

House panel hosts forum on dropouts

Continued from page 1A of the young people of North Carolina."

North Carolina's graduation rate is 66 percent, according to Education Week magazine. Among black males, the graduation rate is 49 percent. During the 2004-05 academic year, nearly 1 of every 20 N.C. high school students dropped out, according to the Annual Dropout Event Report to the State Board of Elections in March. The board's chairman, Howard Lee, wants lawmakers to raise the compulsory age law, which now allows students to drop out at 16.

North Carolina ranks 45th among the 50 states in the percentage of ninth-graders who graduate four years later with 41 percent going on to college and 19 percent graduating with a degree, according to the National Center for

Public Policy and Higher Education.

Dropouts also impact the state's economy. A high school dropout has less than 50 percent chance of landing a job; for African Americans, the percentage drops to 25 percent. The jobs taken



Wright

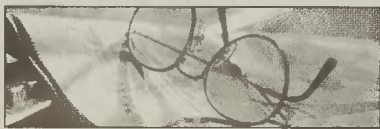
by dropouts also earn less than half of what they did 20 years ago, and studies have shown a lack of education correlates to crime and welfare dependency.

"Our state's dropout numbers are unacceptable," said Rep. Thomas Wright (D-New Hanover), co-chair of the committee. "We need to find out why our students are leaving school and how to keep them there."

Corrections & clarifications

The Oct. 19 Charlotte Post Best supplement misidentified the parents of the Top Senior and runner-up. Patrick and Helene Beach are the parents of Nicole Beach. Donald and Verna Wade are parents of Donnarae Wade.

If you spot a factual error in The Post, call Herbert White at (704) 376-0496.



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