

Schools combat weapons with backpack restrictions

By Jason Richardson
Assistant State and National Editor

The rising crime rate in N.C. schools has prompted three state high schools to implement new rules concerning backpacks.

An entourage of guns, knives and other weapons, paired with an increase of student theft, encouraged school officials to regulate the kind or presence of book bags and backpacks.

Northeast High School, located in Guilford County, banned the use of backpacks or book bags on campus entirely, while Eastern Guilford High requires students to use clear or mesh book bags on school grounds.

Durham Hillside High School requires students to keep book bags in their lockers.

The rules are aimed at stopping crime on campus.

Denese Smith, principal of Eastern Guilford, said that the regulations came about as a result of high incidence of theft last year.

"Last year, students were getting their Air Jordans stolen, and theft in general was on the rise," she said.

Rumors circulated about weapons being present on school grounds, and

book bags blocked classroom aisles, Smith said. Most students had leather book bags, which can conceal stolen or illegal items, she said.

Countywide policy states that administrators must have probable cause to search students' book bags, so gaining access to the bags was problematic, Smith said.

"There was no reasonable course to search all of the kids," she said.

The Eastern Guilford school handbook states that only book bags or backpacks of see-through or mesh material will be used at school, Smith said. The school sells the see-through and mesh book bags to the students at cost, she said.

The bag policy was instituted on the grounds that students would not be inclined to steal if they could not easily conceal stolen items, Smith said.

Smith said the program had been very successful in reducing the rate of thefts at the school. "A lot of the kids are just not carrying bags," she said. "The rest are pretty much getting used to it."

Henry Alston, principal at Northeast High School, said his school did not allow any book bags.

The ban on book bags began in response to an increasing number of guns

and knives on campus, Alston said. The policy has been successful in eliminating a large percentage of the guns, he said.

"There were complaints when it was first implemented," Alston said, "but now everything is business as usual."

Richard Hicks, principal at Durham Hillside High, said his school allowed students to bring book bags to school but required them to keep the bags in their lockers during the school day. "The policy is designed to prevent any contraband from getting on campus," Hicks said.

The school also has taken other security measures, such as hiring a uniformed liaison officer to "be a buffer between the school and the violence someone might want to bring onto campus," Hicks said.

"The staff is also cognizant that they must be alert at all times and that they must always be in a supervisory mood," he said.

Hillside also has regular locker checks and does not allow students to use their own locks, Hicks said.

"That makes us able to go into their lockers without permission."

Campus Calendar

UPCOMING

The Office of General Education and Honors will hold a general information meeting about the Rhodes, Churchill and Marshall scholarship programs at 4:30 p.m. Monday in 431 Greenlaw.

UNC Crew will hold its first meeting for returning members at 7 p.m. Monday in 106 Fetzer. People interested in joining the team may attend a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday in 109 Fetzer. For more information, call 962-1013.

The Society for Creative Anachronism will meet Monday in 226 Union. Time TBA.

The Yachety Yack will hold an interest meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday in Suite 106 of the Union.

Christine Weidinger, soprano, performs arias by Handel, Mozart, Schumann and Barber at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Hill Hall auditorium. General admission is \$15; seniors \$12 and students \$3. All proceeds will benefit the music scholarship fund.

The Black Ink will hold an interest meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday in 210 Union.

Student Environmental Action Coalition will have its first general meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday in 100 Hamilton.

Carolina Cheerleading tryouts begin at 6 p.m. Sept. 9 in the Fetzer gymnasium room. Tryouts are open to all men and women. Show up dressed to practice.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Rename-the-CGLA contest entries may be mailed to the CGLA at Box 39 Carolina Union or placed in 216B Union. The winner will be chosen at the Sept. 8 meeting.

The UNC Vegetarian Club presents a free vegetarian dinner from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Wednesday in McCorkle Place.

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Andy's economic effect gauged

The Associated Press
COLUMBIA, S.C. — Hurricane Andrew's devastation at first will mean an economic boom to hard-hit areas — then bust, predict those who studied Hugo's aftermath in South Carolina almost three years ago.

"Florida is going to take this big, big surge," said Douglas Woodward, a research economist at the University of South Carolina.

