

Achieving the CMS Vision: *Equity and Student Success*

The Vision

The Vision is to ensure that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System becomes the premier, urban integrated school system in the nation in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and full lives as productive and enlightened members of society.

Adopted on September 1, 1991 by the Board of Education

Achieving the CMS Vision: Equity and Student Success

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Presented to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education on March 9, 1999

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Achieving Equity

Why diversity and high expectations matter

By Eric J. Smith, Superintendent

Achieving the CMS Vision: Equity and Student Success, which I am presenting to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, represents the next step in Mecklenburg County's ambitious effort to provide all students with an equal opportunity for success in school and in life.

The process began some thirty years ago when, in response to the Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education court case, the citizens of Mecklenburg County entered into an unprecedented covenant for children. The return on that courageous investment in Mecklenburg's future can be seen in our thriving community today.

However, despite the successes of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the financial health of Mecklenburg County, the objectives put forth by the courts more than a quarter-century ago clearly have not been met.

As a school system, we have taken the painful steps of identifying inequities. Pain is part of the process. To make things right we have had to identify what is wrong. Here is what we have found:

- Too many CMS schools are not racially balanced.
- African-American students have not been provided the same educational opportunities as White students.
- African-American students have not had equal access to instructional materials, supplies and technology.
- In schools with the highest percentages of African-American students, teachers are less experienced than teachers in predominantly White schools.
- The facilities at predominantly African-American schools are inferior when compared to other school facilities.

These disparities are unacceptable. However, the most disturbing remnant of Mecklenburg's once-segregated school system is the continued achievement gap between African-American students and their White classmates. This disparity cuts across income level. On average, higher-income black students don't perform any better than lower-income White students.

The facts are clear and conclusive. This chronic gap is irrefutable proof that race *must* be a factor in any plan to address the future of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Eliminating race from the process would mean shirking our moral obligation to serve all students to the best of our ability.

Before I was offered a position in Charlotte in 1996, I told the Board of Education in my job interview that the one thing I would not do as superintendent was intentionally re-

segregate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. I did not know if that was what Board members wanted to hear, but it was what I believed. If that commitment to diversity were to keep Board members from hiring me, then I did not want to work for them. I was gratified when the Board of Education voted unanimously to hire me as superintendent of the “premier integrated, urban school system in the nation.”

Those words — taken from the CMS Vision Statement — are true, and our students provide the proof. Let me tell you about one of those students.

I met Maurice Falls last month, and I was immediately impressed. Maurice is a senior at Harding University High School, where he carries a full schedule of classes in the International Baccalaureate program, the most rigorous high school curriculum offered in the United States. Maurice is a young African-American man who grew up in Charlotte and has attended Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for all of his school years, so he understands this community’s deep commitment to diversity.

“The world is so much smaller now,” Maurice told me. “You meet people you weren’t likely to meet 10 or 15 years ago, so you need to learn to deal with them and see that person as an individual and not as a stereotype. ... By being together you can eliminate some of the ignorance and you know the truth and you don’t just see people as objects.”

Maurice ranks 11th in his senior class and carries a weighted grade-point average of 4.81 on a 4.0 scale. He is in his sixth year of Spanish study and second year of Japanese, and has narrowed his college choices to Duke, Davidson and UNC Chapel Hill. After college, Maurice plans to use his foreign language skills in international law or at the United Nations or U.S. State Department.

In a shrinking world, Maurice’s fascination with other languages and cultures defines the value of diversity in our school system and in our community. *Achieving the CMS Vision: Equity and Student Success* reinforces the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ commitment to diversity. However, simply providing a diverse environment is not enough. To close the achievement gap between all racial groups, we must have the same high expectations for all students. If we don’t believe in our students — *all students* — why should our students believe in themselves?

“Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is at a new crossroads and we, as a community, have a new opportunity to design a school system that will move us into the next century with students and citizens who have the skills and capacity to confront the challenges of the future.”

Achieving the CMS Vision: Equity and Student Success

Executive Summary

Public education in America serves as the foundation for our democracy; how we educate our children influences how our democracy evolves. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) believes that every child has a fundamental right to a high-quality, equitable education. The vision for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is **“to become the premier urban, integrated system in the nation in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and full lives as productive and enlightened members of society.”** Achieving this vision is not a simple matter, but it will be done. The vision requires the commitment and hard work of many; it requires the energy of our entire community – educators, parents, businesses and the community at-large. CMS is at a new crossroads and we, as a community, have a new opportunity to design a school system that will move us into the next century with students and citizens who have the skills and capacity to confront the challenges of the future.

As we enter the year 2000, the core values of the district will serve as the basis for how we educate our students. These core values are:

- Every student is entitled to a free, appropriate and **high-quality education**. This education provides students the opportunity to succeed in mastering educational fundamentals, to prepare for success as adults in a complex and rapidly changing society, and to make a positive contribution, as citizens, to the community in which they live.

- Every student should have access to **academic rigor**. Each student should be prepared and encouraged to accelerate his/her learning in a way that stretches his/her capacity. Students who take the risk of stretching their capacity should receive support that will increase the likelihood that they will be successful.
- Every student deserves a **competent and caring teacher** who is qualified to teach the grade level and subject matter of the class and who has adequate time to address the needs of each student.
- Students at every school should have equal access to appropriate **instructional resources**.
- Learning should take place in **facilities** that offer each student an equal opportunity for success.
- An environment of **racial and cultural diversity** enhances learning and is necessary to prepare students to be successful in an increasingly multi-ethnic, diverse and changing society.
- **Diversity of students** should be promoted by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education by using practical and educationally sound means that utilize family selection of schools to the extent feasible.
- The **diversity** of the student population, the **utilization** of the school, and the **stability** and **proximity** of student assignment must be balanced.
- Diversity in schools can be fostered by promoting **sound, financially-affordable housing** in neighborhoods in which it is lacking.

In 1996, when Dr. Eric Smith began his tenure as Superintendent of CMS, he actively engaged the school system and community in identifying areas of concern and interest. The result of these meetings and discussions was the development of a systemic reform program to improve academic achievement. To this end, the district has adopted four key goals that focus on:

- Attaining high academic achievement for all students
- Creating safe and orderly environments
- Ensuring community collaboration
- Developing efficient and effective support operations

These four goals serve as the foundation for all CMS initiatives. Every reform that is undertaken in this district is directly tied to one or more of the goals. While CMS has been making progress by using a variety of successful and innovative programs, the district must still address the disparities that exist in educational opportunities and achievement as well as in the district's human, facility and material resources. Many of these disparities have had the most serious impact on African-American students.

* The terms *African-American* and *Black* are used interchangeably throughout this document.

While this Plan started out as a means for the district to achieve unitary status, it has now become a comprehensive framework for student achievement. The Plan is designed to accomplish the district's goals to eliminate racial disparities and to honor the district's commitment of providing a quality education for all students in an environment of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. There are nine components in the Plan; implemented together, they go far beyond student assignment. In carrying out the Plan, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will address the inequities that exist.

The fundamental outcome for this Plan is clear: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools must create the environment where every student is engaged in equitable, high-quality instruction, kindergarten through 12th grade. It is essential that no student is overlooked, no student denied access to appropriate courses, and no student deprived of needed extra support. We must develop the talents of our students and actively respond to their needs. CMS and the community must join together to eliminate the disparities in facilities, resources and personnel. Every school must meet the same high standard and ensure that every child reaches his/her fullest potential and can realize his/her dream. **What** we want to achieve already has broad community consensus; **how** we will achieve it will require extraordinary means and a genuine departure from previous norms.

In reading this Plan, it is important to keep in mind that it is designed as a **comprehensive framework** – a framework that will revitalize our district and community. Each of the nine components will be successfully achieved only if implemented in conjunction with the others.

The Nine Components of the Plan are:

Educational Opportunities

Family and Community

Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers and Technology

Faculty

Student Assignment

Instructional Facilities

Organizational Capacity

Accountability and Bonus System

Plan Management

Each component addresses four areas:

- A. Introduction and Background:** What is the context for the component?
- B. Goals and Objectives:** What CMS goals and related objectives will serve as the targets and outcomes for achieving the component?
- C. Strategies:** What key actions will be taken to implement the component?
- D. Monitoring and Evaluation:** How will the achievement of the component be measured?

Managing all of the efforts set forth in this Plan is a challenging task, but one that must be done well to ensure that it becomes a reality for our community. The best approach to manage these components in a coordinated way is to adopt a project management methodology and to structure a process to monitor the Plan and its components. To that end, a plan management and oversight process is included in Component IX, Plan Management. will have the quality instruction he/she deserves.

Educators, parents, business and the community are all partners in this endeavor. We all have a role to play and we all know that high achievement for every student must be the target. The community has placed its trust in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to care for all of Mecklenburg County's children. It is our obligation to live up to this trust and to ensure that every student in our district is equipped to succeed in life. This success will advance Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools "to become the premier urban, integrated system in the nation in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and full lives as productive and enlightened members of society."

In addition to the overall management of the Plan, the CMS Board of Education policies and the administrative regulations are currently being revised into a standard format recommended by the National School Boards Association. This undertaking will support the objectives and strategies of the Plan as it is implemented throughout the district.

Ultimately, the nine components are inextricably linked to one another, and the attainment of one component is dependent on the attainment of other areas. For example, resolving the inequities of Educational Opportunities is closely tied to addressing the disparities in areas such as Faculty; Facilities; and Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers and Technology. Any combination of components that is less than the full complement means that the end goal will not be realized. When the components are all in place, every CMS student

“The heart of a school system centers on the teaching-learning process that takes place in classrooms every day.”

Component I

Educational Opportunities

A. Introduction and Background

The heart of a school system centers on the teaching-learning process that takes place in classrooms every day. To ensure that every student has an equitable opportunity for success, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Board of Education has defined the core values (see Executive Summary) that serve as the foundation for the school system. Related to these values and principles are the essential beliefs about teaching, learning, curriculum and professional development. These beliefs set the direction for educational decisions and guide what students learn, how they are taught and what skills and knowledge they acquire as they prepare to turn their dreams into reality.

The school system’s work must focus on preparing students to be productive citizens – citizens who are equipped with a broad set of skills to be successful in the next century. To achieve this outcome, CMS’ academic programs must center on engaging and purposeful instruction geared to meeting each student’s needs. In addition, this must be coupled with the support of school, family and community stakeholders who are genuinely invested and willing to demonstrate their investment through actions. The health of public education is dependent on various sectors of the community seeing their role as vital to the success of students and the school system. Ultimately, the family, the community and the schools all impact how students view their opportunities to achieve.

As our students prepare for the multicultural society of the 21st century, they will need the skills to function effectively with a broad range of people. For this purpose, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools believes that learning is enhanced in an environment of diversity, where students' racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are acknowledged and appreciated.

Learning in CMS classrooms is based on the beliefs that:

- Learning is a personal experience that builds on students' strengths and interests.
- Learning is most engaging when it is focused and relevant.
- Learning is most effective when students are actively involved, challenged, and supported.
- Learning has a long-term impact when students have regular opportunities to make choices and work cooperatively.
- Learning results in the mastery of reading, writing and mathematics, which are fundamental to lifelong success.
- Learning maximizes success.
- Learning is most effective when it minimizes the adverse consequences of initial failure.

