

# Board postpones vote on year-round schools

BY SARAH HANCOX  
STAFF WRITER

Recommendations from a year-round school advisory committee Monday left the Orange County Board of Education looking for more.

As a result, board members decided to postpone voting on whether to support the recommendations until more data is gathered.

The advisory committee was formed to research possible changes to the year-round middle school program currently at A.L. Stanback Middle School.

The program saw a drop in enrollment, from 125 to 89 students, because parents and students were frustrated with the "school within a school" structure, which they say does not give them enough support in funding and staff.

Associate Superintendent Kathy Osborne presented the recommendations, which included hiring more staff committed to the year-round program, assigning an associate principal to work exclusively with the year-round school, working to provide key electives to students and potentially starting

another year-round elementary program to serve as a feeder school.

The most radical change proposed, however, is the relocation of the program from A.L. Stanback to C.W. Stanford Middle School.

The reasoning for the move is that it would put the middle school year-round program in the same feeder system as Hillsborough Elementary School, the only other year-round program.

The committee said this would cut down on morning commutes for parents.

Most of the board members expressed doubt over the necessity of the move and questioned whether or not it would improve the program.

"Stanford is already over its capacity. Is there room for a year-round program?" board member Dana Thompson asked.

Although these suggestions would maintain the "school within a school" structure, Osborne stressed that this was a temporary solution until the board can create a separate school for the program.

Board members, including Betty Tom Phelps Davidson, questioned the continuation of the "school

within a school" structure. She reiterated a concern expressed by a parent: "If you can't do it right, don't do it."

"Why (have) expenditures on a model that we tried before and still has problems?" Davidson asked.

Board member Delores Simpson responded by renewing discussion on the proposed solution that would dissolve Central Elementary School and convert it into a year-round middle school.

Although this would give the school its own facilities in an ideal location, it also could result in a backlash for dissolving the current elementary program. There would also be additional costs from retrofitting the building to make it suitable for middle school students.

To address all of these concerns the board asked for the committee to conduct surveys to assess transportation needs of year-round students, as well as to identify interests and concerns among C.W. Stanford staff and parents.

The board did not set a date for a vote on these sets of resolutions.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

# Panel to study intersection safety

BY IRIS PADGETT  
STAFF WRITER

The Orange County Board of Commissioners approved Monday the creation of a task force to examine the safety of the intersection of Homestead and High School roads.

The task force might urge the N.C. Department of Transportation to implement pedestrian and bicycle amenities at the intersection, located near Chapel Hill High School.

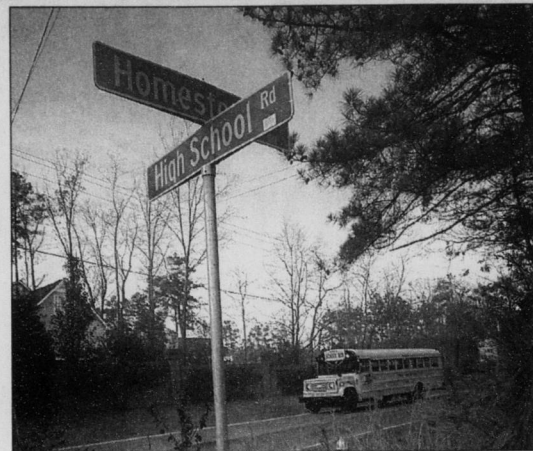
A local parents group called Students on Sidewalks presented their concerns about the intermingling of car and bicycle traffic with students walking home from the school at an October joint planning meeting of the Board of Commissioners, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen and the Chapel Hill Town Council.

The task force will comprise representatives from the community, NCDOT and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education as well as several commissioners, aldermen and council members.

Although the task force has yet to examine the safety of the intersection, most town and county officials said they share parents' concerns.

Council member Dorothy Verkerk, whom Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy has asked to be chairwoman of the task force, said she is optimistic about its goals.

"It is complete pandemonium at that intersection right now," she said. "The pictures I've seen are enough to chill a mother's heart."



DTH/ASHLEY PITT

Parents at Chapel Hill High School are concerned about the safety of the intersection of High School and Homestead roads near the school.

Commissioner Barry Jacobs said that there clearly is a problem at the intersection but that other intersections near schools in Orange County are equally dangerous.

But opinions about the feasibility of mobilizing NCDOT to make changes to the intersection vary in optimism.

Margaret Brown, chairwoman of the commissioners, said requesting changes from the department is a difficult process.

NCDOT official Lisa Crist said that based on a previous study of Homestead Road, she sees no reason to put a light at the intersection.

However, she said, she would support another study if the task force suggested one.

Verkerk said NCDOT will have a hard time saying no to a reasonable proposal if the entire county backs it.

According to Chapel Hill town engineer Kumar Nepalli, the process of implementing traffic control devices and constructing pedestrian amenities could take anywhere from six months to four years, depending on the size of the project.

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