

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Substitute For Education?

Students who seek employment after high school graduation need to master the same basic academic skills as the college-bound person. Therefore, vocational training and technical education are no substitute for education in the core competencies. These are important because the major asset the employers want in a high school graduate is basically "the ability to learn and to adapt to changes in the workplace" as opposed to mastery of a particular set of job skills.

This statement summarizes a National Academy of Science panel report of business and education leaders titled, "High Schools and the Changing Workplace." It is a report that appears worthy of commenting on as our nation's youth and teachers are departing from school for the summer, and for many, the seeking of permanent or summer jobs.

Richard Heckert, vice chairman and chief operating officer of the E.I. DuPont Co., and Chairman of the 20 member panel said the report is concerned only with high school graduates who do not attend college, whom he said "represent the largest segment of the American work force and play a critical and central role in the nation's economy."

Mr. Heckert added that the panel was seeking to set forth a set of core competencies that include:

The ability to read, write, reason and compute, including a mastery of "standard English in its written and spoken forms" and elementary algebra.

An understanding of American economic and social life.

Possession of the attitudes and personal habits that make for a dependable worker and citizen.

Computer Literacy

Equally significant, and we think worthy of special emphasis, Mr. Heckert also noted that:

Computer literacy is overrated and a lousy trade-off as a substitute for basic skills because the computer will soon be a simple tool that anyone can operate.

"Young people must understand that the standards of behavior, speech (no so-called 'black English') and dress expected of employees often differ markedly from those accepted in student circles."

There are two interesting and

related factors that help to explain the significance of the Academy's report. First, a new state-wide test of writing skills

given to North Carolina's ninth-grade students during the past school year produced troubling results. Almost half the students - 45.4 percent - scored the lowest

possible grade - one - on the test and only one percent made a four, the highest score. In all fairness, the test itself, which was designed to measure

students' ability to communicate an idea, resulted in such poor results that many charges have been made of flaws in the test.

Flaws In Test

Some student argued that the test's instructions were ambiguous and many parents added with justification that grading a writing test is at best a subjective undertaking.

Interestingly enough, educators themselves have now been charged with using a form of educators' bureaucratic language that might explain why our 9th-graders did so poorly on the test.

Education news reporters claim, for example, that educators too often talk about the "basic fundamentals" with

no reference nor understanding of other fundamentals. Then too they call school teachers "classroom managers" and students have become "education users."

And students don't work on math problems, rather they spend "time-on-task." Much similar nonsense language is often used.

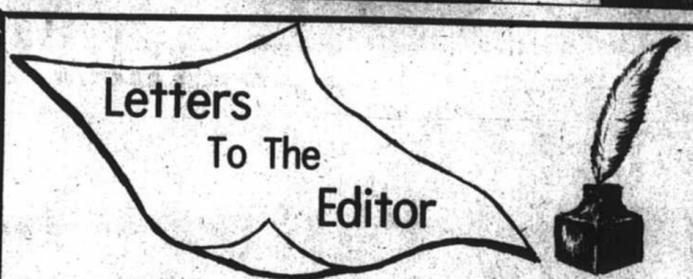
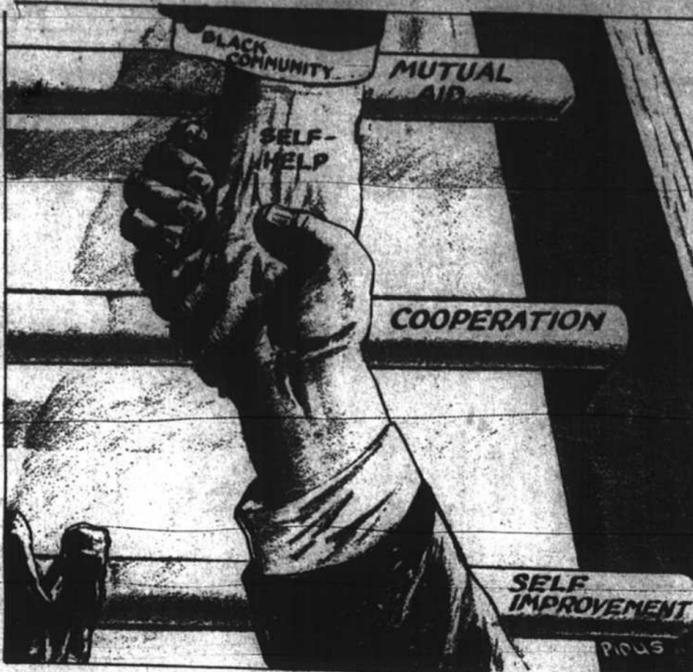
These three observations are core competencies, low communication test scores, and communication skills.

educators - should be given serious criticism over the past school year, some justified, some not, but the inconsistencies

between our observations as well as within them need the attention of the schools and parents alike.

It is time we gave serious thought to the full meaning of

learning and adapting either as an educator, a student or a parent.



