Child at Family Services helped out at ACF's opening banquet.

Chefs

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Development (FSCD). They prepared grilled vegetable roll-ups, rice salad and bean quesadillas. The children were guided by local chefs involved in the Chef and Child program - people like Suzan Smith, the executive chef at downtown Centenary United Methodist Church. She said she was amazed at how focused and efficient the kids were.

"They were fast," Smith said. "I told ... the ones making the quesadillas, 'I need some kids like you on my staff.' They put quesadillas out so fast we couldn't get them on the grill fast enough," said Smith, whose staff of eight at Centenary regularly feeds hundreds of people.

The youngest meal preparers came from FSCD, which offers pre-school programming. They made fruit kabobs. The kids cut fruit like the pros, thanks to the training they've received through Chef and Child, which is offered in Forsyth and 13 surrounding counties.

For the last three years, Chef Don McMillan, owner of the Stocked Pot cooking school and store, has taught FSCD kids and parents how to cook economical, healthy meals. The ultimate goal of the program is to encourage kids to adopt healthier habits in order to fight the growing childhood obesity rate. McMillan said the message is getting through. He recalled a recent class where he had parents prepare soup. The kids were pleading with their parents to add in veg-



Chef Jeff Bacon



Chef Suzan Smith

etables they'd prepared to the soup.

"When you have four-and-five-year-olds telling their parents to eat vegetables, you know it's working," said McMillan.

Sibhan Sturdivant took part in Chef and Child with her five-year-old daughter, Keziah Jones. Sturdivant agrees that the program works.

She said Keziah not only helps her prepare healthy meals at home, but is also eager to eat the food.

"She wants to know what it tastes like," said Sturdivant. "She wants to eat just about anything now."

All the kid chefs received a certificate, a culinary medal, an apron and a chef's hat.

Twenty professional chefs and 30 culinary students also prepared a variety of food for the massive opening banquet. Brave local chefs prepared barbecue ribs on an outdoor grill as snow fell. ACF Southeast Regional Vice President Chef Jeff Bacon said having

the conference come to Winston-Salem for the first time was a dream come true.

Bacon teaches culinary arts at the Second Harvest Food Bank's Triad Community Kitchen and is actively involved with Chef and Child. The theme of this year's conference is "Celebrating Diversity, Sustaining our Future." Its focus is on both gender and racial diversity and sustainable, eco-friendly practices.

"We have diversity among our ranks, so we really wanted to celebrate that," said Bacon.

Smith, who has been a chef for 12 years, said she has seen an increase in diversity in her profession. She said when she began serving on the ACF Triad Chapter Board she was the only woman, and now other women have joined.

"There are so many women becoming chefs. I applaud that," said Smith, who now chairs the ACF Triad Chapter Board.

The four-day conference featured cooking contests, workshops and meetings.

Clarification

A photo of Patrice Y. Toney was used erroneously last week. It appeared in the front-page skybox to promote a story about a new Health Department anti-STD program. Toney was pictured with one of the men involved in the program, but Toney, a former Health Department employee, is not a program participant.

She was an invited guest at last week's kick-off event for the new program because during her days as the leader of the Health Department's POSSE, she wrote the grant that made this new program possible.

Toney, the vice chair of the Winston-Salem Urban League Board, left the Health Department late last year to take a position at the County's Budget Office. The Chronicle apologizes for any confusion the use of her photo may have caused.

