

County schools form plans for greater visibility

BY LIZ STANLEY
STAFF WRITER

In the midst of preparing for a new middle school and reassigning students, two concerns have lurked in the back of the minds of Orange County Board of Education members — their visibility and communication with the community.

Now board members are taking the first steps toward bridging the gap by pledging to make themselves more accessible at public meetings and posting more information to their Web site.

The ideas came about during a talk by Anne D'Annunzio, spokeswoman for the district, about ways the board could improve its relationship with its constituents.

"We represent the people and were elected by the people to serve the community," said board member Delores Simpson.

"If we want to remain a part of the community, we need to interact with people and be among them."

Among the group's ideas was a plan to make more frequent visits to each school in the district, either individually or as a group.

Besides these visits, board members also plan to meet with parent groups, teacher organizations and the district's Parent Leadership Council, where they would listen to parents' concerns and discuss some of the district's initiatives.

During these sessions, board members would also participate in informal discussions with interested community members.

"I think it is on the mind of every board member: How can we be more accessible?" Chairwoman

Libbie Hough said. "Most of the time we think of public officials as being all-powerful and remote."

Another suggestion is to start a monthly or quarterly "Lunch with the Board" session, which would be similar to the already successful "Lunch with the Superintendent," D'Annunzio said.

Setting up a table at Hillsborough's Last Fridays — held by the Hillsborough Arts Council on the last Friday of selected months — and establishing town hall-style meetings at various locations were other suggestions presented Monday.

At Last Fridays, rotating board members would meet the public, share information on current issues and answer any questions citizens might have. The town hall-style meetings would provide a venue for citizens to address the entire board in a less formal setting.

The board also is hoping to take advantage of new features on its Web site — <http://www.orange.k12.nc.us> — to get more information out to the public.

The board plans to post information about its committees on the site by March, and by April, it wants to debut a public comment page on which anyone could respond to questions posed by board members.

Though the board did not decide which specific actions it wants to take, Monday night gave members a place to start, D'Annunzio said.

"Most of us will want to do as much as we can," Hough said.

"We'll have to pace ourselves."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Arms embargo fuels dispute

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, Belgium — President Bush and European leaders settled simmering differences about Iraq but plunged into a troublesome new dispute Tuesday over the lifting of an arms embargo against China. Bush warned Congress might retaliate if Europe revokes the 15-year ban.

Bush said lifting the embargo, imposed after the bloody 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown on pro-democracy activists, "would change the balance of relations between China and Taiwan and that's of concern." But French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said the ban should go.

"It will happen," Schroeder said. The China quarrel was a jarring note on an otherwise upbeat day of reconciliation, handshakes and hopes for better relations.

"First time I've been called charming in a while," Bush said after a NATO summit. He also met with leaders of the 25-nation

European Union. "Europe and America have reconnected," EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso said afterward, Bush at his side, at a news conference.

In a show of unity after bitter disputes, all 26 countries in NATO pledged money, equipment or personnel to train Iraqi security forces, though many of the pledges were modest.

Estonia said it would send one staff officer to Iraq, and \$65,000. France offered one officer to help mission coordination at NATO headquarters, said it would train 1,500 Iraqi military police in Qatar outside NATO's mission.

"The NATO training mission is an important mission, because after all, the success of Iraq depends upon the capacity and the willingness of the Iraqis to defend their own selves against terrorists," Bush said. "Every contribution matters."

The European Union and the United States, meanwhile, agreed

to jointly host a conference to rally and coordinate international aid to Iraq.

Consulting with his harshest critics on Iraq, Bush met with Chirac over dinner Monday night, will travel to Germany on Wednesday to visit with Schroeder and meets Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday in Slovakia. Chirac said America's attitude is becoming "more realistic ... It is progress."

Bush's broad unpopularity in Europe because of the U.S.-led invasion was evident in the protests on the streets of Brussels. Police targeted demonstrators with water cannons Tuesday, after protesters, which numbered in the hundreds, threw a fire bomb and glass bottles at them near the European Union headquarters.

Many Europeans also are nervous about a possible U.S. strike against Iran to stop its suspected nuclear weapons program, and Bush gave mixed signals about American intentions.

"This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous," the president said with a slight smile. "Having said that, all options are on the table." He made a similar statement last week, saying a president never says never about military action.

Europe is trying to persuade Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment program in return for technological, financial and political support.

The United States, reluctant to reward Iran, has refused to get involved in the bargaining and has suggested asking the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions.

"It's in our interests for them not to have a nuclear weapon," Bush said.

Schroeder said he urged Bush to fully back Europe's diplomatic approach toward Iran.

"We have to go down the road of negotiations together," the chancellor told reporters.

