

VIEWPOINTS

What do I tell my students, governor?

By Dr. Wayne Journell

Governor McCrory, I need your help.

I am a teacher educator at UNC-Greensboro, and this semester I have 24 student teachers who are preparing to teach social studies to middle and high schoolers. One of the things that I tell my pre-service teachers is that if a student asks them a really tough question, they should do what they can to find the answer. That is why I need your help.

Over the past six months, I have been repeatedly asked the question, "Why should I stay in North Carolina to teach?" Unfortunately, I have yet to come up with a satisfactory answer.

Every year, as my pre-service teachers start their internships and see exactly how challenging teaching adolescents can be, I usually get the question, "Is teaching really worth it?" Almost every education major asks that question at some point during their studies as they try to reconcile the amount of work and dedication they are observing in the field with their knowledge of the low pay, increasingly disrespectful students and parents, and overall disparagement of the profession that has come to define K-12 education in the United States.

Fortunately, I have become pretty adept at answering that question. I have no difficulty making a case for teaching; as a former high school teacher and a current professor of teacher education, I can attest that teaching is the most rewarding career that one can undertake and that the fulfillment that comes with helping a student achieve his or her potential far exceeds the negative aspects of the profession.

But in response to the recent public education "reforms" enacted by the General Assembly, my current students are asking a different question that has me stumped: why they should stay in North Carolina once they earn their teaching degrees.

As someone who lives, works, and is raising a child in the state, I want to see North Carolina continue to nurture and keep energetic

young teachers in the profession, but I also have a responsibility to my students to give them honest advice. As a consequence, I have been encouraging my students to consider employment in other states once they graduate.

The concerns over public education in North Carolina are hardly confined to my students. Drs. Scott Imig and Robert Smith, researchers at UNC-Wilmington, recently surveyed 600 K-12 teachers and administrators in the state and found that they overwhelmingly disapproved of the recent education policies passed by the state legislature. Perhaps most concerning is that over 74 percent of those surveyed indicated that they were less likely to continue to work in their current capacity, and 57 percent stated that they intended to continue working in public education, but in another state.

Of course, it is one thing to make such declarations on a survey; it is another to actually follow through with them. What I am assuming that you and your staff are banking on is that these teachers who have built a life in North Carolina are unlikely to leave. You may very well be right. When I look at my current crop of student teachers, however, the majority of whom are unattached 22-year-olds, I see people who would be more than willing to move elsewhere if it meant better career opportunities.

Their concerns are valid; why should they stay in a state that ranks near the bottom of national pay averages while, according to a recent article in the Washington Post, our neighboring states (SC, TN, KY, and VA) pay, on average, \$2,000-\$5,000 more? Critics will claim that those average salaries are inflated due to higher pay in urban areas in those states, but one of my former students who relocated from Greensboro to Botetourt, VA (which is nowhere near the Washington, DC suburbs or Richmond) told me that she was "very pleased" with the raise she received simply from crossing the border.

The low salaries would not be as big of an issue had the

legislature not also eliminated the automatic pay raise that came with receiving a master's degree. Again, why would my students choose to stay in a state that does not plan to reward them for improving their professional practice, especially when other states will? The legislature's decision to eliminate teacher tenure only added insult to injury.

Again, Governor, why should my students stay in North Carolina to teach? As you can see, I am struggling to find an answer.

The only response that I have seen come from your office thus far is your promise to give the top 25 percent of teachers a \$500 raise for the next four years. My students have raised questions about how that top tier of teachers will be chosen and whether those raises will continue after 2018, and again, I don't have an answer. I am assuming student test scores will play a significant role, but what about those subjects that are not tested or, as is the case with my students, those who teach subjects that do not receive as much attention as math or science? My students are not convinced.

In short, I see no reason to stop telling my students to look for teaching positions in other states, and I have a feeling that more and more pre-service teachers across the state will be looking beyond North Carolina once they graduate. As a North Carolinian, I am concerned that this potential exodus of young talent will hurt the long-term stability of our state, and it reaffirms my belief that the chief beneficiaries of the legislature's education "reforms" will be our neighboring states.

But I am willing to be convinced otherwise. I welcome your reply—but please hurry; my students hit the job market in May.

Dr. Wayne Journell is an assistant professor and Secondary Social Studies Program Coordinator at UNC-Greensboro.

