

July 1997 Press Releases

Methodist College To Hold 2nd Teacher Education Forum

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Methodist College News Bureau

Topic Teacher Education Forum

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- Dunn Daily Record
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- Mount Olive Tribune
- Red Springs Citizen
- Smithfield Herald
- Business North Carolina
- Bill Norton NC Conference UMC (Raleigh)
- Goldsboro News Argus
- Durham Herald Sun
- News Reporter (Whiteville)
- Spectator Magazine (Raleigh)
- Daily Tar Heel
- Bladen Journal (E-Town)
- Harnett County News
- The Robesonian (Lumberton)
- Charlotte Observer
- Greensboro News & Record
- Wilmington Morning Star
- Rocky Mount Evening Telegram

SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION

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- CASE III
- Arts Council of Fay/Cumb. Co.
- City of Fay. (Mayor's Office)
- Fay. Tech. Com. College
- Fay. Museum of Art
- Fay. Area Chamber of Commerce
- City of Fay. (Jason Brady)
- NC League of Savings Inst.
- Cumb. Co. Schools (Sarah or Supt.s Ofc.)
- Fort Bragg Schools
- Cape Fear Regional Theater
- Museum of the Cape Fear
- Western Harnett H.S.
- Harnett Central H.S.
- Pinecrest HS

- Winston Salem Journal
- Richmond County Daily
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- Greenville Daily Reflector
- Kinston Daily Free Press
- Wilson Daily Times
- Southerner
- Laurinburg Exchange
- Duke Chronicle
- Chapel Hill Newspaper
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PUBLIC INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 1997

Bill Billings
Director of Public Relations

METHODIST COLLEGE TO HOLD 2ND TEACHER EDUCATION FORUM

By Jamee Lynch

FAYETTEVILLE, NC—The recent passage of the Excellent Schools Act has highlighted the expectations communities hold for their teachers: that in return for higher salaries, teachers will be held accountable for student progress and will have to meet more rigorous initial certification and tenure standards. Now that the legislature has approved these measures, the question arises: how can colleges best prepare prospective teachers to meet these challenges?

Methodist College's Department of Education is seeking input from the community to address this very question. Through its Teacher Education Scholar Research Institute, the college wants to gather community feedback to the fundamental question—what should teachers know before they take that first job? The college will hold a public forum on Tuesday, Aug. 5 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Reeves Auditorium.

The public forum will include panelists who are professors in teacher education from around the state as well as representatives from the community. Dr. William Harrison, superintendent of the Cumberland County schools, will be the luncheon speaker and will present awards to the newly-appointed teacher scholars. Panelists for the public forum will include J.L. Dawkins, mayor of Fayetteville, Dr. Breeden Blackwell, retired administrator, current city councilman and mayoral candidate, educator W.T. Brown, and Cumberland County Board of Education chair Diane Wheatley. Several state legislators are scheduled to appear if the legislature completes its current session. The concerns and ideas raised in the forum will be collected and used in follow-up research for state and national publications.

According to co-organizer Dr. Elizabeth Belford, associate professor of education at Methodist, the concerns and ideas of community residents are vital in helping schools of education train more effective teachers. "Everyone has experiences and ideas to bring

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Teacher Ed Forum, Continued

to the discussion," she said. "Schools have changed dramatically over the last 20 years, and we want to do everything we can to prepare our students for the reality of today's classroom. Instead of just sharing concerns among friends, citizens should bring their ideas to those who can use them where it will make a difference-to better train prospective teachers."

Jaunita Heyward, co-organizer and assistant professor of education at Methodist, added, "Creating a meaningful and productive dialogue within the community will better prepare future teachers to facilitate change."

The public forum will include discussions covering several general categories. The first will address professional concerns, such as raising standards for teacher certification, testing instruments such as the National Teacher Exams/PRAXIS, violence against teachers, and safety in schools. Social issues such as drugs, teenage pregnancy, gangs, and weapons and legal aspects including student searches, sexual harassment, tenure, and unions will be explored. Other topics slated for discussion are rights and responsibilities of teachers, parents, and students, including accountability, academic freedom, and social promotion. Also, the forum will address programs and practices that are successful, including magnet schools, year-round schools, and vouchers. The final scheduled topic of discussion will be transforming schools for changing times, addressing such issues as character education, redistricting for diversification, privatizing public schools, and finding new ways to fund schools equitably. Although the forum has these general topics scheduled, there will also be an open mike session for any other issues and concerns.

The Teacher Education Scholar Research Institute was formed at Methodist College in 1996 as a means to provide assistance to teacher educators in their work and as a service to the public schools. The Institute selects Teacher Education Scholars who gather several times a year at the college to research and write about issues facing teacher education. The public forum allows the scholars to gather input on issues and problems for future research projects. In addition, teachers attending programs through the Institute gather and disseminate information from surveys taken at their home schools to share with the scholars. The 1997 Teacher Education Scholars are Dr. Vincent Feudo of Greensboro College, Dr. Tricia Cook of the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Dr. Linda Keaton-Lima of Western Carolina

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Teacher Ed Forum, Continued

University, and Dr. Rhonda Richards of Winthrop University.

The Institute's goal is to bridge the gaps between the community, the schools, and the colleges who train teachers. Belford says, "We want to hear from everyone who cares about our schools. That is the only way to address concerns and make changes where we can."

For additional information about the public forum or the Teacher Education Scholar Research Institute, call Dr. Elizabeth Belford at 630-7054, Jaunita Heyward at 630-7051, or the Methodist College Department of Education at 630-7057.