When a child begins school, the child's family and school enter into a partnership focused on providing the child a high-quality and successful educational experience. This partnership continues throughout the elementary, middle and high school years. While learning occurs in many different settings, students advance toward their goals and dreams more deliberately in classrooms where teachers care about their learners and deliver well-organized lessons. Teachers must be looked upon as leaders whose prime responsibility is to lead the work of their students. Therefore, CMS is committed to the following beliefs about effective teaching:

- Teachers create an ongoing, caring relationship with each learner.
- Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies that meet the unique needs and learning styles of students.
- Teachers regularly analyze and redesign their instructional strategies to prevent student failure.
- Teachers encourage learners' creativity.
- Teachers create student work that is product-focused and incorporates clear standards.
- Teaching is grounded in the best practices that engage and motivate learners.
- Teaching focuses on accelerating learning for all students.
- Teaching is based on a standard curriculum.

The system must use a uniform curriculum to ensure that students in every school are engaged in the same instructional program. By defining this standard curriculum,

teachers understand what is expected of them as well as what they need to expect of their students. Therefore:

- Curriculum is clearly defined by the district using state, national and/or international standards.
- Teachers have a user-friendly curriculum document that states what they should teach and what students should be able to do.
- Curriculum documents are regarded as active, living documents that are used daily, updated regularly to ensure alignment with student assessments, and designed to promote students' continuous improvement.
- All teachers are expected to deliver the uniform curriculum with the goal of accelerating the performance of each student.

Given that learning is a personal experience for each student, a variety of support structures are necessary to ensure success for everyone. Some students require additional programs to ensure that their needs are fully met. Early learning programs and programs that are focused on study skills must be put in place across the system. A pre-kindergarten program for students who demonstrate an educational need ensures that all young children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. At the middle and high school levels, CMS programs such as AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) help students develop study skills and other related skills that prepare them to successfully enter and complete college. Extended learning opportunities in after-school, weekend, holiday and summer programs give students who have identified needs the expanded learning time they may need. Since learning is not just about academics, community partnerships for activities such as mentoring, tutoring, and internships also help expand students' learning experiences beyond those in the typical school day.

Teaching and learning are most effective when students gain useful skills and knowledge and, in the process of doing this, experience success. To make this happen, teachers must be prepared to respond to a broad range of student needs and learning styles. Preparation for this goes beyond what is taught in college when teachers first received their training. CMS must have a commitment to ongoing professional development that focuses on the teaching and learning process as well as on the content to be taught. Staff members must be viewed as learners as well as teachers and leaders. CMS' professional development is centered on the following beliefs:

- Professional development is founded on respect, trust and support among faculty and staff in the organization, as well as on the system's core beliefs regarding teaching and learning.
- Professional development is based on the uniform curriculum and promotes the implementation of instructional strategies that are linked to student success.
- The professional development programs are data-driven with clear goals and outcomes and create an expectation for implementation, reflective action and follow-up.
- Professional development connects student learning to teacher learning.

- Professional development will assist teachers in effectively teaching heterogeneous groups of students with different abilities, learning styles and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
- Professional development views teachers as leaders of learning within their classrooms.
- Professional development is a continuous process that requires time and focuses on the needs of teachers as members of school communities and as individuals.
- Professional development for principals includes strategies focusing on becoming leaders of leaders.

The success of every student in Mecklenburg County is the imperative that faces us all – the school system, families and the community-at-large. Unfortunately, the data indicate that CMS has not provided its Black* and White students with equal educational opportunities.

1. Black students have not had equal access to advanced educational programs and have been overrepresented in programs that fail to promote excellent academic outcomes. Examples of this problem of access include:
 - a. Black students have not been represented in programs for the gifted at the same rate as White students. In 1997-98, while Black students comprised over 40% of the CMS enrollment, they represented only 12% of the students identified as gifted.
 - b. In 1997-98, while Black students comprised 38% of high school enrollment, only 12% of these students took at least one AP course and only 6.7% of these students took at least one AP exam.
 - c. Black students have been formally disciplined at a higher rate than White students. On average for the past three years, 22% of Black students were disciplined as compared to 8% of White and other students. Black students were 66% of those receiving out-of-school suspension, 81% of those excluded, and about 73% of those assigned to management schools.
 - d. Black students are disproportionately placed in Exceptional Children's (EC) programs, especially those with subjective criteria, and are more likely to receive EC services in separate classes or schools. For example, in 1997-98, Black students made up more than 70% of those classified as emotionally disabled and 70% of those who received instruction in a separate classroom.
 - e. Black students are more likely to drop out before their senior year, are more likely not to graduate even if they are enrolled their senior year, and are less likely to have taken the courses required for admission to the University of North Carolina (UNC) system even if they graduate. In 1998, only 49% of Black graduates completed UNC course requirements, compared to 78% of White and other graduates.

* The terms *Black* and *African-American* are used interchangeably throughout this document.

- (2) Black students consistently score lower on student outcome measures, even when free or reduced lunch status and other socioeconomic measures are taken into account.

CMS' success in eliminating these disparities is dependent on its capacity to transform beliefs into daily action. No single component of this Plan can bring about the needed reforms. It will take all the components being implemented together in a coordinated fashion to provide an equitable education for every Charlotte-Mecklenburg student.

B. Goals and Objectives for Educational Opportunities

The objectives below promote the CMS Goal for Academic Achievement:

- Objective 1. 85% of students in all racial and economic groups will read at or above grade level by the end of third grade.
- Objective 2. 75% of students in all racial and economic groups will complete geometry prior to 11th grade.
- Objective 3. 33% of students in all racial and economic groups will complete at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course by graduation.
- Objective 4. The average Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) score will be at or above the national average.
- Objective 5. The percent of students with disabilities who graduate will increase by 10%.
- Objective 6. 85% of students in all racial and economic groups who begin 9th grade will graduate.
- Objective 7. The percent of African-American students and other underrepresented groups in the Talent Development program will increase.
- Objective 8. The percent of all racial and economic groups participating in extra-curricular activities will increase.

C. Strategies for Educational Opportunities

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Curriculum Development and Materials (Objectives 1-7)
 - Provide a well-defined, high-quality instructional program to all students.
2. Acceleration of Coursework (Objectives 2, 3)
 - Provide opportunities for students to accelerate their courses and establish a support system for students who are accelerating their courses.
3. Additional Support in Middle and High Schools (Objectives 2, 4, 5, 6)
 - Provide additional support for students who are not at grade level in math and/or reading/English in middle school or high school.
4. System of Preventions and Interventions (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)
 - Establish an effective system of preventions and interventions for students who demonstrate need, especially students not performing at grade level.
5. Transitions between School Levels (Objective 6)
 - Ensure a successful transition for students as they move to the next school level.
6. SAT Preparation (Objective 4)
 - Ensure that students are prepared to take the SAT.
7. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) (Objectives 3, 4)
 - Continue to implement the AVID program to support CMS goals for average SAT performance and increased enrollment in AP/IB courses.
8. Talent Development Identification (Objective 7)
 - Create an early identification process for the Talent Development program that increases participation by underrepresented groups of students.
9. AP/IB Recruitment and Support (Objective 3)
 - Increase the identification, recruitment, and support of students for AP and IB coursework.
10. Exceptional Children's Placement (Objective 5)
 - Ensure that Exceptional Children's prereferral to placement process is followed as prescribed.
11. Support System for Exit from Exceptional Children's Services (Objective 5)
 - Establish a support system for students who exit Exceptional Children's services.
12. System of Extracurricular Activities (Objective 8)
 - Establish an organized system of extracurricular activities at all schools.

13. Suspension and Exclusion Reduction (Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6)
 - Reduce the student behaviors that lead to suspension or exclusion from the regular school program.
14. Dropout Prevention (Objectives 5, 6)
 - Strengthen CMS' strategies for reducing dropouts.
15. Monitoring Process (Objectives 1 – 8)
 - Establish monitoring processes that ensure that CMS strategies are being implemented appropriately.
16. Review and Evaluation Process (Objectives 1 – 8)
 - Establish a process for annual review and evaluation of components in the instructional program.
17. Professional Development (Objectives 1 – 8)
 - Train instructional staff and expect them to use a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and materials.
18. Employee Role Models (Objectives 1 – 8)
 - Expect every CMS employee to be a role model, mentor or tutor to ensure and support the continuous academic progress of all students.
19. Budget Alignment (Objectives 1 – 8)
 - Align budget and budget processes to support teaching and learning success.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Educational Opportunities

A comprehensive evaluation of the objectives and strategies of the Educational Opportunities component will be conducted. These objectives are directly linked to the district's goal of academic achievement. The monitoring of this component will be the accountability system described in Component VIII, Accountability and Bonus System and Component IX, Plan Management.

Component II

Family and Community Involvement

“Families should have the information they need to make informed decisions about their child’s education.”

A. Introduction and Background

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) views families and the community as key partners in the development of students. The Board’s core values stress the importance of every student receiving support that increases the likelihood that he/she will be successful. In partnership with families and the community, the district seeks to provide a learning environment that supports the intellectual, social, and emotional development of each student. It also works to ensure an equitable system that enables students to succeed academically and to access post-secondary opportunities.

The district’s partnership with families and the local community is based on the beliefs that:

- Everyone is responsible for student success. Public education is a shared community responsibility.
- The family and the school are partners in a child’s educational development.
- Respect, support, and dignity should be given to all children.
- All students should have the support services needed to access post-secondary education and training.
- Families should have the information they need to make informed decisions about their child’s education.
- A positive educational environment requires academic excellence, good internal and external communication, and caring, productive interactions among schools, staff, families, and the community.

This framework provides the district with the necessary foundation to address issues, implement strategies, and attain successful educational outcomes for all children.

B. Goals and Objectives for Family and Community Involvement

The objectives below promote the CMS Goals for Academic Achievement and Community Collaboration:

- Objective 1. Increase the percentage in all racial and economic subgroups of students with fewer than 10 absences.
- Objective 2. Increase the percentage in all racial and economic subgroups of students who enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Objective 3. Increase the percentage of parents who are involved in their child's school and education.
- Objective 4. Increase the percentage of students who receive the support necessary to attend institutions of higher education.
- Objective 5. Increase the percentage of students exiting directly into training or education upon graduation from high school.

C. Strategies for Family and Community Involvement

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Early Childhood Programming (Objective 2)
 - Advance readiness for school success through strong early childhood programming.
2. School Improvement Process (Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5)
 - Increase consistent and strong implementation of School Leadership Teams to focus school improvement planning on student performance.
3. Family Involvement (Objective 3)
 - Encourage and facilitate informed participation of families in their child's educational program. CMS is committed to helping families support their child's academic success and post-secondary opportunities.
4. Linking Instruction and Support Services (Objective 4)
 - Strengthen the link between classroom instruction and the After-School Enrichment Program to enhance student academic outcomes.
5. Community Partnerships (Objectives 1, 4, 5)
 - Strengthen and develop community partnerships that promote student academic success and a safe environment.

