

Nurses, Salaries Top Schools' Wish Lists

By ERICA COLEMAN
Staff Writer

Better teacher pay and more school nurses were among several budget requests discussed at a two-day planning conference for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education.

Representatives from each elementary, middle and high school in the area presented requests for funding to the board during its Annual Planning Conference, which concluded Friday.

Across the board, school officials requested more school nurses that could be available every day for children with special needs. The need for technology and science specialists was also a top priority.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen said a key priority discussed during the budget discussion was the need for more nurses in the school system.

"Equity and constancy is what we are looking for," he said. "Right now we have nurses working at three different schools, going to one school maybe only two days a week."

Pedersen said teacher compensation increases were a major budget request at the conference that needed to be addressed.

"This should be a major part of our budget request," he said. "When we see ourselves falling behind all the districts around us, that is something that we can't live with."

The presentation of requests by school officials on Friday was only the first step in the finalization of next year's budget.

During this second day of the conference, school officials discussed issues such as teacher satisfaction.

Steve Scroggs, assistant school superintendent for Support Services, gave a presentation in which he praised local schools for offering unique programs.

"It is unique for every school to have an assistant principal, even the small ones," he said.

"Our schools are special in their commitment to special education and in the employment of science and technology specialists."

Scroggs also said teachers in local schools were generally satisfied with their careers. He said 83 percent of teachers, when surveyed, stated that they were proud of their schools.

"Our teachers like teaching," he said. "When (teachers are) asked whether or not they would send their own kids to the school they taught at, or whether or not they were more enthusiastic now than when they started teaching, most teachers answered yes to both questions."

But, Scroggs said that over the last two years, 10 teachers left their jobs in the district because of dissatisfaction.

Still, Scroggs said he felt that improving school atmosphere and administrative support were important factors in the success of a school.

"We need to make our schools a positive environment," he said.

"It's the little things that make the difference."

Kim Hoke, spokeswoman for the school system, said this process would continue throughout the spring.

"The final budget will be the culmination of meetings and discussions held from now until May."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

UPenn. President Caves in After 9-Day Protest

By JONAH MITRY
Staff Writer

Thirty-five University of Pennsylvania students recently surrendered the president's office and returned home after nine days of protest against the school's apparel licensing policy, but not before garnering nationwide attention.

Protesters, who ended demonstrations Tuesday, claimed that the school's involvement with the Fair Labor Association, a group that aims to protect the rights of workers worldwide, was unjust and ineffective.

Phyllis Holtzman, senior manager for university communication, said UPenn. President Judith Rodin pulled the university out of the FLA to end the student sit-in and reclaim her office.

The UPenn. protest follows a nationwide collegiate trend of sweatshop sit-ins including a three-day UNC protest last April which resulted in Interim Chancellor Bill McCoy's agreement to the protesters' demands.

Anna Roberts, a sit-in participant, said remaining in the president's office

for more than a week gave the sit-in a "hard-core" feel and showed that the protesters cared about workers' rights.

Roberts said protesters came prepared to stay for the long haul, bringing carbohydrate-enriched snacks for food and a bucket for a toilet.

Miriam Joffe-Block, coordinator of UPenn.'s United Students Against Sweatshops, said she was pleased with the protest's success, although she said future protests were still possible.

"Our goals were to withdraw from the FLA and join the Worker Rights Consortium," she said.

UPenn. has not joined the consortium, but Holtzman said the university established an ad hoc Committee on Sweatshop Labor, comprised of faculty and students, that will make a recommendation to the president by Feb. 29.

Roberts said the administration was accommodating to students' needs.

She said UPenn. provided protesters with an ethernet connection to check e-mail and contact supporters.

Student Body President Michael Silver said UPenn.'s student government stopped short of officially backing

the protesters but still supported them.

"We didn't feel it was our place to fully endorse the protesters because we didn't know how our constituents felt," Silver said.

The UPenn. students' efforts also attracted the attention of the news media at national and international levels, such as the British Broadcasting

Corp., MTV and ABC's "20/20." Holtzman said the students protested responsibly.

"They seemed to be very polite, sincere, earnest students," she said. "Sometimes they would sing."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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