

Board approves changes in AG teaching methods

BY LAURA YOUNGS
MANAGING EDITOR

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board members approved a measure last week to revise the district's academically gifted program in hopes of fixing past problems.

More than a year of planning resulted in board members giving the go-ahead by a 4-3 vote at the June 17 meeting that would alter how academically gifted students are identified, how they are grouped in classrooms and teacher training.

"The revision will help provide more consistent services for students who are gifted," said Kim Hoke, spokeswoman for CHCCS.

One of the changes explained in the 62 page-report is cluster grouping, in which students identified as academically gifted will be placed in groups of five to six in elementary schools and seven to nine at middle schools to mix them with other students while also keeping them with members of their academic level.

Middle school teachers will be

be trained under the embedded model, meaning they will be instructed year-round by gifted-education specialists.

"My basic concern about the plan is about whether the plan has been consistently implemented across the district," said Lisa Stuckey, vice chairwoman of the board. "The plan we adopted goes very far in making sure it is."

In the report, firmer language has been put in place aimed at making academically gifted programs consistent across the district.

This will be a change from a site-mandated system, in which schools are given guidelines and decide how to implement them, said Sandra Page, gifted education director for CHCCS. "It's a change but only for some schools."

Students at the third grade level will have a non-verbal aptitude tests administered to them beginning in August 2005 as one way of identifying academically gifted students.

Since 1996, CHCCS has used a

system of differentiation that combines students of different levels instead of pulling academically gifted students out for separate instruction in reading and math.

Though the changes seem to be a positive, some are worried about a potential lack of effectiveness.

"The revisions overall are a huge improvement," said board member Jamezetta Bedford, who voted against the plan. "But I just don't personally feel it's possible to implement the program effectively. There's really no accountability."

Bedford said that the district has been trying to do this for 8 years but that in some cases, it has been hit or miss and that there is a lack of accountability. She added that she is concerned about the fact that teacher training is so spread out and should be more immediate, adding that a method of measuring students' progress is needed.

"End-of-grade tests aren't adequate and they really aren't good for any kid," she said, adding that the board couldn't decide on other tests to use. "But they definitely have a ceiling effect for our higher achieving students."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.



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After months of contention, Hangers Cleaners and property owner Doug Mitchell have reached an amicable agreement with locals, who contested that Hangers' machinery caused noise during nights and weekends.

Hangers, neighbors sign deal

BY JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
CITY EDITOR

The dispute between Hangers Cleaners and the Village Square Homeowners Association came to an amicable end Friday as the two sides reached a compromise.

On Tuesday the Carrboro Board

of Aldermen formally voted, 5 to 1, that all future issues involved dry-cleaners in B-3 zones, like Hangers, will adhere to a similar agreement.

The deal comes after the residents of Village Square complained publicly about the noise emanated from the cleaners located at 127 Fidelity St.

Established as a B-3 zone, or a business in a residential area, Hangers is separated from the neighborhood by a thin wooden fence.

Hangers, which also launders

garments, does all the laundry and pressing at its Carrboro location while dry cleaning is completed at a Raleigh site.

The bone of contention came when Hangers aimed to move the dry cleaning machine to the Carrboro location, a move that the homeowners said would have resulted in round-the-clock noise.

The agreement, which was also negotiated with building owner Doug Mitchell, requires that the machines only run Mondays through Fridays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and occasionally on Saturday during times of heavy patronage.

"If they were able to operate any time they wanted to ... it would generate too much noise for us," said Daniel Amoni, a VSHOA member. "We're located right next door."

The site has housed a dry-cleaners since 1988, but Amoni, who just moved to the area last year said residents identified the problem long before Hanger's arrived.

"This is just what should have been done a long time ago," he said. Amoni also said Mitchell's part of the agreement calls for him to consider turning the building into Village Square offices once the Hanger's lease expires.

Mitchell said Hangers has already indicated that they likely will leave the building at the end of the lease, which he said expires in 3 1/2 years.

Hangers officials were not available for comment Tuesday.

The Board of Aldermen heard complaints from the two parties at its May 20 meeting and was slated to mandate operating times at its June 22 meeting.

Instead board members were relieved to discover that the parties already had done so and received the agreement with open arms.

They amended a prepared resolution to adhere to the weekday times that VSHOA members requested but continued to allow for Saturday cleaning between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Board member Mark Chilton said it was important to have something on the books instead of relying on an agreement.

"I think the idea was to give Hangers and potentially others in the B-3 zone just a little more flexibility," he said.

"It's not entirely safe to rely on the representation of the current neighbors."

He also said the agreement allowed for a better process.

"We don't know what it takes to run a business but we do want to see some reasonable regulations," he said.

"When they come together its beneficial because there's not so much for us to have to figure out."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

CORRECTION

A front-page article and photo outline on June 17 incorrectly identified Michelle Cotton Laws as a Chapel Hill resident. Cotton Laws is a former resident.

CLARIFICATION

A front-page article on June 17 failed to identify that allegations made in the 2nd paragraph were those of Leslie Sumpter.

To report corrections, contact Managing Editor Laura Youngs at layout@email.unc.edu.

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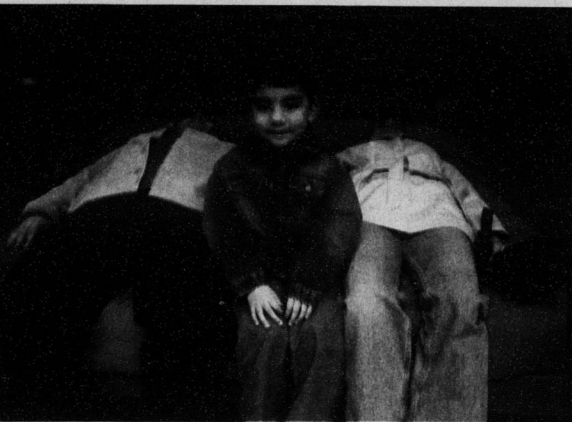
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