

# More Bright Ideas for Our Schools

## Parents offer advice for supporting local schools



*Last year we published student ideas for improving their schools. This year we opened it up to parents.*

### How will students look back on today?

I agree with some ideas written by students in your August 2008 article: that teachers are very important to schools and should be paid more; that tutors should be available to help struggling students before failure; that minds should be challenged instead of being taught only what is on the state End-of-Year Test; that morning prayer gives a good start to the school day. Smart kids, aren't they?

I remember teachers who had total control of their classroom because they knew and we knew that our principal and our parents would back them up. Today's schools are top-heavy with administrators who, unfortunately, make more money than our teachers. I remember making good grades, because our parents expected it. Many parents today are disinterested. Haywood EMC sponsors exciting youth programs. More businesses should follow suit.

I remember school spirit, knowing our school was the best! I remember being taught self-reliance, personal responsibility, and that to bully smaller kids was cowardly.

That's a lot of "remember whens", but what will today's students remember? Will they look back on their school years with nostalgia and pride? I wonder.

*Judy Blitch Gartside, Highlands, Haywood EMC*

### Don't waste food at lunch

I wish that parents would monitor their children's school lunches better. I am absolutely appalled at the food that is thrown away daily. I substitute teach at several schools in Wake County. All schools have the same problem. I am talking about food that is bought via lunch money. Kids take

milk, juice, apples, fruit, etc. What is not eaten is thrown away – unopened milk, unopened juice, uneaten apples, unopened fruit salads.

The schools have a contamination policy which does not allow untouched, unopened food to be placed back in the food line. This is a good policy and helps with sanitary conditions. But what about food banks? Why can't they benefit from this bounty of food? Talk to your schools about doing this. And talk to your child about making good food choices and eating what is taken.

How can we afford to throw away food and drink when one out of every four North Carolina children goes to bed hungry every night??

*JoAnne Klein, Wake Forest, Wake Electric*

### Eight ideas

1. No more than 30 minutes of homework every night or none at all. School work should be done at school, and time at home should be with family.
2. There should be stricter consequences for bullies who belittle or hurt other kids.
3. If teachers don't like kids, they should not be teachers.
4. All parents should help in teaching their kids if they can. But teachers shouldn't rely on parents to do this.
5. Prayer should be put back in school for the students who want it.
6. There should be better fundraisers or help from the county for students in low income families to go on trips and pay for things, especially in high school.
7. There should be no charge for kids parking at school.
8. Teachers should get raises every year and a bonus at Christmas time.

*Sharon Hardin, Rutherfordton, Rutherford EMC*



Thanks for all who submitted ideas. Next month we'll

*publish your stories of stupid moments in your athletic careers. [Deadline was July 15.] For the remaining themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 17.*

## Schools need local and state support

I would love to see the enthusiasm of every teacher spill into their classrooms. Our children should be embraced with joy, love and excitement and shown that education is important. I would love for our faculties to know they have parent, community and state support. Parents actively involved in our children's school and classrooms shows enormous support and encouragement to our teachers.

I would love to know that the older school facilities are not forgotten and made to fend for themselves, while new school facilities are built and provided with state of the art technology. I would love to see public education and our schools made a priority so they can operate without continuous budget cuts.

We should be confident that our state leaders support merit in education. State leaders could stand up and take salary and spending cuts before they cut education. It is time we remember that without our teachers, we would not be able to dream of "what we want to be when we grow up"!

*Joanna Williams, Youngsville, Wake Electric*

## Go back to basics

I am 51 years old and, while my opinions are strong on this subject, I hope I won't be stepping on too many toes in writing this.

Schools should all get back to basics and stop all the extra spending. In my day we only had one teacher per class. I can't understand why we need two teachers now. I don't believe there's so much more extra work now than when I grew up. I do appreciate and respect all the hard work a teacher does, but they handled it back then, what is the problem now? And with one teacher, the papers still got graded, the chaos was maintained and we only had one teacher's name to remember.

I'd also like to see the expensive trips cut out. Families struggle to pay for field trips just so our children won't feel less fortunate if they can't afford them.

Then, there's the end-of-grade testing and holding a child back if he or

she doesn't make the grade. Isn't that what our children work so hard for all year? The end-of-grade testing only puts another title on our children, to make them feel less than perfect.

Families are going back to basics. I look forward to seeing the schools do the same.

*Patty Rich, Star, Randolph EMC*

## Add compassion to classrooms

I'd like to see teachers have a passion for teaching our children. Give the teachers the money and the supplies that they need so that there is no limit to what can be achieved.

I'd like to see teachers pray with their students. I'd like to see teachers permitted to put their arm around a child and tell them that they care about them and mean it. These days, teachers are not allowed to hug their students.

I'd like to see teachers teach history beginning with the Bible, teach biology and science while teaching about the Creator. But they are not allowed to.

I'd like to see our children being taught more things that will help them after they get out of school. For example, they should learn how to manage and invest their money, how to get and keep a job, how to open their own business. But they are being taught things so they can pass a test so the teacher will not lose his or her job.

I'd like to see parents stand alongside our teachers demanding high standards, morals and common sense from our


children. Parents many times are more of the problem than the solution.

*Wanda Garren, Lincolnton, Rutherford EMC*

## Add more year-round schools

I would like to see Montgomery County schools become year-round schools. Right now North Carolina has 53 year-round schools and counting. Schools were started on a 10-month system because children were often needed to work in the fields during the summer. Obviously times have changed today, so we need to make some changes and do what's best for children. Year-round schools still operate 180 days, just more evenly spread out during the year.

Students tend to forget a lot during the summer. Shorter vacations might increase retention rates. In fact statistics show that students do retain information better in a year-round school than in a traditional school schedule. They experience less burnout and fatigue, resulting in fewer absences from school. Plus there may be less of a chance for juvenile delinquency that occurs during the long summer break.

The bottom line is that year-round schools would help students and teachers benefit from a more continuous learning pattern, and a reduced need for review. The National Association for Year-Round Education Web site ([www.nayre.org](http://www.nayre.org)) helps answer any and all questions. 

*Carla Dennis, Troy, Randolph Electric*

## send us your best **EARN \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

### October 2009

#### My Favorite Photo

Send a photo of a North Carolina person or scene.

*Deadline: August 15*

### November 2009

#### Family Discipline

Your ideas for teaching kids good manners and behavior.

*Deadline: September 15*

### December 2009

#### Funny Family Traditions

Strange traditions in your family, not necessarily just for holidays.

*Deadline: October 15*

### Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
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