

Opinions

School Board Needs To Move On With Reassignment

The Kings Mountain Board of Education will continue its discussion on possible school reassignment and transfers at tonight's 7:30 meeting at the KMHS library.

Let us say up front that we realize the board has a difficult decision on its hands. No decision it makes will satisfy many people because, to put it simply, parents do not want their children taken out of one school and moved to another.

Several thoughts came to mind at last week's work session, at which time citizens were given an opportunity to speak their mind. Some of those thoughts:

*After opening the meeting, Board chairman Billy King said the board was ready to hear from parents. When the first parent asked the question "what federal or state regulation mandated a reassignment plan?" Mr. King told him the board wasn't there to answer questions but to gather information. That really went over well with the crowd of about 100 who packed the small board room, thinking they might get an answer as to why their children were being re-assigned. But chalk this one up to inexperience. Mr. King was just elected board chairman in December and simply forgot to state up-front that the purpose of the meeting was to gather information and not answer questions. Most governing boards don't answer questions during a work session or public hearing. If they did, most meetings would turn into shouting matches and nothing would be accomplished. The purpose of those meetings is to gather input from the public. However, the school board should schedule an informal session, or at least set aside a special time prior to a regular board meeting, just to explain to the public some of the options they are considering, and not expect citizens to call the Central Office or read the newspapers for their answers. We'd like to think that everyone reads newspapers but, the fact is, they don't. One of our reporters spent over an hour going door-to-door at Pine Manor Apartments asking opinions on the proposed reassignment plan. She found six parents of East School children and they said they knew the school system was considering some kind of reassignment of students, but they did not know about a school board work session last Thursday night. Despite numerous news stories, public hearings and meetings in the individual elementary schools to explain the reassignment process, the word just didn't reach everyone.

*We understand the concerns of young working parents who have put every cent they have into building a home in a certain area of town and who are working their fingers to the bone to make the payments. They expect their children to be able to attend school in their own community. They cannot afford to sell their home and rebuild in another area of town. Neither can some parents afford to run to one end of town to pick up a child at school, then back to the other end of town to pick up another child at a day care center. As one woman said, if she has to do that much running around it's going to cost her her job. The other side of that coin is that people should not locate in one area of the community expecting the School Board to transfer their children to another area. We appreciate all citizens who speak out at public meetings, even if we don't share the same view. But we don't agree that the matter of reassignment should be put to a vote of the citizens. The citizens have elected five people to make that decision. They've studied and discussed and battled the problem for years and it's time they make a decision and live with it. The main thing to consider is what's best for the children. How many times have we heard that over the years, even in the prayers that open board meetings? So, board mem-

bers, do what you are convinced is best for the children.

*The matter of transfers should be dealt with. We'd suggest no transfers unless in extreme hardship cases. Don't ask us to define the word "hardship" though. We feel like that's something the board has to decide on a case-by-case basis. Transfers have been a problem for years and the problem is not going to go away until the board cuts them out altogether. In 1983, former school board member Bill McDaniel suggested that the school system stop transfers effective at the beginning of the next school year. No other members of the board would go along with him. Today, there are well over 100 transfers in elementary schools. Had those transfers not been allowed, they would not have resulted in a racially-balanced school system but would have helped a little bit. Many parents, and even school officials, have requested that rising fifth graders and their younger brothers and sisters who live in areas that are being reassigned be allowed to remain at their present school. We can go along with that idea only partly. We understand leaving rising fifth graders where they are, because they would be changing schools twice in two years. But the younger students should not be included. The board could put the plan into effect for grades K-4 at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year, thus allowing rising fifth graders to stay where they are, or announce now that the entire plan would go into effect at the beginning of the 1992-93 school year. The latter still wouldn't prevent rising fifth graders from changing schools twice in two years but would give parents plenty of time to line up day care and make other adjustments. By allowing others to remain at their present school the board would be showing favoritism and perhaps even opening itself to a future law suit from parents who request transfers for their students, and are denied.

*This is not a good time to be a School Board member. As we see it, the board can go ahead with reassignment or leave things as they are. Leaving things as they are would probably make a lot of people happy; however, it would not racially balance schools. Some people would say racially-balanced schools are not the question, because Kings Mountain Schools voluntarily de-segregated and there is no federal law requiring

racially-balanced schools. But racial balance is the question. No one can truthfully say that students at East School, which is 64 percent minority, have the same advantages as students at Bethware, which is 86 percent white. Going ahead with reassignment won't be popular and it could cost some people their seats on the Board of Education. But, if they are going to do what the people elected them to do, and that is to make the decisions that are best for the children of Kings Mountain District Schools, they have to forget about pleasing everyone and get on with reassigning students.

