

Opinions

Your Right To Say It

Defer reassignment

To the editor:  
We believe that the proposed redistricting in the Kings Mountain City School System will have a detrimental effect on all the elementary school students K-5. The psycho-social adjustment of students as well as the teachers in the entire school system, if the proposed changes take place, will consume an enormous amount of irreplaceable time. This adjustment to new environments, surroundings, peers, and teachers will further impede the education of our elementary students during this delicate time of growth and development.

As active PTO parents of elementary children for the previous 5 years, we have seen the positive influence of our community involvement result in parents and teachers working together to provide a quality academic and psycho-social environment for all our elementary students. We further believe that this foundation will enable these elementary school children to continue to grow and develop into well rounded self-reliant individuals with the capacity to become productive citizens.

Considering the recent and probable growth of the western area of Kings Mountain, it is our belief that maintaining balance will require constant reorganization. This reorganization will thus inhibit the establishment of community involvement and continuity of quality education for the elementary school students in the Kings Mountain School District.

The Kings Mountain City Schools received a grade of "par" in the 1990 overall achievement report card summarizing student performance for 1989-1990. As we understand this evaluation our system is average in all areas, nevertheless, each area can be improved upon. As the Kings Mountain Board of Education begins to determine how our system can work to improve the areas of weakness they will need time, input, and support from teachers, students, and parents of the school system.

We believe that the primary task at hand should be on improving our overall educational system. This may be partially accomplished by assessing the available statistics as well as retrieving pertinent input from those systems scoring above average. We believe that this priority will be neglected with the emphasis on reassigning for the purpose of balancing numbers in our elementary schools.

In conclusion it is our request that the reassignment proposal affecting 311 elementary student families, teachers, teacher assistants, principals and staff in 5 elementary schools, as well as administrators, be deferred at this time.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Bartley George

It's time for decisions

Dear Editor:  
I am vitally interested in giving our children the best education we can give them. Enough time has been spent on making decisions now we need to make the decisions and continue our primary goal of educating our children.

The present Board of Education for not only the problem of unequal educational experiences within the elementary schools in our system. The easy thing to do would be to ignore the problem and to continue as we are; however, the School has the courage needed to make decisions which provide the best educational environment for all of our school children.

I, also, appreciate the change in our school board meetings. Any person with the desire may address the board. After all, the decisions on redistricting could be made by the board members without having public hearings, but this board is very interested in gathering public input before they make their final decisions. I appreciate their consideration of our ideas and feelings by allowing our input.

The decision to redistrict and the redrawing of attendance lines will not please everyone but it is something that must be done. I believe that the school board we elected will make fair decisions. I do not support a student transfer policy unless there is a severe hardship to the student; the transfer policy needs to be defined in advance by the school board.

The school board chose an unbiased consulting firm to aid them in a fair evaluation of redistricting and redrawing attendance lines. They chose this firm not only for its objectivity but because it came highly recommended by other school boards who had the same enrollment and racial makeup.

We need to make the decision now and get on with the process of educating our children. To do this affirmatively for our children, the parents need to support the school board's decision; after all, we are not talking about great mileage distances. By working together, we can assure that all of our children have an equal education.

ESTHER J. MUENCH

Thank you for coverage

Dear Editor:  
On behalf of the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, thank you for the generous and caring coverage which your newspaper provided for the ecumenical prayer service, "A Call To Prayer For Peace," which was held Jan. 13, 1991.

