

Don't Chew Gum And Do Math at Once

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:
Regarding "The Ax Falls":

Before further criticizing the state of mathematics education, you might want to assess your own capabilities in basic arithmetic. In your editorial concerning the correlation (or rather, lack thereof) of teacher/pupil ratios to math SOL test scores, Amelia's teacher/pupil ratio of 1:11 is compared to the purportedly "lower" ratio of 1:9.6 for Charles City, and the "higher" ratio of 1:14 in Chesterfield.

Although it has been a while since I first learned fractions, I believe that the fraction $\frac{1}{9.6}$ is larger (not lower) than $\frac{1}{11}$, and that $\frac{1}{14}$ is lower (not larger) than $\frac{1}{11}$.

The editorial also cites a targeted bureaucrats to teachers ratio of 1:4 and states you "like to see an even higher ratio." I assume you meant to say "lower."

RONALD E. STAUFFER,
MINERAL

NATIONAL BRIEFS

Denver schools chief appointed to Senate

DENVER — Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter yesterday appointed Denver's public schools superintendent to fill a Senate vacancy



Bennet praised Michael Bennet as a proven leader and problem-solver in the public and private sectors. However, the move surprised many Republicans and Democrats because of Bennet's lack of legislative experience. He's never campaigned for or held public office.

that will be created by the promotion of Sen. Ken Salazar to interior secretary in the Obama administration.

Ritter

praised Mi-

County Should Consider Alternative Solutions

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

I read through the Chesterfield County Public Schools Growth Task Force's recommendations and want to commend the members for their work. It outlines a very thoughtful set of recommendations for the expected growth of students.

Though I don't agree with all of the recommendations, I respect the work that has gone into addressing them. The three areas where I would want to consider further innovation are:

(1) The accepted use of trailers (253 trailers in our schools). Trailers are a temporary tool, not a solution.

(2) The development of alternatives to bricks-and-mortar schools; consider including parents in the solution. Has anyone considered providing parents who would like to stay home and teach their children the tools and incentives necessary to do so? It seems to me Chesterfield owes a debt of gratitude to those parents who currently homeschool their kids.

(3) The need to increase resources through taxes and/or a bond referendum. Given today's economic situation, which in my opinion will be with us for some time, we should be identifying ways to live within our budget — not finding ways to expand it.

You can find the task force's presentation at www.chesterfieldk12.va.us.

DOUGLAS WILLIAMS,
MIDLOTHIAN

Letters to the Editor

▼ CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAY

National Testing Notes Grading Discrepancies

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

Standardizing the grading scale for the state sounds like a logical idea, but it is laughable. A student's grade may depend in part on the grading scale and individual effort, but it also is influenced largely by the rigor of high school and the toughness of the teachers students are assigned within that school.

Students know challenging schools

have some easy teachers and weaker schools have some hard teachers and many try to game the system when possible. This is why nationally administered tests like the SAT have value in allowing comparisons between students from different high schools.

It is also why valedictorians from some high schools may struggle in college while students ranked near the bottom of the class at other high schools may excel.

SUE WEINSTOCK,
MIDLOTHIAN