The big waste

It seems you can't turn on a radio or TV, or open a newspaper, anymore without seeing someone calling for higher taxes. If that galls you, read on:

Alan Keyes, president of Citizens Against Government Waste, recently wrote a story for PM Editorial Services, which supplies some editorial material for this newspaper, entitled "The Big-Waste, High-Tax, Budget Bill Rip-off." In it Keyes claims that implementation of the 1983 President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, popularly known as the Grace Commission, came up with 2,478 cost-cutting, efficiency-enhancing recommendations which could have saved taxpayers \$424.4 billion over three years and prevent accumulation of trillions of dollars in additional deficits by the year 2000. But the Washington establishment rejected most critical Grace Commission recommendations and the national debt tripled during the past decade.

He cites the refusal of Washington to cut waste, a budget compromise which contains \$164.6 billion in new taxes and a minimum of \$245 million in pork barrel spending as the main reasons the deficit continues to soar.

He backs his wasteful spending claim with some very interesting facts, including these expenditures approved in this year's budget:

- *\$67,000 for Belgian endive research in Massachusetts.
- *\$995,000 for a performing arts and cultural center in North Miami Beach, Fla.

- *\$500,000 to restore the home of Lawrence Welk in North Dakota.
- *\$5 million to design and construct a parliament building on the Solomon Islands.
- *\$4 million for a Japanese-American museum in Ontario, Ore.
- *\$1 million for a Seafood Consumer Center in Oregon.
- *\$120 million for 56 highway demonstration projects not requested by the president.

If that's not enough, consider these outrageous examples of waste in the Department of Defense:

- *\$120 for a cup dispenser that retails for \$25 in commercial outlets.
- *\$67.50 each for 4-inch-wide rubber gaskets, while similar plug-type seals for toilets sell for about \$1 in commercial hardware stores.
- *\$1,868 for a steel-reinforced toilet cover assembly for the C-5 cargo plane, while similar covers for commercial aircraft go for about one-tenth the price, about \$182.

Why mention these bathroom supplies, Keyes asks. Because they are obvious signs that our tax dollars are being flushed down the drain in Washington.

There could be some good news to all of this, though. On October 27, thousands of people rallied all over the country to protest higher taxes and government waste. This event, known as Taxpayer Action Day, was the first time in American history taxpayers gathered in this fashion during a non-presidential election year.

Their message was simple: It's time for a clean sweep of Washington, time to eliminate the hundreds of billions of dollars in government waste; time to stop being squeezed between higher property taxes and state and federal income taxes; and time to adopt reforms with real teeth in them.

"As our overtaxed economy declines, as state and federal deficits soar, and as billions of new tax dollars vanish down the sinkhole of government waste, we can expect more and more Americans to join the taxpayer's action movement," Keyes said. "The tax-and-waste politicians in Washington may be riding high this year, but their days are numbered."

To that, we say it's high time!

Your Right To Say It

Thanks from Crisis Ministry

To the editor:

The holiday season is over and, probably, most of us are relieved. Although the real celebration of Christmas is the birth of Jesus, along with that come the hectic days of cooking and shopping. For some there were no shopping days because there was no job and, therefore, no money.

On their behalf, I thank all of you who contributed so generously of your food, money and time this year. There were many but I would specifically like to mention a few because it came from our teenagers. So often we only hear the bad things that teenagers do and never the good.

Sometime before Christmas, I got a call from a representative of the Student Council at KMHS saying that the students would like to do something for the less fortunate families this year. From them we received boxes of food, clothes, and toys. In addition to help from KMHS, KM Middle School donated lots of food.

During this holiday season (November and December) the collective effort of the community allowed the Crisis Ministry to help 401 people with food, four families with rent totalling \$256.25, six families with medical care totalling \$189.38, 19 families with utility assistance totalling \$794.15, and four families with gas, for job hunting or medical reasons, totalling \$25.89.

This is what "having the Christmas spirit" means.

Sherry Hamrick, Director,
Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry

Today's Bible Verse

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:4-6

About squirrels, art, junk tires

Remember that thieving squirrel I told you about a few weeks ago?

Just to refresh your memory, this scoundrel is uncanny about getting to my bird feeders. He has destroyed two of them. To combat the larcenous rogue, whom I have named Capone, I bought small feeders, much too small for him to perch upon.

You will recall that, when last seen, Capone was dancing around on his hind legs trying to figure out how to attack these smaller feeding stations and that he broke into my seed store and helped himself. I got the supply situation corrected by using a plastic bucket with a tight fitting lid.

Well, Capone finally figured out how to get to the small feeders. I have two hanging in the huge oak tree in my back yard and one hanging from the roof of my house.