- See more at: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2014/01/13/teacher-of-teachers-reaches-out-to-governor-mccrory-for-help/#sthash.EiyWvvtS.dpuf>

TODAY'S HOMEWORK (Notes on Education)

"Our tightly controlled educational system mocks the promise of democracy. With a closed educational system we simply cannot have an open political system. The current situation allows the government and big business to manufacture and maintain our culture for us, and in turn, control remains in the hands of the experts and institutions. The ability to change this situation is in the hands of the individuals and families who understand why change is necessary."
— Helen Hegener, "Alternatives in Education"

"Some people don't understand why you do what you do. They think merit pay will make you work harder, as if you're holding back. They don't understand what motivates you. They think the threat of being labeled 'unacceptable' will inspire you to care about the quality of your instruction, as if the knowledge that you hold the future in your hands on a daily basis is not incentive enough. Maybe these sticks and carrots work for bad teachers, but they only demoralize the great ones, and there are thousands and thousands and thousands of great teachers in our public school classrooms today."
— Texas superintendent John Kuhn, Save Texas Schools rally (March 1, 2013)"

We Get Letters

Here's why there's filth on TV

To the Editor:

How I wish every American citizen could read and would heed Paul Burnley's January 8th editorial. He is so right: "... television has lost its opportunity to inform, enlighten and educate the public and has become more of a trash dump." The most obvious example is the immorality, profanity, vulgarity, violence and voluntary audience nudity on The Jerry Springer Show! The history channel has even substituted current-day sensationalism for the opportunity to teach us about history, lest we be "doomed to repeat it."

However, I disagree that "The only reason these shows remain on the air is that this is what the public wishes to see." These shows remain on the air for two reasons. Our nation's business community's current-day "anything for profit" mentality exploits the immoral segment of our nation's population, and the moral segment neither rises up to protest the immoral social filth sensationalistic TV presents nor organizes boycotts of the sponsors of that filth. Please consider the irony; sincere American Chris-

tians finance mission work in countries that will not allow the social filth our nation tolerates!

I am by no means suggesting censorship. I realize organized boycotts of sponsors might have little effect on the presentation of sensationalistic immoral shows (the word "programs" would be complimentary, therefore inappropriate terminology). But boycotts would at least prove that conscientious Christians object to the disgrace such shows bring to our nation in the eyes of the world, along with the legalized pornographic magazines and motion pictures Christians have tolerated with little if any resistance throughout my adult lifetime.

Several years ago, I was jailed for standing up to legalized injustice in our court system. Because I am handicapped, I was incarcerated in the juvenile unit rather than the general population with the hardened criminals. The teenagers paid no attention whatsoever to news broadcasts, informative or family programming, but could not wait for The Jerry Springer Show, laughing along with the TV audience at

the profanity, vulgarity, explicit sexual dialog and violence. How many non-incarcerated teenagers do the same?

Mr. Burnley closed with: "In most instances, the public says that they do not want these types of shows on the air, yet in a poll, it was found that programs with foul language and sexual references were the most watched shows on TV, with the highest ratings and the highest paid performers. It seems that there are many of us who are hypocrites." And that does indicate hypocrisy if moral Christians are watching such shows. But I prefer to believe that those ratings are high because degenerates enjoying social filth are the only people watching sensationalistic TV, while sincere Christians utilize their time more wisely. After all, did our founding fathers consider foul language and sexual references free speech, or is this the result of the current-day "anything for profit" business mentality of unscrupulous profiteers, whom I guarantee you will not allow their children to watch what they produce, now will they?"

Robert C. Currie Jr.
Laurinburg

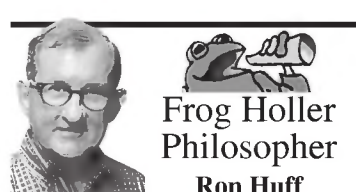
Chiropractor makes a little adjustment

Getting old is something that has not bothered me mentally, at least not since a brief mid-life crisis that is now a distant memory. I like this time of life and would not choose to go backward. Age, however, brings new physical challenges and quirks with increasing regularity. The decline in physical appearance is annoying, but inevitable, and for me has been accompanied by a gradual loss of visual acuity that makes it easier to just ignore what I see in the mirror. My vision is good enough to enjoy the clarity of High Definition TV, but when my nephew Josh recently bought the next generation of TV and commented about the clarity, I figured that it was probably better than I could fully appreciate. At any rate, I'm good with what I have.

As years pass, things can come on gradually in such a way that you don't perceive them as a correctable condition and just chalk them up to old age. Over several years, I have noticed a tightening of muscles and tendons in my neck that cause pain when I turn my head too far in either direction. This has made it hard to sleep without having to change positions often. I just went along my merry way with this until I started getting mild headaches in the same region that seemed to be caused by tension in my neck.

Years ago I had a van that had very loose steering. "What in the heck does that have to do with this situation?" you might ask. Well, I drove that van for many years, fighting that play in the steering, holding my breath when going around a tight curve in traffic. I just figured it was something I had to live with until one day I noticed a little screw I hadn't seen before. Knowing a little about how things work, I instantly surmised that it might be an adjustment. With one turn of a wrench, I eliminated all the play in the steering! You can't imagine what a thrill that was to me.