County Commissioners Urged To Adopt School System Budget Requests

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We, the undersigned faculty and staff of Park Road Elementary School, respectfully urge the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to adopt the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System's budget requests for 1984-85 without reduction. In support thereof, we ask that the following be considered.

1) Over the past two decades the school system's portion of the total county budget has gradually declined, notwithstanding the fact that the public demands upon the schools have steadily increased.

2. We understand that the recent one-half percent sales tax increase was earmarked for schools. We are concerned, however, that even if these funds actually filter down to the schools, that increase may be offset by corresponding decreases or "cutting of corners" in other segments of the budget, thus effectively nullifying the enhancement impact of the new sales tax. We urge that this be avoided.

3) The county portion of the school budget must provide salary increases for locally-paid school employees at levels that will

match, in full, increases provided by the North Carolina General Assembly to state-paid school employees.

4) The Teacher Career Development Program promises to bring many improvements in the education of our county's children by enabling the schools to attract and hold the better-qualified teachers. If this program is to begin, the county must provide start-up funds. We urge that such local funding be approved.

5) Fringe benefits for school employees have not kept pace with other public employees. We urge, especially, that the term life and dental insurance programs be funded on a level with other county employees.

Respectfully signed:

Rowena Simmons, Cora Ann Hudson, LaRue L. Perry, Linda Haigh, Thelma Campbell, Virginia Hollingsworth, Robert Allen, Margaret Gesham, Alberta Pugh, Patricia E. Gribble, Willie Brown, Vi Falen, Emily Justus, Barbara McArthur, Betty T. Alsbrooks, Julie Kittle, Martha Mallory, Linda McLean, Sandy Selden, Althea Garner, Barbara Seegars, Doris Stinson, Eartha B. Fleming, Carolyn L. Newman, Betty T. Werts, Maxine W. Starner, Carol R. Helms, Sandra B. Mullineaux, Jean P. Black, Louise Vaughns, Vivian F. Collins, Vanessa J. Robinette, Wanda Webb, Dolly V. Green, Nancy Rogers-Zigorra, Cornell McIlwain, and Charinagne O. Burns.

Expresses Appreciation

Dear Sir:

On behalf of the Metro-lina FoodBank, Inc., I would like to express our appreciation to you for your assistance in publicizing the food drive held at the recent Kenny Rogers' concert in Charlotte.

Your publicity generated far more than the food that was collected. We have benefitted from the height-

ened public awareness of the problem of hunger, the increased awareness of the Food Bank as one solution, the response from potential volunteers, and new groups wishing to participate with the Food Bank.

We appreciate your interest and assistance.

Lynn B. Sanders

From Capitol Hill

Justice Department Switches Sides

Alfreda L. Madison

Special To The Post

Ten years after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County, Alabama, were removed by its mandates. Both discriminated against Blacks and women in their hiring practices. Women and Blacks were relegated to the lower-paying jobs, with the least opportunity for advancement and benefits. White male employees were assigned to the more desirable, higher-paying jobs with the greatest opportunities for advancement.

In 1974, Blacks and women filed a class action suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama against the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County for their discriminatory practices based on race and sex.

The civil service tests administered by Jefferson County and Birmingham were discriminatory, which did not conform to guidelines issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Of the 624 firemen in Birmingham, only two were Black. There were 849 Birmingham police, 41 of whom were Black. The Blacks that were hired by Birmingham and Jefferson County were subjected to racially discrimina-



Alfreda L. Madison

tory acts and conditions. Around half of the employees of the Street and Sanitation Department were Black. They collected the garbage, trash and dead animals. These were unclassified dirty low-paying labor jobs with no chance for promotion or pension benefits.

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights filed the suit on behalf of the Black plaintiffs. They charged Birmingham and Jefferson County with violating Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

A brief was filed by the U.S. Department of Justice for enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Act of 1968 and the nondiscrimination provision of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance

Act of 1972.

After the District Court found discrimination in the Birmingham and Jefferson County hiring practices, which were upheld by the Appeals Court and refused review by the Supreme Court, the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, plaintiffs and the Justice Department entered a consent decree. This decree seeks to correct discrimination against Blacks and women which were revealed by the trial record. It ensures against a recurrence of future race and sex employment discrimination. The decree provides for accelerated recruitment certification and promotion of women and Blacks. It precludes hiring of unqualified Blacks and women, or rejection of demonstrably better qualified white males in favor of less qualified Blacks and women.

In 1982, white males brought a suit against the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County for its implementation of the consent decree. They allege that Blacks are being hired on the basis of race to the deference of whites. They complain that Blacks are being hired over whites who have scored higher on Civil Service tests and with less related job experience than whites.

