

## Forum

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need to devise programs to cater to each student," he said. "Deal with the child first, not numbers."

Hord pointed out that recent SAT results showing North Carolina ranking last in the nation is not fair to North Carolina students. "In some states, only five to 10 percent of the students take the SAT and in our system about 80 percent of them take it," he said. "The SAT shouldn't be used to compare schools but should be used to point out strengths and weaknesses."

Hawkins said the SAT places too much pressure on teachers and students. "There are too many variables," he said. "A student can only learn so much. We need to use the SAT to identify areas we need to teach in."

Davis said the state "believes every child should be taught" and that test scores "are the instrument to determine where a child should be with a certain subject."

Mauney said the SAT is necessary for students to attend certain colleges. "We need to study ways to make them more effective and spend more time teaching skills to prepare for tests," she said.

Bennett said he had "mixed emotions" about test scores. He said it is not an adequate measure for "one system against another" but some agencies base their funding on SAT scores. "That's not in the best interest of the kids," he said.

Miller, a teacher in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, said test scores don't measure "full achievement...but do indicate norms compared with the rest of the country."

Asked if they'd support more school buses and better transportation for the system, most candidates said more buses would be good but buses are allotted each system by the state.

"Less time on a bus is less time with anxieties," Houze said. "To be able to take a shorter ride would be encouraging" to students.

Hawkins said as long as Kings Mountain has a community schools concept more buses would not necessarily be the answer to the time spent on buses. "Maybe centralization of schools is the answer," he said.

Bennett said a long bus ride is more harmful to young children than to older ones. "We could see that more buses are allocated to the elementary schools," he said.

Asked if they felt that there is a true picture of equality shown in the Kings Mountain School System, most candidates said budgeted funds are allocated equally on a per-pupil basis, however, because each community is different and some PTOs are more active than others, and some facilities are newer than others, it is impossible for all individual schools to be equal.

Miller said Kings Mountain doesn't have equality in its hiring practices. "Over 25 percent of our students are black, but I don't think

we have 25 percent black principals or administrators, and we don't have any blacks on the school board," he said.

Houze said schools are not equal in many ways "but we still have quality in all of our schools. All of our teachers do a good job. There ought to be a way to bring all things into balance but it can't be done overnight."

On the question of differentiated pay, which will be allowed under Senate Bill 2 if a majority of teachers approve it, Hawkins said he favored it, and most other candidates said they would favor it if there could be a fair way of administering it.

"There has been much discussion about merit pay, but local school boards aren't going to have anything to say about it," Hawkins said. "It's going to be up to the state of North Carolina. But I do favor it. I favor more pay for good teachers. If you do a good job you should be rewarded and if you do poorly you should be recognized for doing poorly. I cannot see paying people to do a poor job."

Davis said there is already a pay scale which allows teachers to receive more pay. "In any business there are those who really do a top job and some who don't do their best and get the same pay, and that bothers me."

"Merit pay is a good idea. As to how you would apply it I have no idea," Bennett said. "If you have a bad teacher, get rid of him."

Miller, who said he has seen merit pay first-hand as a teacher in Charlotte, said it is a good idea to reward teachers who have done a good job. "But when another one who hasn't done a good job receives it, that bothers me," he said.

McDaniel said funding for differentiated pay is "short-lived" and questioned where the funds would come from after the state stops funding it. "It would have to come from local taxes which are already high enough. And I question, would the end result be for the good of the student?"

"If it can build the teacher to do a better job, it's good," said Houze. "But it needs to be decided by the teachers. If they can live with it, it'll be a great thing."

Hord said teachers must decide about differentiated pay. "As for

merit pay, there's no fair way of doing it," he said.

In answer to a question about the board's nepotism policy, which prevents the hiring of a member of a school board member's immediate family to an administrative position, Bennett said he wholeheartedly supported the policy.

"My wife is a teacher assistant in Kings Mountain and will be graduating next June from Belmont Abbey with a degree in elementary education," he said. "If I am elected to the school board, she will not work in the Kings Mountain School system. I don't want anything to compromise my ability to serve on the school board."

Hord and Houze said they agreed that a member of a board member's family shouldn't be hired in a position that would put them in a supervisory position over another family member, and other candidates said the board should hire "the best person available" in all cases. McDaniel said if one of his relatives was recommended for a position in the Kings Mountain schools, "I would abstain from voting and would not try to influence

the board in any way."

The candidates listed drugs, weapons, apathy, discipline, security, drop-outs, insufficient funding, pressure, and combination classes as some of the major problems facing education.

Asked what their priorities for any extra local funds would be,

Bennett and Houze said they would favor putting them into the classrooms; Miller said he would put them into higher teacher supplements; McDaniel said he would put them where they would do the students the most good; Hord said he would want to use them to eliminate combination classes, then to work with drop-outs and pay higher supplements; Hawkins said he would favor putting them into the Educational Foundation, to raise supplements to a level equal to surrounding counties, and to assist the anti-drug, drop-out prevention and Head Start programs; Davis said she would prefer paying higher supplements and purchasing more instructional supplies; and Mauney said she would want to use them to decrease class size.

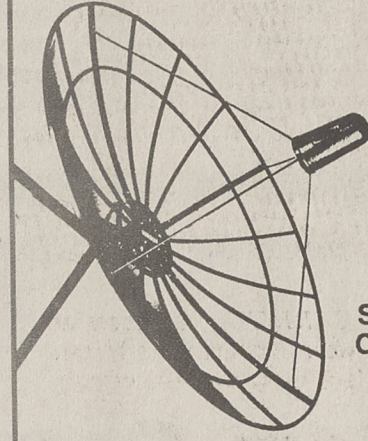
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## School

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Community Center, a total of 2,697 voters are registered and at West Kings Mountain, where voters cast ballots at The Armory, a total of 2,696 school district citizens are registered.

Several elections will be underway at the same time at most polling places. City and county officials remind voters to get the proper amount of ballots to cast votes in the races for Kings Mountain city, Grover town board, Cleveland County Sanitary District and School Board elections.

Priscilla Mauney



# HAVE I EARNED YOUR VOTE?

- Have I attended numerous workshops, learning the role of effective school board members?
- Have I visited other school systems to learn new management and instructional techniques which might improve our school system?
- Have I created an open line of communication for concerned citizens who have personal concerns which need addressing?
- Have I contributed for some positive improvements in our school system?
- Have I voted my convictions on Board decisions?
- Am I willing to base my decisions on research and input from citizens and genuine concern for our children?
- Have I lobbied for continuing full funding of the Basic Education Plan (B.E.P.) and teacher pay raises?

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GILBERT (PEE WEE) HAMRICK

PD.POL.ADV.

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