- Partner with the community to expand existing initiatives and establish new ones that promote workforce preparedness (post-secondary education or training and development of career skills).
6. Community Support (Objectives 4, 5)
 - Strengthen links to segments of our community to support the academic progress of our students.
 7. Post-Secondary Opportunities (Objectives 4, 5)
 - Increase the number of students who pursue education and/or training upon completion of high school.
 8. Agency Support (Objective 5)
 - Strengthen and expand links to Charlotte-Mecklenburg human services agencies to support students' success in school.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Family and Community Involvement

A comprehensive evaluation of the objectives and strategies of the Family and Community Involvement component will be conducted. These objectives are directly linked to the district's goals of Academic Achievement and Community Collaboration. Specific measures for the objectives in this section will be developed and reported to the Plan Management Steering Committee.

“ . . . Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will ensure that each school is provided with the essential instructional materials and supplies, media centers and technology required for teaching and learning.”

Component III

Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers, and Technology

A. Introduction and Background

Successful teaching and learning require a core set of instructional materials and supplies, media centers, and technology. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is committed to the success of teachers and learners:

- The district is responsible for defining the curriculum that is to be delivered at each grade level and in each content area.
- The district is responsible for defining and aligning the instructional materials, supplies, and technology required to support the curriculum in all content areas.
- The district is responsible for providing these basic materials, supplies, and technology for all schools and classrooms, as appropriate.
- These materials, supplies, and technology belong to the school system and should remain at the school site as assigned.
- The district can relocate materials, supplies, and technology based on shifts in student populations. Schools are expected to cooperate fully when such relocations become necessary.
- The district should update the listing of instructional materials, supplies, and technology at least as often as the curriculum is revised.
- Capital equipment supplied to a school is also district property and should remain at the site of assignment unless directed otherwise by the district.

- The district should provide some defined curriculum materials that are considered consumable so that the teacher may personalize and take them with him/her when transferring to another school.

Schools and classrooms are equipped with a variety of instructional materials, supplies, and technology. Some of these items have been provided by the district, some by the teacher, some by the school, and some by other outside sources. The processes defined here will ensure that each school is provided with the essential instructional materials and supplies, media centers and technology required for teaching and learning; however, the district does not limit the ability of outside agencies or schools themselves to exceed this minimum. Schools are encouraged to seek additional support from outside agencies. In this way, the district raises the ceiling for instructional resources to support teaching and learning in every school in the district.

As the data indicate, CMS has not provided instructional materials and supplies, media centers and technology in a way that students at every school have equal access to the appropriate instructional resources. Specific disparities in instructional resources exist when comparing racially-balanced schools, racially identifiable Black schools and racially identifiable White schools:

- At the elementary and middle school levels, students in racially identifiable Black schools have had fewer basic instructional materials and supplies available to them than have students at racially-balanced or racially identifiable White schools.
 - Racially identifiable Black elementary schools have an average need of \$88 per student for instructional materials and supplies, compared to \$66 per student for racially-balanced schools and \$44 per student for racially identifiable White schools.
 - At the middle school level, racially identifiable White schools need \$21 per student in instructional materials and supplies, compared to \$32 per student for racially-balanced schools and \$34 per student for racially identifiable Black schools.
- At all levels, students at racially identifiable Black schools have had less access to adequate instructional technology than have students at racially-balanced or racially identifiable White schools.
 - 30% of racially identifiable Black schools have all classrooms cabled, compared to 54% of racially identifiable White schools and 40% of racially-balanced schools.
 - 74% of racially identifiable Black schools' media centers are automated, compared to 100% of racially identifiable White schools and 82% of racially-balanced schools.

1. Instructional Materials and Supplies: Background

In the area of instructional materials and supplies, the district started the process of defining what materials and supplies were necessary to support the defined curriculum during the 1996-97 school year. The first step in the process was the decision by the district to adopt the North Carolina Standard Course of Study as the district's curriculum. The Curriculum and Instruction staff then proposed a listing by classroom of the materials and supplies that were aligned to the curriculum.

Using a specified set of content areas and courses, teachers and principals provided a review of what had been defined and offered some modifications to what was necessary for each classroom. The content areas and courses were reading/language arts and math (K-8), and algebra I, geometry, English I-II, biology, economic, legal and political systems, and U.S. history. A survey was conducted to determine the needs in a sample set of schools, elementary through high school. Based on the survey, a budget proposal was submitted for an instructional materials and supplies initiative.

A revised survey was conducted by all schools to determine the extent of the needs in the specified content areas. After further input from principals, a second total school survey was conducted so that schools could verify and update the requests. This survey clarified that special education classrooms should be included when considering the basic materials and supplies. There also was a listing of specialized materials and supplies required for self-contained special education classrooms. Allocations were awarded to schools in proportion to school-defined needs, with *EquityPlus* schools receiving a greater percentage of their requests. There was not sufficient funding to provide any school with its total request.

In addition, determining the allocations included adjusting a few schools' requests that were not comparable with the other schools' requests at that level. The total budget was divided among elementary, middle, high, and special centers, and between the regular and self-contained special education programs. Schools received an allocation for regular education materials and supplies and a separate allocation for self-contained classroom needs.

Teachers and other instructional staff determined how to expend their special allocations. To monitor the appropriate spending for the school's defined needs, schools submitted all requisitions for approval prior to placing orders.

Schools will complete another survey in 1999 that is focused on the areas of science and social studies (6-12). Combined with the needs identified in the 1998 survey, schools will receive a second allocation to support these areas. It is anticipated that a third round of allocations will be necessary to bring all schools up to the same basic level of the core materials.

2. Media Centers: Background

Regarding media centers, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools established a written collection assessment plan called a collection mapping project to determine how closely media center books are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Collection mapping is an organized process for systematically analyzing and describing a library media center collection. During this process in 1996-97, personnel become more knowledgeable of the collection at the schools while determining which areas needed additional volumes or were out of balance. They also determined which materials needed to be eliminated because they were outdated.

This process of analyzing the collection in each school was developed over a four-year time frame. The analysis included such indicators as variety, currency, relevance, condition, number of materials for the number of students studying the unit, materials which span the reading comprehension levels of the students, appeal to student interests, new materials, use patterns, student and teacher opinion, number of annual losses, and other sources of funding. During each phase, the media collection was reviewed based on the following defined set of areas:

- 1994-95 Social Science, Science, Technology, Geography/History/Travel
- 1995-96 Fiction and/or Picture Books
- 1996-97 General Knowledge, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Literature
- 1997-98 Recreation, Biographies, Reference

The initial review revealed that the majority of books in most CMS schools were copyrighted in the 1960s and 1970s. For social studies and science, the predominance of outdated materials precluded a quality instructional program.

At the conclusion of each phase of the collection mapping project, schools were placed in priority categories based on its results and compliance with the standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Also, during the last six years, 32 schools added one or more grade levels. Some of these schools were part of the de-pairing process. Other schools gained new grade levels as part of establishing standardized 6-8 and 9-12 grade levels in middle and high schools. Schools that gained a grade level were awarded \$10,000 per new grade to be used exclusively for that grade level. This special funding was to be used for more than purchasing books; funds also were to be used to purchase other resources such as video recordings and computer programs.

During the last two budget cycles (1997-98 and 1998-99), the district has set up a more structured process for schools to update their collections. Using the information gained from the collection mapping project, schools have been placed in categories to determine the amount of district allocation. District personnel identified appropriate listings of

books that can be purchased with the allocated funds. Though schools identified the titles of the books to be purchased, the orders were reviewed and verified centrally to ensure that all collections meet district standards. Materials for the new schools were processed in the same manner.

The collection mapping project was a significant step in establishing a district standard for all media centers. The challenge continues as the average cost per book for a media center increases. During the 1990s, the cost has risen from \$13.98 in 1990 to \$15.65 in 1997 (12% increase). Added to this cost is \$2 to \$3 per book for processing costs (e.g., bar codes, book cards and pockets, book jackets). At the same time, book costs compete with other needed resources for students such as computer software, audio-visual equipment, and operational supplies.

3. Technology: Background

The introduction of technology into the instructional program has been an ongoing priority in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Over time, instructional technology resources have included items such as filmstrip projectors, overhead projectors, 16-mm film projectors, televisions, record players, CD players, cassette recorders and computers. Instructional technology has undergone rapid change and has broadened to include online electronic resources, networked computers, Internet access, interconnectivity of schools, and campuswide video distribution networks.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has developed countywide technology plans throughout the years to address technology resources for the instructional program. The technology resources outlined in these plans have helped CMS identify the baseline of technology within the schools. In 1994, in response to the Department of Public Instruction technology initiative, CMS developed a five-year Instructional Technology Plan that outlined strategies for placing technology resources in all schools.

The state's aggressive funding allocation was only for the first year; subsequent years have been funded at approximately 30%. This reduced funding has negatively impacted the strategies and objectives for implementing the technology plan and consequently has reduced the technology resources available for students.

The district revised its Instructional Technology Plan in 1998, focusing on five major areas:

- Integrating technology into the curriculum to meet instructional objectives
- Providing equitable access to an established baseline of technology
- Providing ongoing professional development for teachers and support staff
- Providing ongoing system maintenance and support
- Building relationships with the community as key stakeholders

Three major factors were used to determine technology resources for schools:

- (a) Prioritization process that ranks school needs
- (b) N.C. ABCs results and curriculum initiatives
- (c) School construction and renovation schedules

Each school is reviewed through a formula-based process for determining technology resource needs. This process includes reviewing data on the current computer-to-student ratio, percentage of completed cabling, N.C. ABCs results, and percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. By assessing all schools, the district has a base of information about the total needs of all schools. As with other areas, there is a racial disparity in instructional technology. Thirty percent of racially identifiable Black schools are fully wired, compared to 54% of racially identifiable White schools and 40% of racially balanced schools.

Two other factors are also critically important in evaluating technology needs. The first is a determination about how the need relates to curriculum and instruction. Technology is the tool; curriculum and instruction establish the direction. Technology alone is not a solution to address academic achievement, but it must be aligned to the curriculum and support a rigorous academic program.

The final factor that impacts the placement of technology resources is the CMS long-range plan for building construction and renovations within the schools. The Technology Services Department and Building Services Department work collaboratively to ensure that the placement of technology in schools considers the renovation and construction schedule.

B. Goals and Objectives for Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers and Technology

The objectives below promote the CMS Goals for Academic Achievement and Efficient and Effective Operations:

- Objective 1. The district will implement standards for instructional materials and supplies, media centers and technology. This will ensure that all teachers and students have access to the basic materials and supplies, and technology that are necessary to support the instructional program.
- Objective 2. The district will align its budget/funding process and policies to support distribution of instructional materials and supplies, media centers and technology in proportion to needs compared to the baseline standards.

C. Strategies for Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers and Technology

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Instructional Materials and Supplies (Objectives 1, 2)

The following strategies will ensure that all schools and classrooms maintain the appropriate level of instructional materials and supplies.

- Establish a curriculum review cycle that includes updating related instructional materials and supplies.
- Update the standards for instructional materials and supplies to ensure continuous alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- Survey schools to determine the level of need by sites.
- Establish a school-by-school materials and supplies replacement fund to maintain the district baseline standards. Schools will be responsible for purchasing items that match the district-defined standards.