Town eyes building policy Vandiver, 86, former governor

BY TED STRONG
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

The Chapel Hill Town Council wants to update the town's Energy Conservation Ordinance and join a unique environmental certification program, all at the same time.

A decision on the proposal, which would strengthen environmental standards for all buildings constructed by the town of Chapel Hill, was delayed Monday until May 9.

The proposal would require the town to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver-level certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for all new buildings and additions of more than 5,000 square feet.

This certification is based on such criteria as water-efficient landscaping, use of alternative transportation and recycled content.

The current standard is for town buildings to use 30 percent less energy than the State Building Code required as of Feb. 1, 1997.

Philip Hervey, senior planner in the town's planning department, said the certification process provides an extra level of environmen-

tal protection, but from an outsider's perspective.

"You're verifying it through a third-party review," he said.

Council Member Dorothy Verkerk said the new standard would be advantageous because it is not time-sensitive.

Hervey said there would probably be a slight increase in the cost of buildings under the new system — 2 1/2 to 4 percent of construction cost, based on an estimate from the U.S. General Services Administration.

But that cost might be offset by later energy savings. He said the increase in construction costs would have some impact on town development decisions, but not a huge one.

"It's just another factor in the overall project," Hervey said.

The council delayed action because members wanted the change to take the form of an ordinance.

Town staff had recommended a policy resolution, which would allow the staff more flexibility in determining to which projects to apply the standard.

Town Manager Cal Horton reit-

erated to the council that an ordinance would be constraining.

"I think having it in an ordinance will give council no discretion, and I will have to bring every project to you with a LEED certification," he said. "You would have to do things that you don't want to do."

Council members said they wanted the Council Committee on Sustainability, Energy and Environment to further tweak the proposed ordinance.

They also asked the committee to redesign the section detailing which buildings can be exempted from the requirement.

The committee's original ordinance allowed the council to grant waivers of the new requirement for projects below the 5,000-square-foot cutoff. The staff's proposed resolution had no specific trigger.

Council members wanted the reworked proposal to include waivers for larger structures that were too simple in design to meet the new criteria, such as large storage sheds.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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Choose the next DTH Editor

The Daily Tar Heel is seeking students to serve on the panel that will choose the editor of the DTH for the 2005-2006 school year.

Applications for the seven at-large positions on the DTH Editor Selection Board are available at the DTH Office and the Carolina Union info desk kiosk.

Applicants must be available for an orientation meeting from 6-7pm Thursday, March 31 and from approximately 8:30am-4pm Saturday, April 2 to conduct interviews and make the selection.

All students may apply for at-large positions except current DTH news staff members. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Michelle Jarboe (962-4086, mjarboe@email.unc.edu) or Paul Isom (962-0520, pisom@unc.edu).

Deadline: Friday, March 4

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our 9th Annual Awards Issue chosen by YOU, the readers of the DTH.

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All completed forms must be received in the DTH office by Friday, February 25, 2005 at 5:00pm. One entry per person.

One winner will be chosen in a random drawing and announced in our special Carolina's Finest Award issue Thursday, March 24, 2005.

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Most underrated athlete _____
Favorite sports Web site _____
Favorite team to watch (not football or basketball) _____
Favorite coach _____
Best machine at the SRC _____
Best off campus work out _____
Most despised rival _____
Best place to watch a game on TV _____
Most popular phys ed class _____

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
Best up & coming artist _____
Favorite campus music group _____
Favorite radio station _____
Favorite local group _____
Favorite place to see a band _____
Favorite Web site (not sports related) _____
Favorite movie in 2004 _____
Best place to find that new CD _____
Best place to see an arthouse flick _____
Favorite reality show _____
Favorite CD in 2004 _____

THE SCENE
Best place to shop on the web _____
Favorite place to people-watch _____
Most/Least effective pick-up line _____
Most interesting mixed drink _____
Cleanest bar bathroom _____
Best meal after midnight _____
Tastiest microbrew in the Triangle _____
Best new hangout (bar or restaurant) from 2004 _____

COLLEGIATE LIFE
Best drinking game _____
Best parking ticket appeal excuse _____
Favorite study spot _____
Best class to do the crossword in _____
Best road trip _____
Quietest roommate habit _____
Favorite spring break destination _____

OUT 'N ABOUT
Favorite place to get your caffeine fix _____
Favorite place to get a frozen drink _____
Best restaurant for a healthy meal _____
Best restaurant to impress a first date _____
Best delivered meal _____
Best burger _____
Best ethnic restaurant _____
Best lunch bargain _____
Best place to stock up on Carolina paraphernalia _____
Best place to shop _____
Best new restaurant in town 2004 _____
Best place for students to live _____