"And, if they are not careful, they'll say the economy is great, business is booming. Then all of the sudden everything will drop off," he said Thursday.

Hurricane Andrew blasted through Florida and Louisiana this week, leaving

20 dead, hundreds of thousands homeless and an estimated loss of \$15 billion in Florida alone.

In South Carolina, Hugo's fury in 1989 left 29 dead and \$5.9 billion in damage. The report from USC's business school on Hugo's aftermath concluded the storm added \$360.6 million to the state's construction industry during the first 1 1/2 years after Hugo.

The big boost came primarily from a flood of reconstruction work that increased employment, the report said.

The same construction spurt will occur in Florida, Woodward said.

"You can't ever think that disaster is a good thing because it creates jobs, but that's what it does," Woodward said.

On the other hand, construction work that would have normally been done two or three years down the road is completed right after the hurricane, leaving an "aftershock" of inactivity later, Woodward said.

South Carolina budget forecasters got caught in the trap, he said. They painted a rosier-than-real picture of the state's revenue collections for three years. This year, the state has cut its budget by \$202 million.

Miami and south Florida's 3.5 million people about equal all of South Carolina's population and are more densely packed than Charleston and the South Carolina coast, where Hugo smashed ashore.

Visitation

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STOW Area Director Kristen Davis, who served on the subcommittee that drafted the proposal, disagreed. She said she did not want to see the present rule changed.

"By having the (present) rule, some people are going to abide by it, but if there is no rule, no one will abide by it," she said. "I would support the rule that's in place, but I do think we should look at it and see if it's the best policy."

Thompson said many students thought the present visitation rule was too restrictive.

Test

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she said she was pleased that black students scored higher than the national average. "They are able to go in (to the test) with a good foundation," she said.

Baker added that Chapel Hill consistently had high averages on the SAT.

"It's certainly reassuring after the bad news we've been hearing all year," she said. "I think it's certainly a good start."

SAT prep courses offered after school and attention from teachers and guidance counselors helped raise scores, Baker said.

Hoke added that almost 87 percent of the school's graduating seniors continued their education. "Many of our students have the goal of going to college," she said.

Orange County Schools students averaged a combined total of 826 on the SAT. The average on the verbal section was 387, while the average on the math section was 439.

Almost 58 percent of the students at Orange High School, the only high school in the system, took the test during the 1991-92 school year.

SAT

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dent prepare for the SAT, Dorman said.

Despite the 11-point jump for the state average, North Carolina still ranked 48th in the nation for total SAT score. In 1991, North Carolina tied with Georgia for the 48th slot.

Dorman said that school systems should not be held solely responsible for the low rankings. Low levels of education among children's parents and widespread poverty have affected N.C. scores for years, he said.

"Statistically, a child of two parents who finished college and have a high income level do much better than a child who lives in poverty and whose parents didn't finish high school.

"Being at the bottom of the ladder isn't always a symbol of what's going on in school, but in the home," Dorman said.

Although enthusiastic about the state average increase, Dorman said North Carolina's national ranking showed little change.

"One thing that's sobering is (the state) ranked 48th in 1983 too," he said. "We've been stagnant for an entire decade."

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, designed to give students a "trial run" at the SAT, and testing workshops contributed only slightly to the state average increase but could aid the slumping national average in the future, Triplett said.

If schools encouraged more students to take the PSAT, the fear and nervousness of taking such an important test would be eliminated, she said.

"It's like a boot camp for the real thing — takes the mystery out," Dorman said.

SAT workshops help students by teaching basic test-taking skills and prepare them for the "sometimes tricky" test format, Triplett said.

"(The PSAT) makes students a little more alert about questions that are going to be asked and their wording," she said.

Dorman said he admitted the N.C. system had "a long way to go" but the increase was a "step in the right direction."

"We needed the good news," he said.

Robinson

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Although tuition was increased, Robinson said he did not consider the year a failure.

"We also got money to build the new social work building and money towards a new business school building," Robinson said. "We were able to keep cuts to a minimum, which was the biggest success we had."