2. Media Centers (Objectives 1, 2)

The following process will be used to ensure that all schools have a media center that meets the baseline standards.

- Establish a review cycle of media materials to be coordinated with the curriculum review cycle.
- Update the guidelines for media center materials to ensure alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- Complete a school-based assessment of school collections to determine the extent of needs by school site.
- Verify a school's list of needs when its requests are not comparable with other schools at that level, and/or on a random basis.
- Establish a school-by-school materials and supplies replacement fund to maintain the district baseline standards. Schools will be responsible for purchasing items that match the district-defined standards.

3. Technology (Objectives 1, 2)

The following strategies will ensure that all schools and classrooms maintain the appropriate level of technology resources.

- Assess, on an annual basis, the technology baseline that defines the minimum standards for technology and instructional software in each of the elementary, middle and high school levels.
- Conduct technology inventories by school on an annual basis.
- Continue to use an objective technology allocation process which compares each school against the baseline and considers the following types of factors:
 - ⇒ Student-to-computer ratio
 - ⇒ Percentage of classrooms that are cabled
 - ⇒ Percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch service
- Review N.C. ABCs results.
- Allocate equipment and resources to schools that are farthest below the baseline, adjusting for renovation schedules and curriculum needs.
- Establish a yearly project schedule by school for the distribution of this allocation.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Instructional Materials and Supplies, Media Centers and Technology

On an annual basis, schools will be surveyed to determine needs as compared to the baseline standards for each of the areas of instructional materials and supplies, media centers, and technology. Funds will be allocated that address the needs of each school with the schools in greatest need receiving the most funding.

The principal will be responsible for maintaining an ongoing inventory of the materials and supplies, technology and equipment allocated to a school. The principal will also be responsible for supervising the procurement process that ensures maintaining the baseline standards for materials and supplies, media centers and technology.

“Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools [is committed to providing] . . . a high-quality, diverse faculty in every school.”

Component IV

Faculty

A. Introduction and Background

The teaching and learning environment in each school is created and shaped by its faculty. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ (CMS) Goals for Academic Achievement, Community Collaboration, and Effective and Efficient Support Operations establish a framework for providing a high-quality, diverse faculty through recruitment, selection and training processes. To ensure success for all students, a school system must have the supporting processes and policies in place to attract and retain a high-quality, diverse faculty in every school. Teacher experience, advanced degrees, licensure, and demonstrated success are key factors in such processes.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has not met its obligation completely to desegregate its faculty or to provide schools with predominately Black students with faculty that is as qualified as CMS provides to schools with predominately White students. The distribution of Black teachers is not even across schools within CMS. In schools where there is a greater Black student enrollment, there is also a greater proportion of Black teachers. For example, in 1997-98, 12.8% of the faculty of racially identifiable White schools was Black, compared to 30.0% of the faculty of racially identifiable Black schools. The distribution of teachers by experience and credentials is not even across schools. The test results for students overall are generally higher in those schools that are lowest in the percentage of Black students, have the highest

percentages of experienced teachers and have higher concentrations of teachers with higher credentials.

The following conditions currently exist in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools regarding experience and credentials:

- (1) **Experience:** Racially identifiable Black schools have less experienced teachers and racially identifiable White schools have more experienced teachers than the system average. This experience gap is particularly large for White teachers at the elementary school level. It is also true that Black teachers in racially identifiable White high schools are the most experienced Black teachers.

CMS also has assigned professional support staff (e.g., librarians, counselors, psychologists) in such a way that racially identifiable Black schools have lower average levels of experience than other schools at elementary and middle school levels.

- (2) **Advanced Degrees:** The higher the enrollment of Black students in a school, the fewer teachers who have advanced degrees. This problem is more pronounced in high schools and elementary schools than in middle schools. In racially identifiable White high schools, more than 45% of teachers hold advanced degrees, compared to 35% in racially identifiable Black high schools.

- (3) **Licensure Problems:** At the high school level, schools with higher proportions of Black students have more teachers who have licensure problems, such as teachers with provisional licenses, lateral entry teachers, or teachers teaching out of field.

Teachers are hired to serve the needs of the school system and not a particular school. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is committed to hiring and maintaining the best-qualified instructional and non-instructional staff for the school system. In addition, CMS is committed to placing in each school a **quality staff** based on a core set of beliefs. A **quality staff** should:

- Have teachers who have graduated from a fully accredited institution of higher learning.
- Have a significant complement of teachers with advanced degrees.
- Have an average experience level of at least 12 years.
- Have teachers who have demonstrated success as documented by state and local student assessment methods including North Carolina End-Of-Grade (EOG) or End-Of-Course (EOC) Test results.
- Be fully licensed in the area in which they are hired to teach, and know the course content and how it is related to other subjects.

- Know and appreciate various cultures, the larger global society, and how to establish rapport with a diverse population of students and families.

Differentiated staffing is an approach used by CMS in which additional teaching positions are allocated to schools with high concentrations of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These schools are identified based on the percentage of students in each school who are eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL). Schools with higher percentages of students receiving FRL are staffed based on lower student/teacher ratios to meet the needs of their student populations. The additional allotted positions are used to reduce class size and/or to provide smaller instructional groups.

In elementary schools, CMS currently differentiates staffing for grades K-3 based on the following formula:

FRL Percentage	K-3 Staffing Ratio	4-5 Staffing Ratio
60%+	1:16	1:26
40-59%	1:19	1:26
20-39%	1:22	1:26
<20%	1:23	1:26

The allotment formula for middle schools is as follows:

FRL Percentage	6-8 Staffing Ratio	If Dual Programs *
>50%	1:19	plus 1 additional position
<50%	1:20.5	plus 1 additional position

* Dual programs refer to when a school has two programs operating simultaneously, such as two magnet themes.

Without differentiated staffing, the district uses the state-defined ratios of teachers to students. The ratio is 1:23 for grades K-3, 1:26 for grade 4-5, and 1:20.5 for grades 6-8.

High school teachers are allotted based on the following formula steps:

- 9th-12th grade student enrollment (excluding Exceptional Children self-contained students) is multiplied by 7
- number of workforce development teachers is multiplied by 50, and is then subtracted from the number above
- this results is divided by 150

For example, a high school with 1,000 students and 5 workforce development teachers would have the following allotment:

$$1,000 \text{ students} \times 7 = 7,000$$

$$5 \text{ workforce teachers} \times 50 = 250$$

$$7,000 - 250 = 6,750 / 150 = 45 \text{ teaching positions}$$

- add one position for In-School Suspension
- add two positions for schools with 30% or more FRL students

This approach to staffing supports the Superintendent’s goal for higher academic achievement by providing greater equity in position allocations to schools with high concentrations of students with special needs. CMS is in the process of developing criteria that will be used for allotting support staff to targeted schools based on the identified needs of the student population. CMS also plans to provide preparation time equivalent to a 60-minute block per day, with common planning for grade levels and departments.

Part of creating an environment of racial and cultural diversity that enhances learning and is necessary to prepare students to be successful in an increasingly multi-ethnic, diverse and changing society is to have a **diverse faculty**. It is expected that every school will have a diverse instructional and non-instructional staff. The Black instructional staff at each school should approximate the percentage of Black teachers across the district. In cases where the staff of any particular school is not diverse, assignments and reassignments by the Superintendent may occur after two years of interventions.

Good working conditions are a key ingredient to an effective learning environment and serve to attract and maintain a stable and highly qualified faculty. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is committed to providing exemplary working conditions in the areas of class size, support staff, facilities, instructional supplies, and equipment. To assure equity, particularly across schools, audits of the targeted schools will be conducted on a regular basis by the Associate Superintendent for Operations, Associate Superintendent for Education Services, and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

B. Goals and Objectives for Faculty

To address the CMS Goal of Academic Achievement, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is committed to providing a diverse teaching and administrative staff in each school. This staff will be of the highest quality, particularly in regard to degrees, licensure, experience and demonstrated success.

The objectives below promote the CMS Goals for Academic Achievement, Community Collaboration, Safe and Orderly Schools, and Efficient and Effective Support Operations:

Objective 1. Each Charlotte-Mecklenburg school will be in compliance with all staffing guidelines required by *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*.

- The “desegregation of faculty (shall) be accomplished...by assigning faculty (specialized faculty positions excepted) so that the ratio of Black and White faculty members of each school shall be

approximately the same as the ratio of Black and White faculty members throughout the system.”

- “(T)eachers (shall) be assigned so that the competence and experience of teachers in formerly or recently Black schools will not be inferior to those in the formerly or recently White schools in the system.” *Feb. 1970 Decision, 311 F. Supp. At 268.*

Objective 2. Each targeted school within CMS will be staffed with teachers and administrators reflecting the average degree level, number of years of experience and classroom success (state and local assessments) of the school system’s Schools of Excellence, Distinction and Exemplary Growth for 1997-98, as measured by the N.C. ABCs program.

The *1997-98 School Profile for Selected Schools* gives the averages for elementary and middle schools of Excellence and Distinction and the high schools with Exemplary Growth. For each level, the chart provides averages for the categories of teachers with appropriate and current licensure, teachers with advanced degrees, percentage of first-year teachers, percentage of tenured teachers and average teaching experience.

C. Strategies for Faculty

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Teacher Assignment Strategies (Objectives 1, 2)

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will design strategies to correct inequities in racial composition, experience and qualifications of the CMS instructional staff. The challenge is two-fold: (1) increasing the number of minority teachers at schools with predominantly White student populations, and (2) increasing the number of White teachers, as well as those with more years of experience and advanced degrees, in racially identifiable Black schools. The percent of the faculty that is African-American at every school should be within 10 percentage points of the percent of the faculty that is African-American districtwide. The specific teacher assignment strategies are to:

- Monitor and report teacher exits and transfers, with particular attention to diversity issues. CMS will closely monitor teacher transfers using quarterly reports and post-transfer surveys that will be summarized and compiled. Information will also be collected through exit interviews.
- Assign new hires from a central pool to schools that are outside of diversity compliance guidelines.
- Implement transfers by the Superintendent after two years of interventions in schools out of compliance. Impacted schools would be determined and volunteers

would be sought initially. Involuntary transfers would then be planned and implemented if necessary.

- Provide improved school profiles that describe the faculty demographics to schools three times per year. Training will be provided to principals on the improved format.
- Document and report progress toward meeting objectives semiannually to ensure accountability.

2. Additional Support Strategies (Objectives 1, 2)

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will need additional support systems to enhance teacher assignment strategies. These support strategies include training, technology, recruitment and retention, and administrative directives. When implemented effectively, these strategies can make a genuine difference in the quality of faculty in our schools. Specific support strategies are:

- Pay \$500 signing bonuses to all new teacher hires to increase the number and quality of candidates.
- Pay an additional \$500 signing bonus to new hires in critical areas, such as math, science, and special education to eliminate or significantly reduce the number of unfilled critical teaching positions.
- Enhance the comprehensive recruitment plan with attention to targeted colleges and universities.
- Enlist teachers and principals to recruit teachers, particularly alumni of historically Black colleges and universities.
- Update interviewing skills for principals and recruiters to better identify quality teachers.
- Continue performance-based incentives at Equity*Plus* schools.
- Evaluate principals using the new Principal Appraisal System, which includes diversity expectations.
- Communicate and monitor the expectation of diversity for central office departments.
- Provide training for new and experienced teachers and administrators that will ensure proper support and awareness for diverse populations of students and teachers.
- Improve technology in the Human Resources Department to enhance the district's hiring and monitoring capacity.
- Offer graduate programs through partnerships with local colleges and universities.
- Offer critical training to principals, assistant principals and administrators through the CMS Leadership Academy.
- Develop and implement administrative evaluations and bonus systems for top level central office and building level administrators.

