

A PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY IN ORANGE COUNTY

TASK FORCE:

Create a Commissioners' Educational Excellence task force to provide a thorough, unbiased review of the Orange County and Chapel Hill Carrboro City school districts. Analyze the resources and programs available; address concerns regarding funding disparities, cooperation, and other matters identified by the Board of County Commissioners; and determine to what extent changes are necessary to assure that each student in Orange County has an equal opportunity to achieve a quality education. Charge the group with returning a report to the Board of County Commissioners by the end of the 2003-2004 fiscal year, if possible.

ACTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

- Hire a consultant to report to the BOCC who would examine the operations of each school system from an efficiency and business standpoint, with the object of improving education, reducing costs, and identifying areas of potential collaboration such as purchasing.
- Consider for adoption as part of the 10-year Capital Investment Plan a resolution stipulating that capital funds will be allocated to build a single proposed central office shared by both school systems.
- Have county staff analyze for possible adoption by voters a countywide supplemental school tax that would be dedicated to school needs, scaled to reduce the CHCCS district tax as appropriate, and that would serve to unify support for education in Orange County.

COLLABORATION:

- Charge the Chapel Hill Carrboro City and Orange County school boards to return to the Board of County Commissioners by June 1, 2004 with an analysis and plan of action to implement collaboration in the following areas:
- A joint effort to coordinate the implementation of a middle college program, preferably in concert with Durham Technical College.
 - A single alternative school program for students in both districts.
 - A plan to allow students in each district to readily access courses and programs not available in their district but offered in the county's other school system.
 - A plan to institute regular meetings between the superintendents and their respective staffs to examine areas of mutual educational interest and potential cooperation, including an annual report to the public on their progress at working together.
 - A joint early-childhood program.
 - An effort to expose parents in the CHCCS system to the features of the OCS year-round schools at Hillsborough Elementary and Stanback Middle School.
 - A strategy for promoting contacts between children in the respective school systems on an ongoing basis beyond athletics (pen pals, joint projects, etc.).

11/11/03