I saw him launch his attack this morning. He goes up into the oak tree, just about one of the feeders, and jumps down on top. Of course, it's too small for him to land on, but he jars enough seeds out for a meal. Capone actually leaps about 15 feet, just for a handful of sunflower seeds. This morning he not only spilled a bounty of seeds but he scared a cardinal, a tufted titmouse and two doves half to death. Not only that, but he invited a couple of his furry little buddies to lunch.

I will stop him, if it's war he wants it's war he'll get. I may have to resort to squirrel baffles, but I will eventually win...I think.

IN THE NEWS

Architect Maya Lin has finally finished the \$340,000 piece of art for the Charlotte Coliseum. The "art," known as "The Playing Field," consists of 8 or 10 shrubs clipped into rounded form, resting on a sloping piece of contoured land. According to the artsy crowd in Charlotte, it's supposed to look like balls rolling down a hill into a spiral cup. What it really looks like is 8 or 10 clipped bushes on a contoured lawn.

Considering one of the basic laws of nature, that is, shrubs tend to grow, I wonder whose job it will be to keep the bushes clipped?

Newly elected Senator, Paul Wellstone, of Minnesota, used the Viet Nam Memorial in Washington to stage a crying demonstration against



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the probable war in Iraq last week. Viet Nam vets are unhappy about that, and well they should be.

Wellstone, who has publicly avowed his hate for Jesse Helms, went so far as to make a pencil rubbing of the name of a Marine Captain from his hometown in Northfield, Minnesota who was killed in action in 1968.

The Marine Captain, Bill W. Deetz, never met Wellstone, nor does the weeping Senator know the deceased Captain's family.

Don't we have enough phonies in Washington?

Foul-mouthed comedian, Andrew Dice Clay, is irked at 20th Century Fox for refusing to release his concert film.

Clay, who describes his filthy act as "A guided tour through mental illness," said, "Hollywood puts out movies with people being dismembered, and heads being ripped off, but they don't want to make people laugh."

Though his logic is somewhat distorted, Clay has a point.

I am on the edge of angry at whoever dumped over 100 old tires in the Kings Mountain National Military Park. How could anyone be some mean-spirited?

The park belongs to all of us, and I will not stand still for such destructive behavior. I guess there isn't much one person can do about it, but I will make a gesture, at least.

I will offer a \$100 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.

If there is anyone out there who knows anything about it, call the authorities. If anyone would like to stand with me, let me know.

School Questions

From Page 1-A

Q - If the first draft of reassignment is approved, how many students would change schools?

A - 311, including 189 majority students and 122 minority students.

Q - How many board members have kids that have been transferred by their parents out of their assigned district?

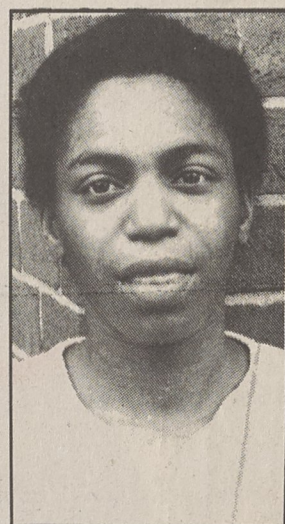
A - Two. Billy King lives in the North district and his children attended East; however, they are no longer in elementary school. Doyle Campbell also lives in the North district and his children attended West; however, they are no longer in elementary school. (Billy Houze lives in the Grover district and his children attend Grover. Ronnie Hawkins has no children. Priscilla Mauney lives in the North district and her children attend North; however, in the first reassignment draft her children are assigned to East).

Sidewalk Survey

What do you think of the Board of Education's plan to bus your children to Bethware School?



AVIS HOUSER
It's too far. If my three children missed the bus they'd have no transportation. The bus doesn't need to be traveling the by-pass with school kids.



BARBARA DAVIS
It's time the school board got the kids settled. It's too far to Bethware and busing would pose a hardship on both the parents and kids.



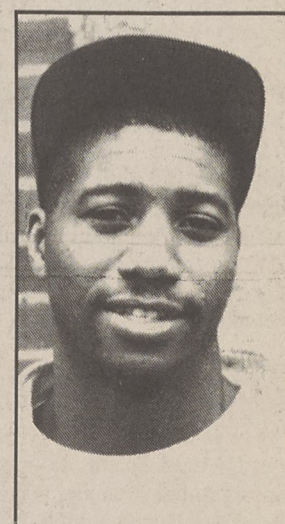
TAMMY ELDER
I don't want my kids to have to travel that far away from home.



LAVERNE GLOVER
I just moved from New Jersey and my child likes East fine and I don't want him to change.



CAROLYN BROWN
As long as the kids are bused, I think it's fine.



CALVIN BESS
I think it's a good idea to change from East to Bethware and change will be beneficial for the kids.

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