3. Targeted School Strategies (Objective 2)

- In addition to the recruitment program outlined in Support Strategies, the recruitment program for targeted schools will include the payment of a one-time

bonus of \$500 for every two years of experience (up to \$5,000) for experienced teachers and administrators who are recruited to work in targeted schools. This bonus will be paid at the end of the initial year with a commitment to return for the second year.

- The retention program will include:
 - a. adding \$2,500 to the base salary of experienced, quality teachers and administrators who are recruited to work in targeted schools **and** to the base salary of quality staff and administrators who have demonstrated success and remain in their assigned targeted schools. These individuals must continue to demonstrate classroom success while remaining at the school.
 - b. paying beginning teachers a one-time bonus of \$2,500 at the end of the third year and adding \$2,500 to their base salary after the fourth year. These individuals must demonstrate classroom and/or school success while remaining at the school.
 - c. continuing performance-based incentives currently in place for schools in the *EquityPlus* program.
 - d. implementing tuition-free graduate programs at targeted schools through partnerships with local colleges and universities.

4. Working Conditions Strategies for the Targeted Schools (Objective 2)

- Designate Average Daily Membership (ADM) staff on a differentiated basis minimally at a level of 16:1 for K-5, 18:1 for middle and 19.5:1 for high school at targeted schools.
- Provide support staff at targeted schools. This may include parent advocates, social workers, counselors and ESL teachers, commensurate with the identified needs of the student population.
- Provide preparation time equivalent to a 60-minute block per day with common planning for grade levels and departments.
- Establish plans and standards for the facilities, instructional materials and supplies, and design and delivery systems in targeted schools as noted elsewhere in this plan.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Faculty

The measures listed below will be used by the Plan Management Steering Committee to monitor and evaluate the Faculty objectives. Corrective actions will be taken by the Plan Management Steering Committee as necessary.

Measures for Objective 1:

- Every school in the district will reflect the overall district faculty population within a 10% margin.

- The faculty of currently or recently racially identifiable Black schools will reflect the experience of the faculty of currently or recently racially identifiable White schools in the system.

Measures for Objective 2:

- Within three years, all targeted schools will be staffed with teachers and administrators reflecting the average degree level, number of years experience and classroom success. For schools not in compliance after two years, the Superintendent will implement transfers to bring the schools into compliance.

Component V

Student Assignment

“ . . . [The] Family Choice Cluster Plan . . . is designed to enhance family involvement, foster community, efficiently utilize school system resources, and support academic achievement.”

A. Introduction and Background

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' (CMS) Family Choice Cluster Plan for student assignment is designed to enhance family involvement, foster community, efficiently utilize school system resources, and support academic achievement. This process also reflects the district's core value of balancing diversity in student populations, the utilization of school buildings, and the stability and proximity of student assignment.

To develop an effective and efficient plan for student assignment, one that promotes the highest quality of instruction and promotes racial and cultural diversity, CMS staff reviewed a broad range of plans from other districts across the United States. The assets and shortcomings of each one were weighed to determine the best approach for our community. Charlotte-Mecklenburg's needs and strengths were carefully considered in developing the Family Choice Cluster Plan. Also incorporated into the student assignment process are the four success factors for student assignment that have been broadly acknowledged by the community as essential: stability, proximity, utilization and diversity.

The Family Choice Cluster Plan is designed to support the district's goals and reflect their core values. In addition, this Plan addresses the problem that CMS has not racially balanced the student population of each of its schools to the extent practicable.

Currently, 23 schools are racially identifiably Black (RIB) and 13 are racially identifiably White (RIW), which together make up 28% of all regular schools. Ten of 42 magnet schools are racially identifiable. Techniques such as pairing and the use of satellites have placed a disproportionate burden on African-American students.

The Family Choice Cluster Plan also responds to the problems caused by growth by offering stability. As Mecklenburg County's population continues to grow at a rapid rate, and more than 3,000 new students enter the district each year, CMS must determine the best strategy for assigning students to schools. Maintaining stability is increasingly challenging as students are reassigned to schools on an *almost annual basis*. Families voice concern about their children adjusting to different school environments and their education being disrupted when they are moved from one school to another during their elementary, middle school, or high school years.

To implement the Family Choice Cluster Plan, the district will divide the county into three to five clusters that reflect the demographics of the school system as a whole. Special attention will be given to the racial breakdown, economic status, number of English as Second Language students, Exceptional Children, age of schools and other appropriate factors to ensure diversity within and equity across clusters. Each cluster will also have comparable number of students and available seats.

Families will choose from the choice schools within that family's cluster and the magnet schools serving that cluster, ranking them in the family's order of preference. A lottery will be held to assign students to schools, taking into account the capacity of each school with preferences given to students living within a proximity zone, to siblings, and to students with special needs. Once assigned to a school, a student will have the option of staying there through the school's terminal grade, or the student can select to re-enter the lottery in future years.

The Family Choice Cluster Plan will have a phase-in schedule and be implemented beginning in the 2001-02 school year, with the 1999 and 2000 school years being used to address equity problems among the schools and to build the infrastructure necessary to administer the Plan. For 1999-2000 and 2000-01, students will continue to be assigned using the current student assignment methods. Beginning in 2001-02, students starting in the entry grades of kindergarten, 6, and 9, and students new to the system will participate in the Family Choice Cluster Plan.

A core value of CMS is that an environment of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity should be provided to prepare students to be successful in an increasingly multi-ethnic society. For the first three years of the Family Choice Cluster Plan (2001-02 through 2003-04), while CMS is moving toward unitary status, applicants will be chosen in accordance with racial balance guidelines, with a target that each school be no less than 15 percentage points below the district averages for African-American and White students.

A target will be set for students of other races to fill up to 10% of the seats. Assuming that the district is then unitary, after 2003-04, the district will use a lottery that is not based on race. A variety of other methods to achieve racial, ethnic and economic diversity within each school will be used. These methods may include intensive recruiting, incentives, majority to minority transfers, and strategies to promote economic diversity.

The student assignment process serves as one of the nine essential components for this comprehensive framework. Only when all of the components are in place will equity be achieved across the district, ensuring that all students receive the highest-quality education through grade 12.

B. Goals and Objectives for Student Assignment

The Student Assignment objectives below promote the CMS Goals for Community Collaboration and Efficient and Effective Operations. These objectives, when implemented, will be consistent with the goal of Academic Achievement for all students.

- Objective 1. Increase family choice of schools for their children.
- Objective 2. Foster family involvement in the schools.
- Objective 3. Implement the student assignment process in an orderly manner so that currently enrolled students are allowed to remain in their current school through its terminal grade.
- Objective 4. Increase the number of students who remain in the same school through the final grade level of that school.
- Objective 5. Enable siblings to stay together.
- Objective 6. Maximize the number of students attending schools that reflect the diversity of the district.
- Objective 7. Allow students who live within a defined proximity zone of a school to attend that school.
- Objective 8. Decrease overcrowding and maximize utilization of schools by aligning student enrollment with the capacity of each school building.
- Objective 9. Design the student assignment process so that the cost of transporting students is not disproportionate to the benefits of providing family choice.

C. Strategies for Student Assignment

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Placement of Students in Choice Schools (Objectives 1, 2, 4-8)

Once the district has designated the clusters, students will be placed in schools as follows:

Preference: Each family will complete a choice application for each child. The application will require that the family rank schools within its cluster for each student. A family may also rank magnet schools. Once a student is placed in a school, that student will be able to remain in that school through its terminal grade.

Residential Address (Domicile): The domicile of the family or legal guardian will determine from which cluster of schools a family may choose. Proof of residence will be required at the time a choice application is submitted.

School Capacity: Each school's capacity will be used to determine the maximum number of students who will be placed at that particular school.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity: The district is committed to having diversity among student populations within each of its schools. This value is essential in preparing CMS students for the multi-ethnic and diverse society of the 21st century. While CMS is moving toward unitary status, for the first three years (2001-02 through 2003-04) applicants will be chosen in accordance with racial balance guidelines, with a target that each school be no less than fifteen percentage points below the district averages for African-American and White students. A target will be set for students of other races to fill up to ten percent of the seats. During the placement process, seats will be reserved to allow additional time for targeted recruiting of underrepresented groups.

Exceptional Children (EC) and English as a Second Language (ESL): This combined population represents approximately 12.8% of the district's total population. EC and ESL populations within the district are growing at a faster rate than the non-EC and non-ESL populations. These students may require specialized facilities or resources to accommodate their instructional needs. Therefore, these students will be placed first in the choice assignment process.

Siblings: CMS is committed to keeping families together. To achieve this, the district will accept siblings at the same school within the cluster.

Proximity: Students who live within a defined, immediate area of a particular school and select that school as a choice will have a proximity priority for attending that school.

Lottery: Students will be assigned to schools through a lottery that matches students' ranked choices with school capacity, diversity targets, and proximity and sibling priorities. The district will enroll as many students as possible in their first choice school. Students who are not admitted to their first or second choice will automatically be placed on the waiting list for their first choice school.

Applications will be processed in cycles. If a family misses the first cycle deadline, the family will have another opportunity in which to submit its application.

This approach will ensure that each student has an opportunity to obtain a seat within his/her school of choice.

If a family does not complete a choice application, the student will be assigned to a school within his/her cluster based upon the established guidelines. Extensive effort will be made to contact families so that they each complete a choice application.

Transfers: Requests for transfers will be based on extreme hardship for cases such as a child's medical need. Staff will approve or deny transfer requests based on the established guidelines. Each cluster will have a transfer appeals committee made up of family representatives to review transfer appeals. The Board will act on the committee's recommendations.

Students Who Move: Students who move within their cluster may remain in their current school. If a student moves to another cluster during the school year, that student may remain in the current school of assignment through the completion of the school year without transportation provided, or that student may attend a school in the new cluster with transportation provided by completing a choice application.

2. Placement of Students in Magnet Schools (Objective 1)

Families will still have the option of selecting magnet schools in addition to the other choice schools in their cluster. Magnet schools with their particular programmatic focus will continue to be used as a method of providing choice and academic rigor and of maintaining the success factors of stability, proximity, utilization and diversity. There will continue to be some countywide magnets. Some magnet themes will be offered in multiple schools, with each cluster being served by one school.

3. Phase-in of the Family Choice Cluster Plan (Objective 3)

During the phase-in process of this Plan, current students in CMS will be allowed to remain at their current school through its terminal grade. This applies to all schools, including magnets. The Family Choice Cluster Plan will have a phase-in implementation schedule starting with students who enter grades K, 6, and 9 in 2001-02. Based on this phase-in schedule, it will take six years to completely implement the Plan in the elementary schools, three years in the middle schools and four years in the high schools. After that time, all students will be in schools based on their families' choices. During

the phase-in period, students in grades 1-5, 7-8, and 10-12 will be allowed to enroll in the schools of their families' choice through the choice lottery as space permits. Families of students new to the district will complete and submit a choice application at the time of arrival or during one of the application cycles.