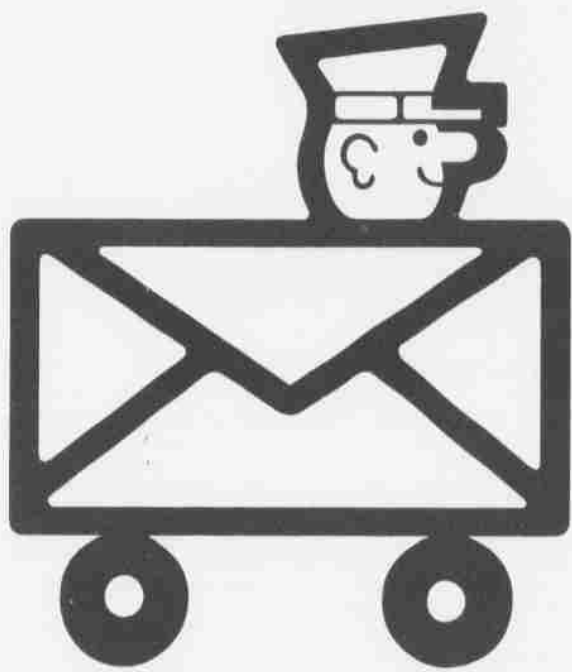
Despite his hard work and the commitment of other UNC representatives, Robinson said tuition probably would keep increasing in the future.

"We're in a situation where we will probably have to keep raising tuition," he said. "You have to be pragmatic and willing to give in some places. We're trying to keep it as low as we can."

Robinson said he would place special emphasis on trying to get the UNC bond issue — a package of bonds that would go to construction on UNC-system campuses — passed through the General Assembly during next year's session.

"We had really hoped and counted on a bond issue," he said. "It is top priority this (coming) year."

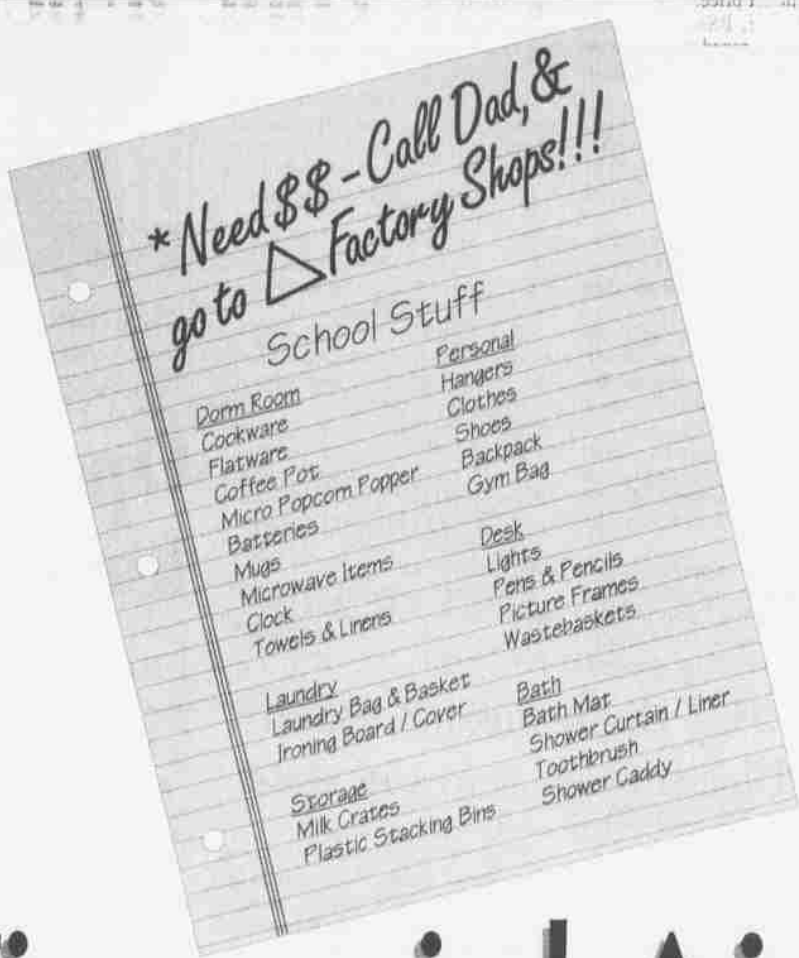
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