

LWVCM President Delores Johnson Hurt

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg. My name is Delores Johnson Hurt, and I am the president of our local League. There are several of us here tonight on behalf of our Education Team to call your attention to a report we recently completed and sent to all of you on the Board and to Supt. Wilcox. It is entitled Important Statistical Trends in CMS Schools, and it is available on our web page goleaguego.org

The League's commitment to equitable education opportunities is long-standing. Our support of CMS's commitment to provide all students with the opportunity to perform to their fullest potential led us to examine some key education success factors across CMS schools.

We are here tonight along with representatives in the audience from other community organizations advocating for educational equity. We hope that 2018 will be the year CMS champions our concerns.

We prepared our report using data provided to us by CMS in March 2016 that included the socioeconomic status (SES) composition of CMS elementary, middle, and high schools as well as information about school staff credentials.

The specific school characteristics provided included:

- The percent of enrolled students who were assigned to the LOW SES category
- The percent of enrolled students who were assigned to the HIGH SES category
- The principal's Years in Current Assignment
- The percent Teachers with 0-3 Years Teaching Experience
- The percent Teachers with 4+ Years Teaching Experience
- The percent Teachers Nationally Board Certified
- The percent Teacher Turnover 2016-March 27, 2017

As you know, students in the low SES category typically have fewer educational advantages, while students in the high SES category typically are more advantaged.

The Education Team took the data from 165 CMS schools along with public records of State grades for each school and performed a statistical correlation analysis. If schools are equitable with respect to staffing and teacher credentialing, there should be little correlation between the percent of students in a school with high or low educational advantages and the tenure of its principal or the number of Board Certified teachers employed there. But that is not what we found. Some of my League colleagues are here to tell you more about what we found.

Helene Hilger, LWVCM Education Committee Co-Chair

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board and Superintendent Wilcox. I am part of the League of Women Voters team that developed the Report described by our League President, Ms. Hurt. I'm going to tell you more about the report findings.

- We looked at five staffing and credentialing characteristics of CMS schools as well as the state grades assigned to schools. All were correlated or highly correlated with the proportion of less advantaged students (% LOW SES) in a school. These correlations were significantly significant, most at the "highly significant" level. Specifically, the higher the percentage of less advantaged students in a school:

- the more likely the principal had a short tenure at the school. (CC -0.176, sig. level 0.026)
- the more likely the school had a high percentage of teachers with only 0-3 years of teaching experience. (CC 0.534, sig. level < 0.001)
- the more likely the school had a low percentage of teachers with 4 or more years of teaching experience (CC -0.538, sig. level < 0.001)
- the more likely the school had a low percentage of nationally board-certified teachers (CC -0.469, sig. level < 0.001)
- the more likely the school had a high percentage of teacher turnover (CC 0.242, sig. level 0.002)
- the more likely the school had a low state score for proficiency (CC =-0.729, sig. level <0.001) and a low state score for growth (CC=-0.160, sig. level 0.045)
- The analysis showed that the more students with higher educational advantage in a school:
 - the more likely the school had a high percentage of teachers with more than 0-3 years of teaching experience (CC -0.511, sig. level < 0.001)
 - the more likely the school had a high percentage of teachers with 4 or more years of teaching experience (CC 0.508, sig. level < 0.001)
 - the more likely the school had a high percentage of nationally board-certified teachers (CC 0.525, sig. level < 0.001)
 - the more likely the school had a low percentage of teacher turnover (CC -0.313, sig. level < 0.001)
 - the more likely the school had a high state grade for performance (CC=0.758, sig. level < 0.001) and a high state grade for growth (CC=0.184, sig. level 0.021)
 - There was no statistically significant correlation between the proportion of high educational advantage (high SES) students in a school and the principal's length of tenure (CC 0.141, sig. level 0.074).

If parents, educators, and School Board members were asked to describe the factors they believe are important or desirable for student success, high on everyone's list would likely be principal and staff stability along with significant teacher experience and credentialing. Sadly, this analysis shows that schools with high concentrations of our less educationally advantaged families, are much less likely to have these attributes than schools with high percentages of more advantaged families. ***In these critical areas, our schools are not equitable.***

Certainly, correlation is not causality, but even a cursory review of educational research shows that the factors considered here are well researched as those critical for student learning and success^{12,3}. There is a highly statistically significant correlation between high needs schools and lower achievement levels. Even more disturbing, there is a statistically significant correlation between high needs schools and lower student growth. Thus, students needing more than a year's worth of growth to catch up may be the very students we ask to perform year-to-year in a school with lower principal and staff stability and more inexperienced teachers.

Tom Bowers, LWVCM 1st Vice-President and Education Committee Co-Chair

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board and Superintendent Wilcox. I am part of the League of Women Voters team that developed the Report described by our League President, Ms. Hurt and my co-chair of the Education Team, Helene Hilger. I'd like to thank all who have come out tonight to support our report effort and share our report recommendations with you.

We ask CMS to:

- Acknowledge that staffing issues, including staff stability, experience level of teachers, and percent of professionally recognized staff (such as National Board Certification), significantly impact the ability of schools to be successful with all students.
- Clearly document, in easily readable form and at least annually, staffing patterns by school, with emphasis on schools serving our less advantaged children. This information would include, at minimum, the percent of first-year teachers at each school; the percent of teachers with 0-3 years of experience; the percent of teachers with 4 or more years of experience; the teacher and principal turnover rates; the percent of National Board-Certified Teachers; and student achievement measures.
- Act, starting NOW, to create and/or strengthen teacher retention efforts, strong mentoring programs, and other policies and practices to support teachers in high needs schools and reverse the disturbing trends identified in the enumerated conclusions. Produce an annual report describing such efforts and results.
- Re-establish an Equity Committee of interested citizens that reflects the diversity of the community, to focus on and assess progress on equity issues impacting student achievement.

The League and our supporters recognize that there are other identifiable factors including, but not limited to, attendance, extra-curricular opportunities, class offerings, equitable equipment, supplies, and facilities, bi-lingual staffing levels, and parental involvement that must be monitored and addressed to significantly impact student achievement and provide equity for all students.

By appointing a new Equity Committee, the CMS Board will have community representatives working with them to delve more deeply into these issues, advise the Board, promote understanding and action from the broader community; and accelerate the changes that must occur for CMS to meet its pledge to uphold its core beliefs. **Such acceleration is imperative, as the children adversely impacted by existing staffing patterns and related inequities are continuing their educational careers even as we deliberate.**