The Courts ruled that the tests were discriminatory. It's impossible for Blacks to have had as much experience in civil service positions as whites because scarcely any Blacks held civil service positions before implementation of the consent decree. Justice Department Civil Rights division under Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds filed a brief on behalf of the white males, even though the Justice Department played a great role in effecting the consent decree. When the decree was presented to the District Court no one objected to any parts of it. For the Justice Department to change its course would be inconceivable if it were not in keeping with the Reagan Administration's very strong determination to turn back the clock on all civil rights gains. This is just another facet of Mr. Reagan's efforts to keep his campaign promise to the Heritage Foundation, to make getting rid of civil rights a top priority.

The Justice Department introduced a new interpretation of the consent decree, which states that race and sex discrimination can be remedied by hiring and promoting qualified Blacks, even if white males may be considered better qualified.

Open Forum

What Gives Commissioners Right To Cut School Budget?

Mr. T.L. Odom, Chairman Board of County Commissioners
720 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, N.C. 28202

Dear Mr. Odom,

What gives the County Commissioners the right to cut the school budget? Have you taken a walk through the schools to see the condition of buildings, looked at the furniture and checked the equipment to see if it is in good shape? Do you know how many schools are not air conditioned? Is the drug and alcohol program important? Are buses safe? Is the art program important?

The questions can go on and on, but as I look over the proposed budget I realize that these are some of the areas that will take the cuts. As president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Council of PTA I have talked with just about every president in the PTA. As I listen to their concerns and what they are doing to improve their schools and provide educational materials for the students I am appalled as to the kind of things they have going on to raise money for many needs. I dare say out of 100 schools in our system that parents have raised well over \$200,000.00 dollars to provide for students. If you pull the parents out, you lose this money and education suffers more. However, parents do care but when did it become our

responsibility to have to fund even more than what we are doing now? People like you, we look to and trust to guide our elected officers in the direction that will best serve our students.

The parents have offered a great deal to our community to help in our schools, to do things for our students, if you and your board make the cuts in the budget that will effect education as a whole, in the long run only the students will suffer.

I ask you to please review other areas to make cuts, but to give careful consideration to the proposed budget for the school.

Again I urge you to please give careful consideration to the cuts in the budget and to appropriate the funds needed for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

Thank You,

Jackie C. Shore, President Charlotte-Mecklenburg Council of PTA 3439 Windsor Dr. Charlotte, N.C. 28209

D.G. "Thanks" Supporters

Dear Editor: There were a lot of happy people at D.G. Martin for Congress headquarters the evening of June 5, when the run-off election results came in. I was the happiest, I suppose, but hundreds of my supporters shared the excitement of our winning the Democratic nomination for the 9th District Congressional seat.

I want to thank the voters for their confidence in our approach to the campaign: our emphasis on issues, on independence, on fiscal responsibility, on experience. They showed that they care about these important factors, and I will continue to emphasize these factors in the months leading up to the November election.

I want to thank Ben Tison for his endorsement of my candidacy in the run-off, and Susan Green for conducting a clean and professional campaign. I know that both of these strong,

capable political leaders will provide outstanding service to the people of this area for many years to come.

And I want to thank those volunteers who backed me in this race with their hours of effort, their enthusiasm, their money, their talents, their commitment, and their beliefs in my potential as their next Congressman. Quite simply, I could not have won without them.

I urge Democratic, Republican, and Independent voters in the 9th District to study carefully the points that all the candidates make in their campaigns in the weeks and months ahead. In the Congressional race, in particular, I believe there are differences that make me a strong choice as the Congressman who can best represent all the people of this great district of our state.

Sincerely,
D.G. Martin

Memorial May Take Over

Continued From Page 1A

after the Fountain House program in New York. The goals are to help clients acquire independent living and pre-vocational skills so that they spend less time in hospitals and are better able to hold down jobs.

Mental Health Services also provides marriage and family counseling, individual and group therapy, and medication when needed. There are special programs for children and adolescents; workshops on a variety of mental health

topics, such as "Overcoming Depression," "Stress Management," "Assertive Behavior," and "Enhancing Interpersonal Relationships"; and consultation to other agencies and community groups.

The professional staff includes masters level social workers and psychologists, Ph.D.'s, and psychiatrists. All services are available to residents of Mecklenburg County. Fees are based on ability to pay. For further information, call 375-3575.

Using Tax Strategies

WASHINGTON, DC

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), in cooperation with the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand, this week published a 40-page booklet that outlines a number of financial planning techniques, including the use of tax shelters, that can help middle-income parents provide for their children's college education.

Allan W. Ostar, president of AASCU, says the booklet, "Early Planning for College Costs: A Guide for Parents," is designed to "help meet the needs of parents who fear they might not be able to afford to send their children to

college." Ostar notes that for most middle-income parents, the cost of college education for their children is rapidly becoming an overwhelming financial burden. "While tuition and fees are increasing, student financial assistance programs are being drastically reduced, especially for children of middle-income parents."

Copies of "Early Planning for College Costs: A Guide for Parents" can be purchased for \$2.00 each from Early Planning for College Costs, P.O. Box 467, Rockville, MD 20850. Members of the Press can obtain copies by calling AASCU's Public Information Office.

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