4. Establish Student Assignment Information Center (SAIC) (Objectives 1, 2)

The district is committed to ensuring that all families understand the choice process and procedures for the Family Choice Cluster Plan. To accomplish this, the district will operate year-round Student Assignment Information Centers to assist families with the school selection process. Each year, families will have a designated time to apply for schools. Families can obtain applications from any school or from the Student Assignment Information Center. One-on-one support services will be offered at the SAIC. The SAIC will assist families in understanding the "priority" for processing applications. During school choice selection periods, the district will establish additional information centers as needed.

The success of this new approach to student assignment is dependent on an informed community. The Public Information Department will serve a vital role in disseminating information to the community. Public Information will inform families and the community of registration periods by using various forms of media. The district will draw on its current relationships with city and county agencies to educate families on the new Family Choice Cluster Plan. Preschool centers will serve an important function in sharing information to help families make good choices for their children.

Given the growth and changing demographics within Mecklenburg County, the SAIC will be staffed with bilingual representatives to assist families. When it is required, the district will make sure that representatives will be available to assist families who have limited English proficiency. During peak seasons and when needed, the SAIC will be open on some weekend days to assist families who cannot be accommodated during the weekday.

5. Establish Community-Based Planning Councils (Objective 2)

The Family Choice Cluster Plan will also require the assistance of the community to ensure that all schools within a cluster are successful. Research shows that family involvement within schools enhances academic performance of students. To that end, CMS will establish a Community-Based Planning Council for each cluster, with at least one family representative for each school. The Council's main responsibility will be to serve in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent on how to better involve parents in schools and which programs need strengthening within the cluster.

6. Provide Transportation (Objective 9)

Transportation will be provided for students who attend a school within their cluster or a magnet school serving their cluster and who live a sufficient distance from the school to warrant transportation. If a student attends a school that does not serve that cluster, transportation will not be provided.

7. Promote Affordable Housing (Objective 6)

To foster the district's core value of diversity in the schools, the Board will work together with the County Commission, the City Council, the governing bodies of the towns, and the business community in developing an affordable housing plan. This plan would promote sound, financially-affordable housing in areas of the county where it is lacking. The Board will work with these bodies to implement the affordable housing plan.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation for Student Assignment

To monitor and evaluate the Student Assignment component of the Family Choice Cluster Plan, staff will provide annual reports to the Superintendent on the number of applicants; the number of students who were admitted to their first, second and third choice schools; and how each school in the cluster was ranked. The data will serve as the catalyst for implementing academic and other enhancements within the cluster. As staff members begin to review the data, appropriate resources will be directed to ensure that all schools within a cluster are successful. In addition, racial, economic, and special needs data will be monitored to determine diversity.

Given the annual Family Choice process, enhancements must be implemented in a timely manner whenever practicable. Aggressive strategies will be implemented to make any under-chosen schools more attractive to families and their children. As the Family Choice Cluster Plan develops, additional evaluation and measurement strategies will be incorporated into the annual review process.

“ . . . Facilities are an integral component in the district’s attainment of a sound instructional program.”

Component VI

Instructional Facilities

A. Introduction and Background

Various studies, committee reports, community site visits, evaluations, and professional reports document that the condition of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ (CMS) existing facilities must be improved to provide quality instructional programming consistently across the district.

The Future School Planning Task Force Report, *A Vision to Overcome Barriers to Educational Excellence Related to Future School Planning and Student Assignment*, recommends:

- the establishment of a baseline standard for all facilities
- adequate funding to support ongoing maintenance of existing facilities
- significantly more than 50% of available capital funds be spent on existing facilities until all schools meet or exceed the baseline standard
- a committee be appointed to monitor the process of bringing schools to the baseline standard

The Helping Empower Local People (H.E.L.P.) audit, which reviewed physical conditions and technology in 35 schools, made the following observations:

- older schools had the worst physical conditions and technology gaps, with the exception of the magnet schools
- serious inequities existed in the physical condition and technology among schools
- a number of health and safety conditions needed to be addressed immediately

The Heery Report (1992), funded by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, assessed each facility in the system and provided a detailed technical conditions report.

The Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee has heightened the awareness for establishing preventive maintenance programs and proactive facility management initiatives. The deferred or breakdown maintenance approach used in the past has created the poor conditions that exist in our school facilities today.

The reports noted above support the finding of Dr. Dwayne Gardner, an instructional facilities consultant to the district, that racially identifiable Black school facilities are educationally inferior and inadequate. They are also older when compared to racially-balanced schools and racially identifiable White schools. Of the facilities he examined, 79% of the racially identifiable Black school facilities need major improvements or replacement to meet the instructional program needs. This compares to 50% of the racially-balanced and 14% of the racially identifiable White schools. Racially identifiable Black school facilities are also substantially older than racially identifiable White school facilities. Only two new schools have been built in predominantly Black census tracts since 1971.

To provide for improved maintenance of school facilities, the CMS Facilities and Maintenance Department was reorganized to reflect the practices of present facility management industry standards. This reorganization was also designed to address the challenges detailed above and to ensure that all school facilities are both equitable and meet a baseline standard. The new department, now known as Building Services, has as its mission, "To build and maintain quality school facilities in a cost-effective manner."

A Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan has been proposed to provide a comprehensive analysis of trends, issues and factors that can be used as a framework for the development of future school sites and renovation of existing school facilities. This plan outlines procedures and policies to be used by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in the determination of school renovation needs. Several key factors will be used to determine future school sites and to identify existing schools that need additional classrooms. These factors include growth plans, the potential for achieving diversity in student populations, development initiatives, and capital plans for infrastructure and facilities. These factors will be analyzed in conjunction with student growth projections and the physical condition and capacity of existing facilities. In determining new school sites and renovation projects, consideration also must be given to the implementation needs of the Family Choice Cluster Plan.

It is important to keep in mind that while facilities are often viewed as a separate entity within a school district, they are an integral component in the district's attainment of a sound instructional program.

B. Goals and Objectives for Instructional Facilities

The objectives below promote the CMS Goals for Academic Achievement and Efficient and Effective Operations.

- Objective 1. Build new schools and renovate existing school facilities to ensure equitable resources for all students.
- Objective 2. Develop, implement and maintain facility standards.
- Objective 3. Conduct ongoing comprehensive facility needs assessments in relation to the established facility standards.
- Objective 4. Provide leadership throughout construction programs.
- Objective 5. Establish a day-to-day and long-range maintenance program.

C. Strategies for Instructional Facilities

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies, among others, to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Meet Standards (Objectives 1, 2, 3)

- Use existing federal, state, and local documents to ensure that CMS meets quantity and quality standards for educational facilities.

Whether designing new facilities or renovating existing facilities, Building Services uses numerous documents that support the educational planning of a facility. These documents, which are bound separately include North Carolina Building Codes, Local Zoning Ordinances, North Carolina Public Schools Facilities Guidelines, Safe School Facilities, Early Childhood Education Facilities, Exceptional Children's Facilities Planner, and the Americans With Disabilities Act. These documents not only help support the delivery of instruction, but also ensure that the design and construction of facilities meet quantity and quality standards.

2. Educational Specifications (Objectives 1, 2, 3)

- Develop and implement educational specifications for school buildings that support the delivery of the curriculum programmatically, functionally and spatially.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has developed educational specifications for elementary, middle, and high schools. The process to develop and establish these

educational specifications has been thoughtful and deliberate. In fall 1997, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools established a Director of Educational Planning for Facilities position. During the next year, existing Charlotte-Mecklenburg Educational Specifications were evaluated along with Department of Public Instruction guidelines.

The schools most recently constructed were reviewed to determine how closely these specifications were followed.

In fall 1998, data were compiled, evaluated, and distributed to the CMS Curriculum and Instruction staff to evaluate the content of the specifications and guidelines. This process included a specific delivery timetable that coincided with the construction schedule of the 1996 and 1997 Capital Improvement Projects. This process was accelerated in November so that the specifications would be completed January 1999. Educational specifications have been developed for each instructional level and are in the final review stage.

While all of these documents help to ensure that design and construction meet quantity and quality standards, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Educational Specifications for elementary, middle, and high schools will be used as the benchmark from which facility equity is derived. These educational specifications will be reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect the most up-to-date educational requirements.

3. Computerized Management Program (Objectives 3, 5)

- Develop a computerized facility management program to track physical assets.

Using standards and guidelines from the documents above, Building Services will implement a computerized facility management program to track physical assets. The school system is currently reviewing several computer packages that are used by firms in the facility management industry. The system to be purchased must address several key issues, such as integrating graphic and alphanumeric data, flexibility to integrate internal and external functions, Internet compatibility, ability to integrate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Quality Assurance Checklist and Preventive Maintenance Checklist, a cost management system, a work order system, a purchase order system, and a physical asset data base. A computerized facility management system will be implemented during the 1998 – 1999 school year.

4. Assess Capital Needs (Objectives 2, 3, 4)

- Assess, on a two-year cycle, the capital needs of educational facilities in CMS and prioritize the needs in a 10-year plan for growth and renovation.

The Capital Needs Assessment and the Capital Improvement Program comprise the district's plan to address capital needs. Historically, the system has focused on growth and the renovation or replacement of major systems (e.g., roofing, HVAC, plumbing). While the 1996 and 1997 Bond Programs address the infrastructure of schools, they do not fully address the overall modernization of school facilities.

The Ten-Year Capital Needs Assessment is the result of a process devoted to researching and analyzing existing conditions, identifying facility deficiencies and responding to student growth projections. The Capital Needs Assessment process utilizes data collected from school staff, maintenance staff, architects and engineers, quality assurance checklists, preventive maintenance checklists, and utilization checklists. Enrollment and demographic studies are assessed to determine enrollment patterns. This information provides the basis for the development of a master plan concept. The master plan explores and outlines solutions for the system's long-range facility needs.

Once facility needs have been identified and categorized, priorities are established to create a three-year Capital Improvement Program. The Capital Improvement Program establishes a direction that responds to the short-term needs of a long-range master plan. The Capital Improvement Program becomes the basis for a capital budget request from the Board of Education to the County Board of Commissioners for capital funding. Initially in establishing the three-year capital improvement plan, a priority will be given to remedying disparities in facilities in racially identifiable Black schools. Priority will also be given to providing equitable school facilities in the African-American communities.

5. Future School Sites (Objective 1)

- Use a process to site new schools that is responsive to projected growth in the number of students, to the value of diversity in student populations, and to equitable access to facilities.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Instructional Facilities

To ensure that standards and specifications are maintained once a facility is built, it is the responsibility of Building Services to establish a process that systematically assesses the conditions and capital needs of that facility. This process includes several different checks and balances to review existing data on an ongoing basis.

One source for ongoing reviews will be the *Facilities Management Inspection and Quality Assurance Checklist*, which was developed to record semi-annual inspections of

each facility. This ongoing monitoring of completed work and the inspection of facilities is central to a quality facility management program and the development of future capital

improvement programs. The *Checklist* includes detailed inspections of landscaping, exterior and interior construction, painting, windows, doors/hardware, signage, lighting, ceiling systems, electrical, plumbing, tile and carpet, and roofing.

