

# Educators Lobby Legislators for Increased Funds

By MARY CAMERON  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of concerned educators and parents gathered at the Legislative Building in Raleigh on Thursday to send a message to N.C. lawmakers for educational change.

"Shoulder to Shoulder for Public Schools," a collaborative effort of the N.C. Association of Educators, the N.C. School Board Association, the N.C. Association of School Administrators and the N.C. Parent-Teacher Association, was an event designed to encourage members of the educational community to make their voices heard.

"I think it's time in public education to take a stand together instead of each of us going in our own separate directions," said Greg Lowe, a teacher from Rowan County.

Participants were first given a briefing on important educational issues by interest group representatives and then were encouraged to meet with their legislators to discuss the specific issues they believed were most important.

"For students, smaller class size is my number one concern," said Rima Jakub, a special education teacher from Beaufort County.

Others said they would speak with their legislators regarding more mone-

etary assistance for vocational student organizations for programs at the middle school and high school level.

"Vocational student organizations are important because they are designed to extend what is taught in the classroom," said C.K. Turner, a Rowan County vocational education teacher.

Teacher pay was generally agreed upon by educators as one of the most critical issues facing North Carolina's public education system. "We've been asked to do so many jobs handed down by the state, but the state is not giving us funds to do the jobs," Lowe said.

Other education advocates also expressed their concerns regarding

teacher pay. "We've got to pay people more in order to keep the teachers we have and also to attract people to becoming teachers in the future," said Bill Wilson, director of government relations for the N.C. Association of Educators.

Legislators said they understood the purpose of the rally and that educators' concerns were a high priority, said Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange. "It's important to keep education in the public eye so we don't lose the momentum we've gained in the legislature."

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## CHARTER

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Teachers said some of the school's problems arose after an outside recruiter brought in students with the promise of a school basketball team. But a tight budget meant no team, causing divisions among students that muddled the school's original focus, teachers said.

"We were worried about enrollment and were not really discriminatory as if we would be able to give those students what they need," Hayes said, adding that bad behavior had distracted from the potential for other students to learn.

Evelyn Holt-Fuller began teaching at the school last fall, but said she took a job at a Durham public school in January because of late paychecks and the lack of a structured discipline plan.

"It's just unfortunate that additional funds were not sought earlier in the year to keep the school from going in the red," Holt-Fuller said.

But despite a money crunch, some students have thrived, leaders said.

"I'm really glad I decided to come here last year," said Andrew Layton, an 11th-grader.

"I rethought my life since then and what I'm going to do with it."

Teachers said they would volunteer their time to finish putting the school's half-dozen seniors through school.

"We want the best for the students," Danita Mason Hogans said.

"We're all focusing our energy on that they are put in places that are best for them."

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## DRUGS

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month. According to the BOG's report, only 16 alleged drug violations were reported at UNC for 1997-1998. Kitchen said she looked at everything that went into producing those numbers and made

several recommendations that did not involve disciplinary action.

Kitchen said the Student Conduct Code Committee was in the process of changing the statute language of UNC's Honor Code, which differs from other codes of UNC-system schools.

The committee is pushing to change the word "possession" in UNC's Honor Code, to the word "use," which other universities include in their codes, she said. As the code stands now, using drugs is not a violation under the code, Kitchen said.

Kitchen also recommended that even if a student was found not guilty in a drug related incident, the dean of stu-

dents would still intervene, similar to actions taken in alcohol-related incidences.

"This is not a disciplinary action - there is no hearing," Kitchen said. "It's more like somebody talks to them and says 'Gee, it would appear you are using drugs.'"

Another recommendation Kitchen addressed was training resident assistants to increase their drug awareness. "The student attorney general and UNC housing staff ought to be preparing RAs for these situations also."

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## KOSOVO

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of casualties. By bombing them, we are actually increasing the Serbs' anger."

Donald Puchala, director of the Walker Institute at University of South Carolina, said the bombings should not have happened. "From my own views, it's a huge mistake," he said.

"This is not going to work. There is no time in history where we have bombed anybody into changing their mind."

But Fortuzi said he supported the bombings. "I think it is the right thing to

do, but it is sad," he said. "This will lead to a lot of killing, and it will take a lot of time."

Ardien Garo, also an Albanian journalism graduate student at UNC, said he never wanted the conflict to become a war issue. "There is no other way out," he said. When a political solution doesn't work, the next step in solving the conflict is by force, Garo said.

Garo said the issue was a matter of history. "Albanians have been there since before Christ, the Serbs did not get there until the 12th century," he said.

He also said the Serbs would lose more this way than they would have through the peace agreement.

Greenberg said Albanians feared the bombings. "We can bomb a lot, but will it really save them?" he asked.

But Fortuzi said he did the Albanians in Kosovo probably did not mind the bombings that much. "In their mind

they have been killed many times already, and they cannot go back to live like they did before," he said.

Garo said he thought the Albanians would concede to the bombings. "It is an accepted deal," he said. "This is the way to peace."

Puchala said he saw no logic to the bombings. "This has nothing to do with any direct U.S. interests," he said. "Politicians are backed into a corner. The bluff has been called and now they've been forced to take action. This thing will last forever, and we'll definitely see some Allied casualties."

But Fortuzi said it was right for NATO to interfere. "This is not an internal matter, it can easily spread," he said. "The challenge of the world from now on will be to stop this genocide."

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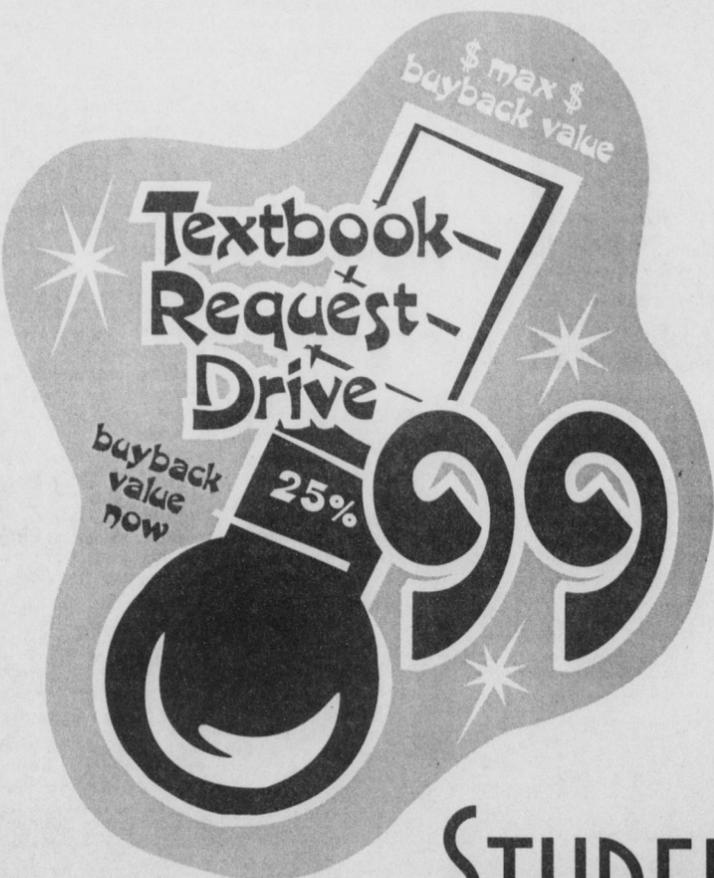
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