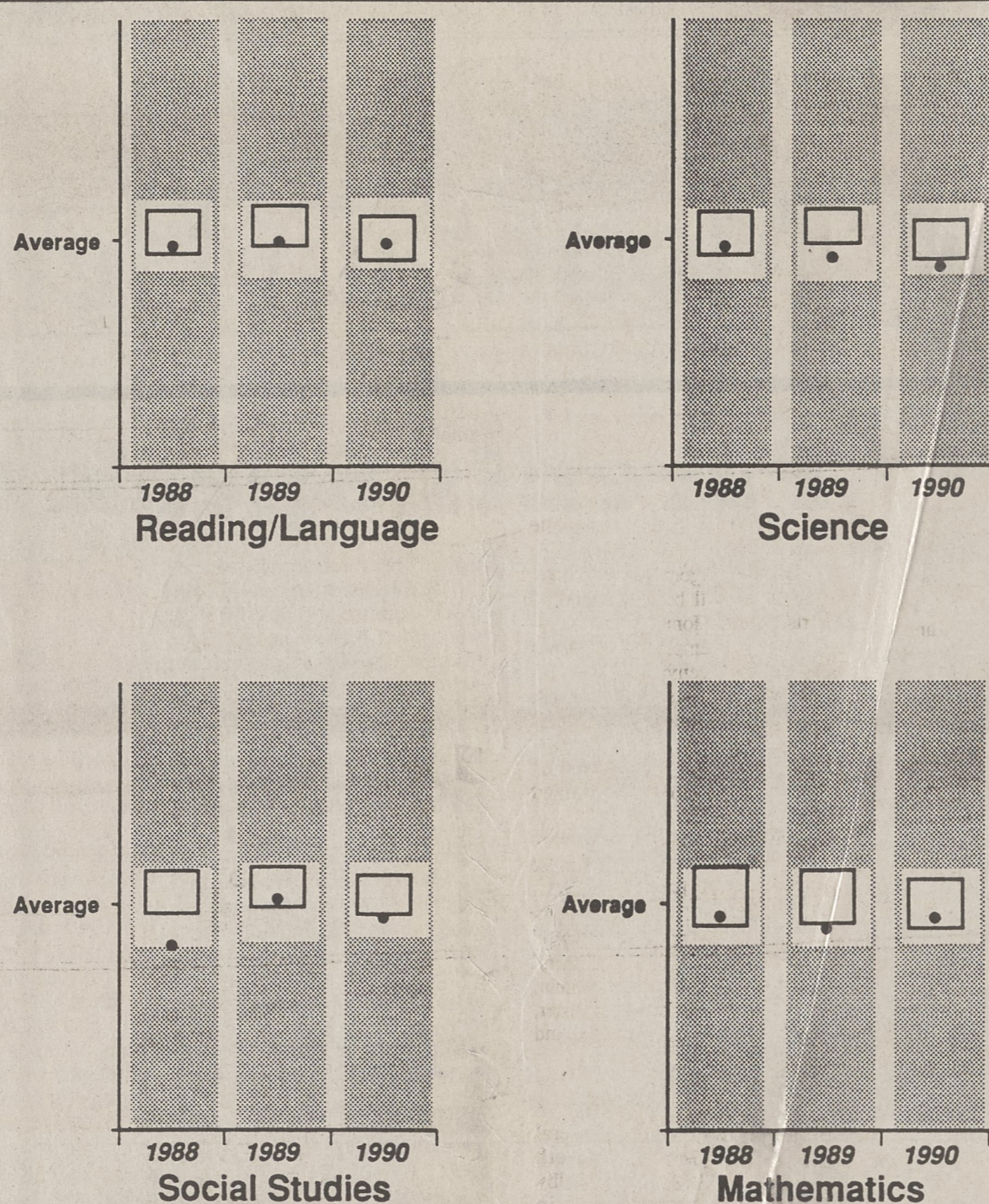
This prayer service was held at a time of urgent national and world need, as well as at a time of deep personal need. The prominent placing of the articles gave the reading public a great opportunity to respond. Respond they did! Nearly 800 people from across the Kings Mountain Community came together in prayer. Thanks in large part to your newspaper, this gathering was so meaningful.

The KM Ministerial Association also thanks the participating ministers, the combined choirs and soloist Jeff Grigg, and the supporting congregations for their great part in making the prayer service at Central United Methodist Church a most profound moment in the journey of our lives. The Central minister, Rev. Bob Little, choir director Mrs. Linda Dixon, organist Mrs. Peggy Ramey, ushers and Handbell Choir all served as most gracious and helpful hosts. Thank you.

Thanks be to God! For the peace which God gives, which passes our human understanding, yet which keeps our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God, who is our Refuge and Strength, our very present help in time of trouble.