Another source for ongoing monitoring is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' *Preventive Maintenance Program*, which encompasses 13 areas: athletic facilities, carpet, ceiling systems, doors and hardware, electrical, electronic systems, HVAC, painting, paving, plumbing, roofing, signage, and window/glazing. Each of the 13 preventive maintenance areas includes a schedule of service, activities to be conducted, a checklist to be completed, and responsible staff. Implementing a preventive maintenance program will extend the useful life of the building's systems and increase the value of the asset. This preventive maintenance program has been implemented with the adoption of the 1998-1999 budget. Full implementation is projected to be complete by 2001.

A third source is school community input. This input is vital in assessing the capital needs of a facility. Each school will be asked to develop a capital needs request using a format provided by Building Services. The information gathered during this process will provide the basis for a comprehensive facility needs assessment.

Finally, all school buildings over 20 years old will be assessed using the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction feasibility and cost analysis guidelines. Items that will be included in the building feasibility analysis are:

- educational program adequacy
- historical or architectural significance
- safety and code compliance
- relationship to other buildings on site
- accessibility for the disabled
- physical conditions
- mechanical and electrical systems
- hazardous materials

If the building analysis indicates poor feasibility for renovation, a site feasibility analysis will be conducted which will include:

- site adequacy
- location
- sewer and water systems
- parking and traffic control
- playgrounds and play fields
- drainage
- environmental problems

A recommendation will be made regarding renovating or replacing the facility under consideration based upon established guidelines.

All school capital needs requests and data gathered from preventive maintenance inspections, quality assurance inspections, work order requests, and school community input will be entered into a computerized facility management system.

This computerized system will allow the district to integrate Quality Assurance Checklist results and Preventive Maintenance Checklist data, cost management information, the work order system, the purchase order system, and the physical asset database for assessing the conditions and capital needs of each instructional facility.

Based upon the findings of this entire review, a plan will be initiated to address critical facility needs through renovation/expansion/replacement. Analysis of existing conditions as compared to standards and guidelines will establish priorities for future capital replacement programs and Capital Improvement Programs. Through these careful monitoring and evaluation processes, CMS will make the progress needed to attain full equity across all its instructional facilities.

“Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools must commit extraordinary effort to attain the vision described in this Plan and to ensure a quality education for more than 100,000 students.”

Component VII

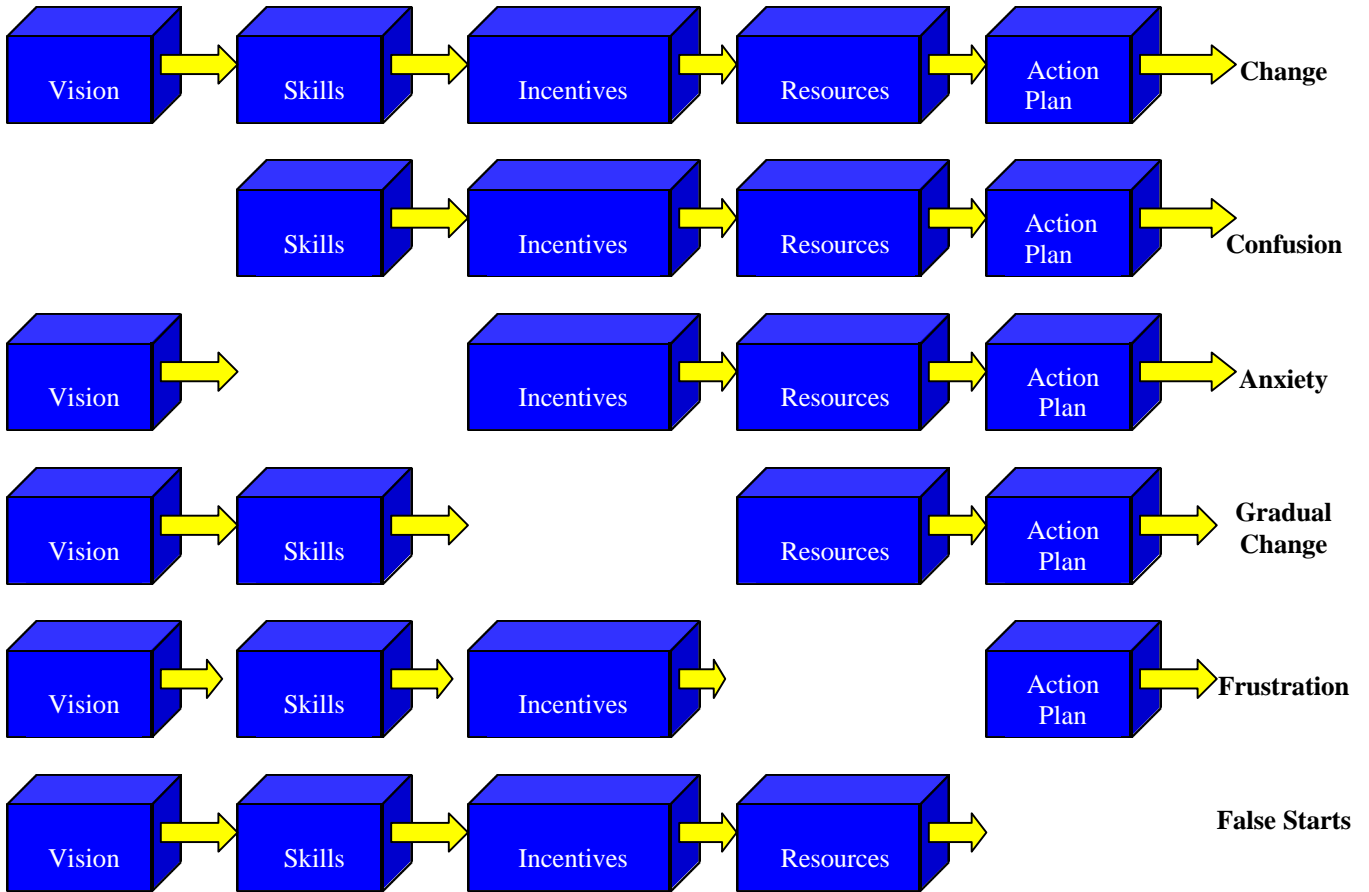
Organizational Capacity

A. Introduction and Background

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) must commit extraordinary effort to attain the vision described in this Plan and to ensure a quality education for more than 100,000 students. Teachers, administrators and support staff will need to redouble their commitment and performance to make the components described in this Plan a reality. Such extra effort and performance, however, cannot be achieved with only existing tools, processes, skills and staff. To achieve desired changes and results, CMS must increase the organization’s current capacity to perform this additional work and produce the type of results that are expected by our community.

Managing complex change requires a proper alignment of vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plans. Figure 1 developed by M. D’Amore of Westinghouse shows the importance of such alignment, and what occurs when these elements are missing.

Figure 1. Managing Complex Change



This component describes the work that will establish the tools and processes to ensure success. These elements will also contribute to the completion of established project outcomes in a timely manner.

B. Goals and Objectives for Organizational Capacity

The objectives below promote the CMS Goal for Efficient and Effective Support Operations to improve the central office capacity to perform work and produce desired results.

- Objective 1. Deliver support services and projects on time, on budget, with 100% accuracy and with quality at or above the expectation of the school-based customer.

- Objective 2. Create the necessary culture shift for all central office functions that establishes a “supplier” attitude among central office professionals. This shift will improve service and remove barriers to success for school-based staff.

C. Strategies for Organizational Capacity

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Business Processes (Objective 1)
 - The key central office business processes will be improved (assessed and redesigned). Initially, CMS will implement efforts to improve the following critical business processes:
 - ⇒ Budget Management (including a budget prioritization process),
 - ⇒ Contract Management,
 - ⇒ Project Management,
 - ⇒ Construction Project Management,
 - ⇒ Professional Development Management,
 - ⇒ Performance Management, and
 - ⇒ Projections, Staffing and Employment Processing.

2. Tools and Business Technology (Objective 1)
 - CMS will improve/replace the tools and business technology available to employees to do their work. The business process improvements above must be part of a comprehensive effort to replace the district’s business technology, or computer applications.

3. Resources (Objective 1)
 - CMS will establish a process to prioritize and (re)allocate resources and funds to ensure projects and services can achieve committed service levels and meet commitment dates.
4. Project Management (Objective 1)
 - CMS will implement a project management methodology. This includes a project initiation and management technique that is commonly used to scope, approve, monitor and track the progress of all major projects.
5. Plan Management (Objective 1)
 - CMS will establish a plan management methodology to oversee all of the projects and efforts associated with the full implementation of this Plan. This includes an ongoing assessment of the project status reports and measures. This assessment will be used to make necessary adjustments (such as redirecting resources and/or efforts) or to take other corrective measures to keep the projects and other related activities on target. (See Component IX, Plan Management for more information on this process.)
6. Performance Management (Objective 2)
 - CMS will implement an employee performance management system. This system will include pay increases and/or bonuses correlated directly to employee performance and related to the defined expectations.
7. Training (Objective 2)
 - The district will engage all central office staff in the CMS Goal for Efficient and Effective Support Operations, including training in quality and process improvement techniques.
8. Measuring and Reporting Progress (Objective 2)
 - CMS will implement a process for measuring and reporting progress toward achievement of the Plan.
9. Subcommittees (Objective 2)
 - The district will continue and Board of Education subcommittees in the areas of Personnel/Policy, Facilities/Finance, Curriculum and Instruction and Legislative Issues.
10. Partnership (Objective 2)
 - The district will become a member of the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence, a nonprofit organization that provides Total Quality Management and related training.

11. Cycle Time and Accuracy Level Goals (Objective 2)
 - CMS will develop and implement cycle time stretch goals.
 - CMS will develop and implement accuracy/quality level stretch goals.
12. Return on Investment Opportunities (Objective 2)
 - The district will identify Return on Investment opportunities during the budget process.
13. Customer Feedback (Objective 2)
 - The district will implement an internal customer feedback system for central offices.
14. Reward Systems (Objective 2)
 - The district will develop and implement systems to reward its accomplishments toward the CMS Goal for Efficient and Effective Support Operations.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Organizational Capacity

The measures to be monitored to track success in this area of the Plan include the following:

Measures for Objective 1

- Percentage of key projects completed on time and within budget.
- Customer satisfaction ratings for key projects (establish baseline for customer satisfaction by January 2000).
- Customer satisfaction ratings for the following key processes: Budget Management, Purchasing, Contract Management, Projections, Staffing and Employment Processing (establish baseline for customer satisfaction by October 1999).

Actual targets for percentages and ratings will be determined.

Measures for Objective 2

- Employee performance profiles across departments (establish baseline by summer 2000).
- Cycle time for the following processes: Purchasing, Contract Management, and Projections, Staffing and Employment Processing (establish baseline by October 1999).

“A unique component of the system is the emphasis on decreasing the disparity among groups of students.”

