

DEBATE

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choices for people who don't have choices," he said.

He said he wants to give schools annual letter grades ranging from A to F, based on quality. If a school receives a grade F two years in a row, its students would be eligible for the opportunity scholarships.

But Easley said urging children toward private schools would be dodging the public education problem.

He said the state's efforts should be focused on lowering class sizes and implementing programs for pre-kindergartners and students who need extra help in classes.

"When you take voucher money and send it to private schools, you take away accountability," he said.

Still, Vinroot said the vouchers are necessary to provide children from all social statuses with the opportunity to attend private schools.

"More affluent families have the choice of sending their children to a private school," Vinroot said, pointing out that Easley attended a private school. "Why shouldn't poor children have the same choices?"

Another discrepancy between the two candidate's platforms arose when Vinroot said he would require teachers

to take high-level competency tests before becoming certified and pay them based on their abilities, not tenure.

"If you go out into the business world, your pay is based on your performance, not how long you've been there," he said.

"I want only the best and the brightest to teach our children."

While Easley said he also wants to implement a teacher competency test, he said teacher salaries should be raised as a motivation to work harder, even if there is no tangible improvement in student performance levels.

"I would like to see incentive pay for teachers who improve themselves," he said. "We need to give them packages

that have good pay, good retirement systems and expense accounts."

Despite several differences in campaign stances, the two candidates did agree on some higher education issues.

Both said they supported the \$3.1 billion higher education bond referendum that will be voted on in November and were committed to focusing more on community colleges.

But the debate heated up again when a representative for the N.C. School Board Association asked about the candidates' views on a state lottery.

Easley said he favored the lottery as long as it is approved by N.C. voters and the resulting revenue is used to fund public schools.

But Vinroot quickly voiced opposition, saying lotteries are a scam.

He said lottery earnings could easily be diverted to other things besides education — an issue he has often brought up in campaign ads against Easley.

Vinroot claimed that Easley used money collected by the attorney general's office, which was earmarked for public schools, to fund public service announcements that aided his campaign.

"You took \$1 million or more that should have gone toward education and put it toward yourself," Vinroot said. "You chose your campaign over the children you claim to represent."

Easley retaliated to the accusations in

his closing statement, saying the announcements were legitimate and that he was committed to enhancing public education.

"I'm not tied to the Democratic party. I'm tied to the working families of North Carolina and the 1.3 million children in this state."

UNC Student Body President Brad Matthews, who attended the debate, said the debate was informative, despite the sniping between the candidates.

"I appreciate the fact that they're both willing to sit down and talk about education, because it is so important to us."

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

OWASA

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"The original (agreement) had hardly any expansion on central campus."

The change prompted OWASA to renegotiate the deal, said James Mergner, deputy of University facilities services. He said UNC officials have

been willing to work for a fair and reasonable agreement.

"University officials decided (the agreement) is in their own best interests," he said. "We see growth in the Master Plan that could affect a lot of growth in places it hadn't before."

If the agreement is accepted, Runberg said the next step will be to amend the Memorandum of Agreement to accommodate the language changes. "We will develop the legal language ... something contractually binding."

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SECURITY

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the need to improve the fire alarm systems in South Campus residence halls.

"They get a lot of false responses," said Larry Herringdine, assistant director of facilities management for the Department of Housing. "We need to see if we can rectify the situation. If students get bombarded by false alarms, they're not going to go outside."

Herringdine said officials need to find out whether the false alarms are due to cooking mishaps or the alarm equipment, which is 20 to 22 years old. The committee also discussed look-

ing into pedestrian safety around Odum Village, the student family housing area, and increasing library safety.

"I have been getting a lot of anecdotal stories and complaints about Davis Library," said Student Body President Brad Matthews.

The committee members resolved to compile a report on library safety for their next meeting in November and agreed to keep their ears perked for other campus safety issues.

"How safe you feel on campus is always a big issue," Poarch said. "This campus is a very safe place."

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TUITION

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all the stops to fund what it did," Barnes said.

"We don't necessarily have the largest reserves going into this session." System officials, therefore, must carefully assess any requests for state funds this year, said Jeff Davies, UNC-system vice president of finance.

"The goal we have for this year is that our budget, in general, should be targeted," he said.

Barnes also said it is symbolically important — with a \$3.1 billion bond referendum to fund higher education cap-

ital improvements on the November ballot — for the system officials to demonstrate that they are doing their part to provide funding.

But recently elected UNC Association of Student Governments President Andrew Payne said he is not convinced that the system's costs are increasing enough to warrant a 4 percent tuition increase.

Payne, an N.C. State University senior, requested that system officials include cost increase data in the proposal that will be drafted for the committee's next meeting.

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