DR. ERIC M. FAUST

KM Schools' Report Card



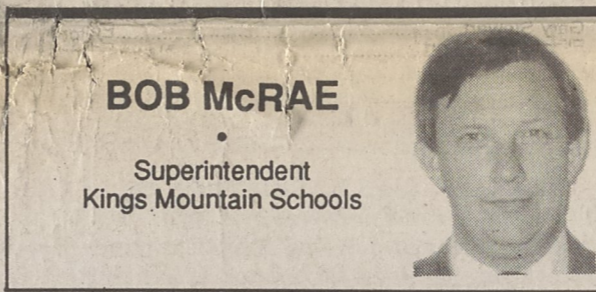
The above graphs show Kings Mountain Schools' achievement in four subject areas in the past three years in the State Report Card released last week. Shaded area shows the range of possible scores for all school systems in the state. White area in the middle is the state average. The black box represents the state's expectations of Kings Mountain District Schools, and the black dot shows the actual achievement. If the dot is below the box it means KM did not achieve up to expectations. If it is within the box, KM achieved what was expected by the state. Overall, KM received a "par" grade. Only 10 of the state's 134 systems achieved "above par."

Report card good, but there's still room for improvement

I don't suppose that any issue affecting public education in North Carolina in recent years has attracted more attention across the state than the recently released Report Card for the 134 school systems. A recent article in this paper did a good job of capsuling this effort for you. Today, I would like to attempt to fill in some of the details about the Report Card and about our results in Kings Mountain.

The format of the Report Card was an effort to fairly compare the achievement of all school systems in the state while recognizing that there are significant differences from system to system which affect that achievement. Therefore, the state used six characteristics are (1) local per pupil expenditure; (2) percent of minority students; (3) percent of students in compensatory education programs (for us this relates to our Chapter I reading program); (4) percent of students on free and reduced price lunch; (5) percent of parents of school children with less than a high school diploma; and (6) percent of students absent from school more than 14 days in a year. When these characteristics were computed for our system, our index of advantage was figured at zero (0). This is the midpoint of the scale which ranges from -40 to +40. In North Carolina this year the actual range on the scale was from -31 to +21. Essentially, this tells us that, in terms of advantages and disadvantages our children have that affect their achievement in school, they are average as compared to the rest of the state—that is, about half of the systems have a greater level of disadvantage than we do and about half of the systems have a greater level of advantage than we do.

You should realize that many systems cluster around average and that there is not a great deal of difference between a system at, for instance, -3 on the index of advantage and one which is a 0. In Kings



BOB McRAE  
Superintendent  
Kings Mountain Schools

Mountain, according to the Report Card, our children are just about in the mid-point of the state in terms of their potential to learn when they arrive at school.

Once the index of advantage was figured, the state used that to determine a prediction of how well our students should do in four major subject areas, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Actual results from three consecutive years of testing were computed to see how we did in relation to the state's prediction. Tests results used were from the 3rd, 6th, and 8th grade California Achievement Tests and North Carolina Writing Tests, and all high school end-of-course tests for which three years of data existed.

If a system's actual results were within the range of its predicted results, it was said to be "at par". This is where Kings Mountain scored. If a system is "below par", it scored lower than the prediction. While we are pleased to be at par, we want to improve to an even higher mark.

What specifically can we glean from our results prior to having the time to thoroughly analyze them? I would offer the following:

Here's hoping we all get to enjoy more sunshine

Today is Sunday January 13, 1991. The sun has been shining brightly for the first time in almost a month, or so it seems. That golden sphere, however, has failed to wipe away all the gloom.

Yesterday, Congress gave the President permission to wage war, if he sees fit, against Iraq. I don't know whether that was right or wrong. On one hand, it is wrong for a bully to send an army into a small country and deprive it of its right of self determination. On the other, I shudder to think of people, human beings, getting killed in large numbers.

The Vietnamese war has been over for 17 years, but today it seems as though that bloody conflict ended only a year or so ago.

I hope we don't go to war. I still remember the activists of the 60's declaring that old men were sending young men to their deaths. I remember how indignant I was that some U.S. citizens could turn on their own country in such a manner. I wonder if they were right?

If we fight this war just for the sake of cheap oil, then that has to be immoral. By the same token, if we fight a war to free a captive nation, how can that be wrong?

Someone once said "The cause of freedom is identified with the destinies of humanity, and in whatever part of the world it gains ground, by the by it will be a common gain to all who desire it." I firmly believe all humanity should be allowed to enjoy the privilege of liberty.

There can be little doubt that Saddam Hussein is a despot, and I believe a government based in tyranny



JIM HEFFNER  
Columnist

carries with it the seed of its own destruction. The true strength of any ruler lies in openness, flexibility and truth. As soon as government departs from those standards, it becomes nothing more than a gang in possession, and its days are numbered. Consequently, Iraq will lose in the end, but many people may die needlessly.