Component VIII

Accountability and Bonus System

A. Introduction and Background

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ (CMS) Accountability and Bonus System is designed to promote the district’s goal of Academic Achievement. This component has a number of indicators that gauge district goal achievement. School goals relate to those indicators and measure school progress toward, or achievement of, these goals.

The CMS Accountability and Bonus System uses measures that are compatible with the North Carolina ABCs and uses the tests required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. However, the system extends beyond the state ABCs and is more complex and rigorous. A waiver will be requested from the State Board of Education to allow the state ABCs program funds to be distributed according to these more rigorous standards. The CMS Accountability and Bonus System will use reading, mathematics and writing tests as academic measures in elementary schools. Reading, mathematics, writing and algebra I tests will be used as measures in middle schools. In high schools, it will use tests in English I; English II; algebra I; algebra II; geometry; economic, legal, and political systems; biology; chemistry; U.S. history; physics; and physical science. The participation rate in higher-level courses will also be used as a component of the program in middle and high schools.

In addition to these tests, the CMS Accountability and Bonus System will use CMS surveys of students and families, focusing on items related to CMS goals for Safe and Orderly

Environment and Community Collaboration at elementary, middle and high school levels. Measurement for these two CMS Goals will be used in the locally-funded bonus system only.

A unique component of the system is the emphasis on decreasing the disparity among groups of students. It examines results for subgroups and reserves the greatest rewards for schools that meet targets for racial and/or economic subgroups. The needs of the groups that have the farthest to grow academically must be met without sacrificing the academic achievement of those already on grade level.

B. Goals and Objectives for Accountability and Bonus System

The objectives below promote the CMS Goal for Academic Achievement:

- Objective 1. Establish an accountability system that measures and reports school success based on the following factors:
- Growth in student achievement.
 - Student participation in higher-level courses.
 - Reduction of achievement disparities among subgroups.
 - Level of student perception about safety and orderliness of school.
 - Level of family satisfaction.
- Objective 2. Establish a bonus system that uses the N.C. ABCs funding and that rewards schools based on their success on the following factors:
- Growth in student achievement.
 - Student participation in higher-level courses.
 - Reduction of achievement disparities among subgroups.
- Objective 3. Establish a locally-funded bonus system that includes the factors for the NC ABCs bonuses and some additional local factors. The set of factors for the local bonus system that rewards schools will include the following:
- Growth in student achievement
 - Student participation in higher-level courses
 - Reduction of achievement disparities among subgroups
 - Level of student perception about safety and orderliness of school
 - Level of perception about family involvement
- Objective 4. Use measures that are compatible with the N.C. ABCs to help schools focus on both local and state standards.

C. Strategies for Accountability and Bonus System

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Measurement of Academic Goals Growth (Objectives 1, 4)
 - The CMS Accountability and Bonus System will measure academic growth by comparing actual school means with predicted school means for students in the aggregate, and by racial and economic subgroups. Additionally, middle and high schools will be measured on their progress in participation rates in higher-level courses based on course completions.
2. Measurement of Academic Goals Performance (Objectives 1, 4)
 - Schools will be measured according to their overall performance by using the Relative Performance Index (RPI) to calculate the movement of students from one of the four state achievement levels to a higher level. While movement is expected at each level, points will also be awarded for keeping level 4s at level 4 with expected growth. Schools must exceed a minimum RPI to meet this component of the program.
3. Measurement of Safe and Orderly Environment and Community Collaboration (Objectives 1,4)
 - Families and students will be surveyed annually. A school index will be created to measure increases in the perceptions of safe and orderly environment and family involvement. Points will be assigned and included in the school score for the locally-funded portion of the accountability and bonus system.
4. Assignment of Bonus Levels (Objectives 2, 3)
 - Based on all of these calculations, a sum of earned points will result in five levels of accountability and bonus. The highest level is the *gold* medallion, followed respectively by *silver medallion*, *bronze medallion*, *no recognition* and *critical needs*. Bonuses will be awarded to gold, silver, and bronze medallion level schools. Critical needs schools will be provided with district assistance. In addition, critical needs schools may receive state assistance in accordance with state procedures.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Accountability and Bonus System

CMS' Accountability and Bonus System results will be reported annually to communicate the district's and each school's progress in meeting or exceeding goals. Adjustments to the program will be made, when appropriate, to align with changes in district and state standards and accountability.

Component IX

Plan Management

“Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will develop, execute and monitor an established plan management process on an ongoing basis to ensure that desired results and changes are realized.”

A. Introduction and Background

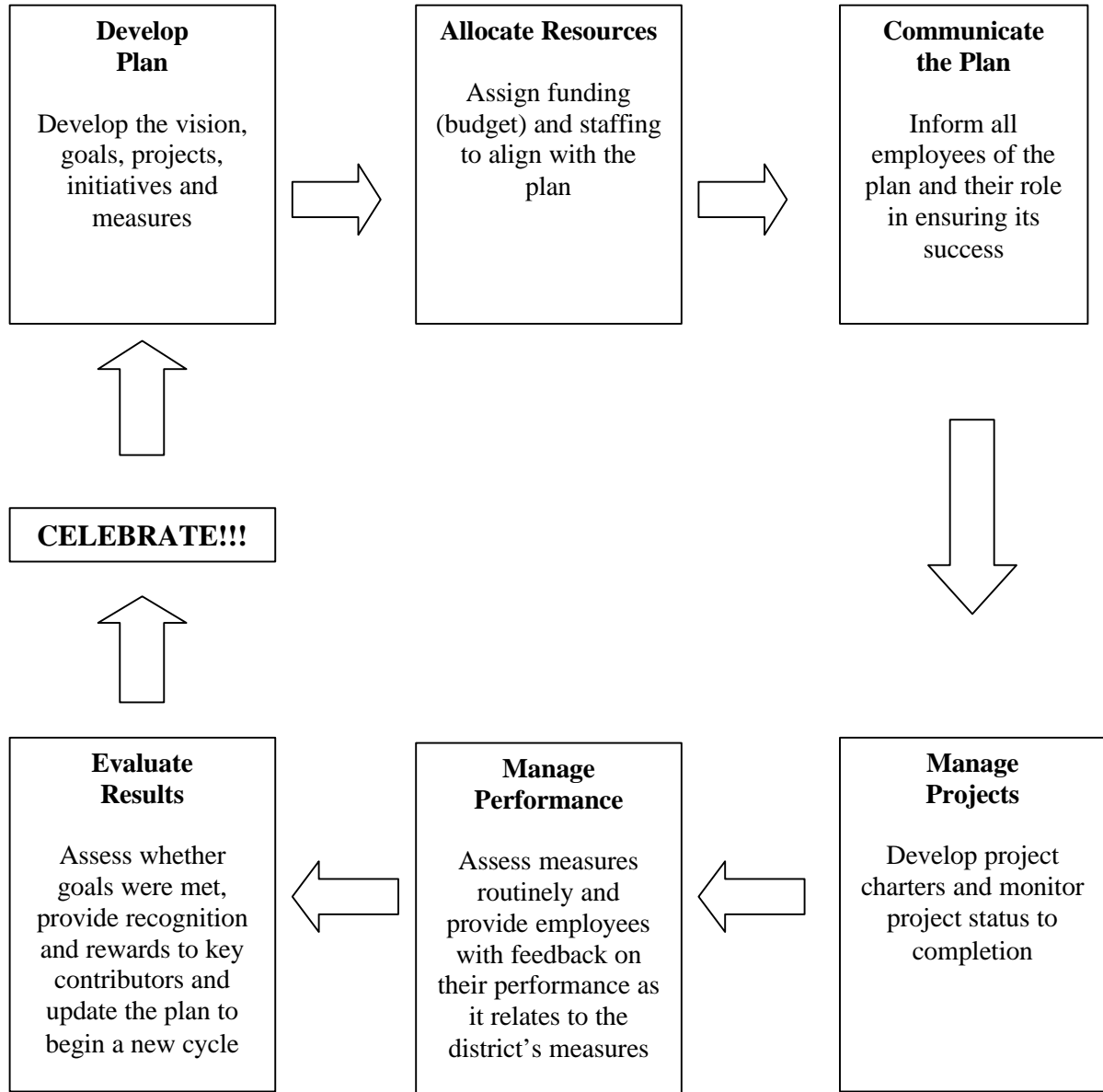
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) will develop, execute and monitor an established plan management process on an ongoing basis to ensure that desired results and changes are realized. Effectively managing a plan requires that the following processes take place:

- Resource allocation (e.g., human and material resources) – Because a school system has limited resources, CMS must prioritize its resources and reallocate lower-priority resources to support the higher-priority needs outlined in the Plan. It is important that prioritization becomes a regular activity with resource allotment and reallocation occurring on an ongoing basis as projects in the Plan are completed and other projects are initiated.
- Communication of the Plan: Ongoing communication regarding the plan status and adjustments is also essential. Explicit role expectations and instructions will be communicated effectively to all employees.
- Project Management: After identifying the goals, objectives, strategies and projects, the district will allocate resources to each project in the Plan. Managing these projects to completion will be a key ingredient. It will require project initiation and management techniques that are commonly used by Project Managers in the private sector to scope, approve, monitor and track the progress of all major projects.

- Employee Performance and Assessment: A central office employee performance management process that links employee compensation to employee performance and progress on key measures is essential. This performance cycle begins by documenting and communicating performance expectations to each employee. These expectations will be linked to key measures in the plan as much as is practicable for each employee. Employees will be given feedback on their performance at regularly scheduled intervals. Pay increases and/or bonuses will be correlated directly to employee performance and related to the defined expectations. This process will be phased in, beginning with central office middle to senior level administrators.
- Plan Measures Assessed on a Regular Basis: Adjustments will be made to resource allocation, priorities, and schedules as needed to ensure appropriate progress of the plan.

Figure 2 shows this ongoing cycle of plan management. The framework for the processes listed above will be developed as described in Component VII, Organizational Capacity.

Figure 2. Ongoing Cycle of Plan Management



B. Goals and Objectives for Plan Management

The following objective promotes the CMS Goal for Efficient and Effective Operations:

- Objective 1. Establish a plan management process to provide ongoing oversight and direction of all related projects to ensure the desired results are achieved.

C. Strategies for Plan Management

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will implement the following strategies to meet the goals and related objectives listed above:

1. Project Management Process (Objective 1)
 - Use the project management process discussed in the Organizational Capacity section. This process requires the development of a project charter for all major projects.
2. Project Sponsors (Objective 1)
 - Ensure that all projects are assigned a project sponsor from the Superintendent's staff.
3. Plan Management Steering Committee Designation (Objective 1)
 - Establish a Plan Management Steering Committee made up of the sponsors for the key projects. See Figure 3.
4. Plan Management Steering Committee Tasks (Objective 1)
 - Use the Steering Committee to perform the following tasks on a regular basis:
 - (a) Establish priorities and approve project initiation.
 - (b) Allocate resources to projects.
 - (c) Remove barriers to the success of projects.
 - (d) Oversee the scope of projects and ensure that projects remain on schedule.
 - (e) Monitor measures related to the Plan and take corrective action as necessary.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Plan Management

The evaluation of this process will be determined by the percent of major projects that use project charters and systemic project plans, and the degree to which they are completed on schedule and on budget.

Figure 3. Plan Management Steering Committee