"What in the heck does that have to do with this situation?" you might ask again. The body



Frog Holler Philosopher
Ron Huff

is just a collection of parts that can get out of whack just by doing the things that we do everyday. This is especially true when we do repetitive things and sit in awkward positions for long periods of time. In other words, work! Carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow are examples of how the body can react to such conditions. Sometimes you just need to go into the repair shop and have a look under the hood.

Years ago, I had a roommate who knew a little about chiropractic. He could adjust your neck with a subtle little twist of the head. The results were positive even though I was probably stupid to let him do it without some kind of license. This was my introduction to the practice of adjusting the body to put it back into its natural alignment. As my headaches became more frequent, I was really starting to worry that there might be something major wrong, but sensed that maybe things were just out of alignment.

My sister-in-law Barbara's sister, Brenda Burley, is a chiropractor. She is also married to a chiropractor. I know them both pretty well and thought they might be just the mechanics I needed to visit. You may think that chiropractic is not effective and that your regular doctor should be able to help you with whatever ails you, but it is logical to me that a mechanical condition can be helped by mechanical means such as chiropractic.

I made an appointment and went in thinking that I had very little to lose except pain, and much to gain. I got some x-rays and an examination and within minutes was on the table getting treatment. This consisted of some heat, some ice, some massage and an adjustment of my spine and neck. This was great but when Brenda rattled around the room chanting, all pain disappeared. Well, at least the part about the pain disappearing is true!

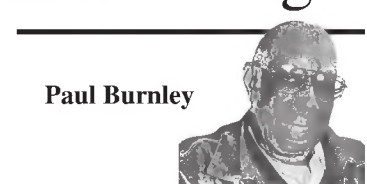
I left the office feeling immediate relief and have not had a headache since then. I have been able to sleep better and move my head more freely. After driving that old van for years, all it took was one little adjustment.

More later.

The best role models are right down the street

We hear that there are few role models for our young people to follow today. This is not true. The term role model today has taken on a new meaning. Years ago, a role model was a person that had made a success of themselves and with their success was also an evaluation of their character and morals. Today, we seem to judge role models by the amount of money they earn. Their morals or their actions do not seem to matter, as long as they can accumulate wealth.

Years ago, the people we all looked up to were the people we knew and were around that had made a success of themselves in our particular neighborhoods—the teacher that would put forth the extra effort to help the child that was a little slow to keep up with the rest of the class; the handyman down the block that



Paul Burnley

was always happy to fix any problems a neighbor would have; the elderly lady who you could always depend on to leave your child with in the event you had to run an errand. These were the role models.

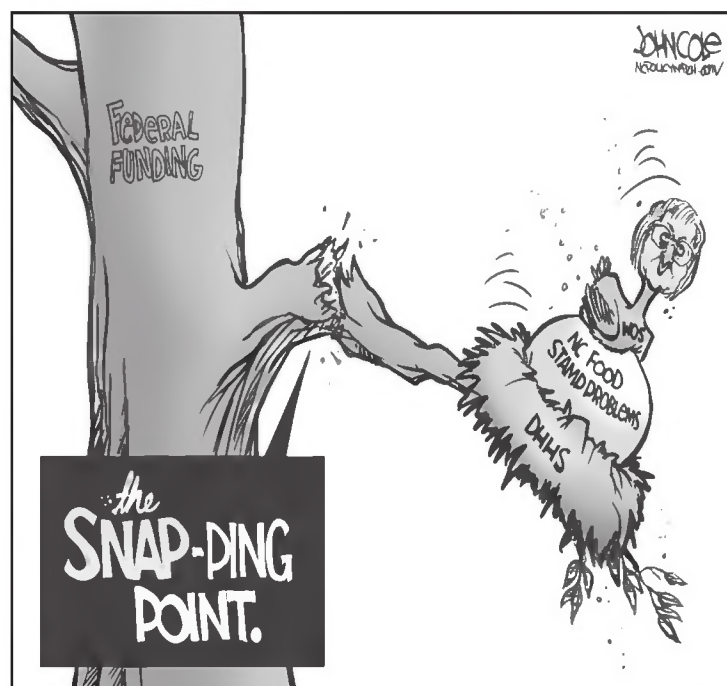
Madison Avenue has convinced our young people that if you pay \$200 for a pair of sneakers, they will be able to become wealthy and famous. If girls are able to buy high priced handbags and clothing, they too can become famous role models. The definition of role model has become nothing to do with character, but the amount of money one

makes. It doesn't seem to matter if this individual is a drug user or criminal felon, as long as he or she can make a large amount of money. The media and in most instances the public view them as role models.

I remember my first role model. It was when I was about 10 years old. Mr. Henry lived down the block from us. He worked as a mechanic for the bus company. He must have been good, because everyone who had a car in the neighborhood would depend on him to repair it when they had a problem. But what I remember the most was the way he treated the kids in the neighborhood.

Whenever we had any problems with our bicycles, roller skates, or any of our toys, he would always have the time to talk and try to solve our problem. He

(See BURNLEY, page 3A)



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