

K-12
From Page 1

cation also are hot topics. English as a second language classes provide special instruction for the increasing number of non-native English-speaking children in the state, and smaller class sizes are popular.

In Burke County, Patton said, schools restrict class sizes in first through third grade to 15 students per teacher. Children learn better in smaller classrooms, he said.

"No question about it." The trend also can be seen in middle schools, where grades are divided into "teams" designed to give each child more attention and provide a more nurturing environment.

"Middle schools have gone from being clones of the high schools ... to being structured to fit the needs of today's adolescents," said Dorsey Harris, a specialist at the N.C. Association of Educators' Center for Teaching and Learning and a retired middle school teacher.

In middle and high schools, the four-classes-per-day block schedule strives to

give students more time with the same instructors. High schools also tailor curricula more to the individual than in the past, offering more advanced placement courses and career guidance.

School Choice

Students aren't the only ones with more education options from which to choose - many parents today can choose the school their child attends.

Madeleine Grumet, dean of the UNC School of Education, said charter schools, which are smaller and allow

more creativity with curriculum than traditional schools, are linked with parents' desire for more individual attention.

"If the public schools seem too large and impersonal, you're going to be attracted to (charter schools)."

Charter schools, which are funded by the same tax dollars that support traditional public schools, have become increasingly popular since first opening in North Carolina in 1997. Today the state has 95 operating and five more approved charter schools.

But Grumet said many people are concerned that charter schools will undermine the existing public school

system because they threaten to divert funding away from traditional schools. While charter schools were originally designed to provide a breath of fresh air to the education system, she noted, most simply replicate existing public schools.

Changing Attitudes

It remains too early to tell if the new initiatives will make a difference.

The state's average SAT scores are on the rise - in 2001, the state's average score increased four points from the previous year to 992 - but scores still fall below the national average of 1020.

According to the 2000 Census, North Carolina had the second highest dropout rate in the nation, compared to the 10th highest in 1990.

But the problem might be getting better.

Only 5.7 percent of students dropped out of high school during the 2000-01

school year, compared to 6.4 percent the previous year.

But research has shown that people view the public school system in a more positive light today - perhaps as a result of the new initiatives.

The 2001 Carolina Poll by UNC's School of Journalism and Mass Communication found that North Carolinians are more satisfied with public education: 58.7 percent of those polled in 2001 gave their schools grades of "A" or "B," up from only 42 percent in 1993.

"People more and more see education as the key that unlocks their economic future," Hunt said.

"We have a long way to go in many respects, but our goal is to have the best public schools in America by 2010."

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REACTION

From Page 1

lots late at night because shuttles to the lots will only run until midnight.

"Safety should be the foremost concern, and I don't think it was the top priority in this case," Daum said.

Faculty Council Chairwoman Sue Estroff said the plan negatively affects University employees in the lower salary ranges because the cost is the

same for all employees regardless of how much money they make.

"It's getting increasingly difficult for people who work here to afford parking," she said.

In addition to hurting lower socioeconomic groups, she said the proposal is illogical and needs further development.

"If I got a paper like this from a student, they wouldn't get a very good grade."

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Developments in the War on Terrorism

Al-Qaida, Taliban Planning Comeback

Protected by sympathetic clerics, up to 1,000 Taliban and al-Qaida leaders are hiding in Pakistan and planning a Taliban comeback in Afghanistan, according to Taliban members and others familiar with the Islamic movement.



Moussaoui Family Refuses to Help U.S.

Zacarias Moussaoui's family refused to cooperate with a U.S. justice official Tuesday as the government sought to build a death penalty case against the only person charged in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

CIA Chief: Al-Qaida Still a Threat

Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist organization remains a threat to Americans around the world, despite a U.S.-led worldwide crackdown that has resulted in the apprehension of more than 1,300 extremists, the head of the CIA said Tuesday.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

From Page 1

more suited to the job, Newcomb said.

"This was one of the easiest and the hardest decisions Justin had to make this year," Newcomb said. "They were both good candidates, so he couldn't have gone wrong."

"I have a good working knowledge of the system," Spillman said. "I've seen close to 80 cases."

Spillman, a political science and peace, war and defense double major, will serve as attorney general until

March 1, 2003.

Newcomb said he will be at UNC next year in case Spillman has any questions.

"The best advice I can give Amanda is to utilize the people around her, because we have some very good people in the judicial branch."

Newcomb also expressed his confidence in Spillman's ability to handle the workload next year.

He said, "Amanda is a very diligent worker and a very efficient worker."

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PARKING

From Page 1

Of the increases, the price of parking in the park-and-ride lots will increase the most - \$102. Five hundred spaces are slated to be added to the PR lot on Estes Drive, officials said. Elfland said the fee increase is needed because the prices of PR lot permits do not cover the cost of operating the lots, citing the security needs associated with off-campus areas.

The proposal also calls for the construction of a new park-and-ride lot on Jones Ferry Road that will serve 500 vehicles. The lot at the Friday Center off N.C. 54 would be expanded to accommodate 500 to 800 vehicles as well.

The off-campus lots aim to help make up for an overall decrease of on-campus parking because of campus construction. The Ramshead Lot - two-thirds of which is designated for student permit parking - will be closed during the construction of the Ramshead Center, which is due to begin this summer and should take about two years, Elfland said.

To compensate for the loss of parking at the Ramshead Lot, Ehringhaus Field will be temporarily converted to a parking lot. Other changes mandated include gating four lots: 440 W. Franklin St. (N1); Porthole and Morehead (N2); Cobb, Connor and Paul Green Theater (N4); and Public Safety (S1), which Elfland said will reduce enforcement costs.

Administrators said that unlike TPAC's proposals, the plan approved Tuesday would cover the entire budget shortfall. Funds raised from the hikes would be augmented by doubling the percentage of salaries and wages each University department now is required to give to DPS, bringing the total to 0.104 percent.

Nancy Sutfenfield, vice chancellor for finance and administration, said she will send out a campuswide e-mail today explaining the specifics of the proposal.

Although the plan leaves out almost all of TPAC's recommendations, Elfland said the vice chancellors considered the ideas at length in their meeting. Sutfenfield said TPAC simply ran out of time to come up with a more feasible proposal.

The plan only addresses the 2002-03 year. Administrators said they hope to craft a four- or five-year parking plan.

Sutfenfield said she wants to shift the campus's focus from simple parking rules to access to campus. "We can accommodate the loss of parking and still have access that is as good or better as parking."

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Campus Calendar

Today

11 a.m. - The Orange County Chapter of the Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Kenan-Flagler Business School sponsored by the school. It is the final drive for the Points for Pints competition and will last until 3:30 p.m.

7 p.m. - Advocates for Sexual Assault Prevention will be hosting the "Take Back the Night!" march in the Pit. Everyone is welcome.

For the Record

The March 18 article "Southpoint Well Received by Triangle" incorrectly stated that Texas Tech University beat Mississippi State University in the semifinals of the NCAA Tournament.

The University of Texas-Austin beat Mississippi State in the tournament's second round.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

The Daily Tar Heel

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One copy per person; additional copies may be purchased at The Daily Tar Heel for \$.25 each.

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