Hussein does have an ace in the hole. If, as he says he will, he attacks Israel, how many Arabs will desert the coalition? It is inconceivable that those Arab countries who are part of the "coalition" will fight on the side of the Jews they've hated all their lives. Technically, for example, Syria is at war with Israel, though they haven't fought each other in years. Are we to believe they will defend that country? Of course not.

And what of the Japanese? They get 70% of their oil from Kuwait, yet they say they will not send troops in-

Our View

KM people do it again

The announcement last week that Kings Mountain United Fund topped its goal for 1990-91 was good news indeed following on the heels of the announcement that Glen Raven Mills may be the third industry closed by the recession crippling the textile industry, bread-and-butter of many who live in this area of the state. Hundreds of people in the Greater KM area are signing up for unemployment due to plant closings and layoffs.

The overwhelming support of Kings Mountain United Fund by individuals and industries is just another example of the caring people who live in Kings Mountain, Grover and the Greater Kings Mountain area. Even in bad times, Kings Mountain has always cared for the less fortunate and this year's record of giving to the United Fund was tremendous again. Not only did you top the goal of \$127,500.00 but the final count revealed a record \$130,434.00 in cash and pledges.

Volunteers who knocked on doors deserve much praise for their willingness to work even harder after some mills had to cut back on pledges due to layoffs. KM United Fund depends heavily on employees of industry to make the goal and considerable hours were spent by drive leaders and volunteers to attain the goal again this year without cutting back on agency requests.

Twelve of the 16 agencies asking for help turned out at the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet and their stories of how one gift to the United Fund brings help to so many was heartwarming.

Congratulations to Drive Chairman Glenn Anderson, UF President Ruby Alexander, division leaders of the campaign, the donors who gave and all those who share in the victory. Hats off for a job well done, a cooperative effort that we will see the results of for years to come.

Letter Policy

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each week's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines when submitting letters:

Keep the letters brief and to the point. Type and double space them, if possible, and sign them in ink stating your name, address and telephone number for verification purposes. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

The Herald reserves the right to edit any letter for spelling, good taste, libel, slander or any other reason, and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

Mail your letters to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. Hand-delivered letters will not be accepted.

While we do face some obstacles in helping our students score well on what the Report Card measures, they are not overly significant when compared to many other school systems. We need to identify those obstacles, make plans to confront them, and get on with it.

The characteristics which affect achievement in which we seem to be most disadvantaged when compared to the state are in the number of parents of school children who do not have a high school diploma and in the number of students who are absent from school a high number of days.

Science and social studies results in our system lag slightly behind those in reading/language arts and mathematics. Over the last three years, our reading/language arts achievement is slightly higher than the other three areas.

While we are not doing a poor job, we can do better. We have the quality of employees and community support which can make this possible, and I think our citizen expect us to continue to improve. The Board of Education has established improved performance as one of its goal, and they will have them.

I invite you to monitor our progress. Part of the effort, a major part, rests with us. But part of it also rests with you. In the coming weeks we will be identifying specific ways the community, especially the parents, can assist. This effort will be no better than the intensity all parties give it. Get ready to help. In the meantime, rest assured that the teachers and other employees in the school system are quite capable and anxious to do their part in assuring Kings Mountain that its schools will continue the long history of excellence which has been recorded.

to combat. I can't help but feel they are sitting back laughing at the United States.

I am not completely convinced the Arabs deserve to have American citizens die in their defense. They claim they are of the highest religious order yet they kill in a heart beat. I don't mean to say all Arabs are bloodthirsty, but I would point out that most acts of terrorism in the past twenty years or so were committed by Arabs, and those terrorists have always been welcomed in all Arab countries.

The Saudis obviously don't believe in religious freedom. They have constantly raised objections as our fighting men and women have tried to worship in their own way. The American troops were forced to celebrate Christmas "quietly."

Nor am I convinced this country can continue to police the world. Perhaps it is now time to start thinking about staying home and minding our own business. American can't be all things to all people.

Whatever happens to the Middle East, we are not going to settle all the problems in that part of the world. They've been at each other's throats for centuries. Maybe it is time for a Middle East Peace Conference.

I sincerely hope Saddam Hussein backs off and crawls back under his rock. It saddens me to think of all the young people who are likely to sacrifice their lives if war does break out.

I hope it doesn't happen, but, by this time next week, there may be many Americans who will never enjoy the sunshine again.