



# Asheville-Buncombe Education Coalition

## ASSIGNMENT 2010

*Our Vision Within comparable-sized North Carolina school systems,  
Asheville City and Buncombe County public schools will be number one in graduation rates by 2010.*

### From our Director

FALL 2004



Maggie Smith and  
Education Coalition  
Board Chair, Virgil Smith

Friends,

As Thanksgiving is upon us, I am reminded of the many gifts and blessings that have been bestowed upon the Asheville-

Buncombe Education Coalition. Many individuals, agencies, businesses, schools and funders believe in the vision of this organization and share their time, talent and treasures to ensure our success.

The Education Coalition grew out of concern about the significant "achievement gap" (the difference between how some children perform compared to others) in our public schools. **The founders envisioned a community that supports its schools and teachers and takes responsibility for the academic success of its children.** We are grateful for the many leaders who have stepped forward to assist our students during the past three

years:

- **The 19 Education Coalition member agencies** that join together to coordinate their efforts and share their best practices to mentor and tutor over 400 students. You are the Coalition!
- **The Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools:** We thank you for your partnership, patience and experience. Your willingness to provide staff, space and time is yet another example of your dedication and commitment to our children.
- **Our business partners** who support the Coalition through student sponsorships, in-kind support and/or encouraging their employees to tutor or mentor during the week.
- **Over 400 community members have provided over 16,000 hours of mentoring and tutoring** during the past three years. Thank you!
- **And our generous donors** who make all of this possible: Sisters of

Mercy of North Carolina Foundation, Melvin R. Lane Fund, Janirve Foundation, Eckerd Family Foundation, Steelcase Foundation, Wachovia Foundation, Community Foundation of WNC, Gannett Foundation, and the City of Asheville.

On behalf of the Education Coalition staff and Board of Directors, I offer sincere appreciation to those of you who have invested in our organization and the students that we serve. **To those of you who have not joined our cause, we invite your involvement.** As you consider the gifts of this season, please think about investing in the future of our children and the future of our community. There's no time like the present! *"It takes a village to raise a child"* – you are our village!

Happy Thanksgiving,

Maggie Smith

Executive Director

### The Circle is Unbroken



Tanisha and Josh

When Tanisha was a child she had some great times at Delta House during her summer break.

She remembers the people and all of the art projects they worked on together. She also remembers how,

during one of the hardest and most important times of her life, she had support from a mentor through the YWCA's MotherLove program.

#### Full Circle

Tanisha is an adult now. She works at the YWCA daycare center. And just down the street is the Delta House where she is now a tutor through the Education Coalition.

*"It's nice being here. I know these kids. I know their parents. They are my neighbors and friends. That helps when they walk in the door tired or wound up from a long day at school. I can relate to them on the things they are dealing with and I can also cut through some stuff. I get to be there for them just like people were there for me."*

- Tanisha Edgerton

## Student Spotlight



Dequan is a shy young man who is always looking out for his little brother. He won't tell you too much without a direct question and even then it's a pretty short answer. But **Anderson Davis**, the Director of Partners Unlimited, **can't stop bragging about him**; *"He's done a 180 degree turn around. He's a great kid and he's worked so hard. I'm really proud of him."*

Before Dequan's Mom signed him up to receive tutoring at Partners Unlimited he had been getting suspended from school and was failing many of his classes. Yvette Pecha (former ABEC staff member) tutored Dequan two hours a week and took him on outings. **By the end of the year Dequan had turned things around. Grades that were in the 50's and 60's were now in the 80's and 90's.** His grades are good this year and suspensions are a thing of the past.

**When asked what he thought about being tutored Dequan said this:** *"My grades have come up. And now that my grades are better my Mom took me off punishment so I can play basketball again."* **Two hours a week—what a powerful investment!**

## Let the Pictures Tell a Story



Buncombe County Superintendent, Cliff Dodson (standing) addressed the Education Coalition's Advisory Board at their first gathering. The Advisory Board consists of community leaders who have graciously agreed to share their time, insights, and connections to assist us in becoming a smarter and more effective organization.

Over 200 people packed the dining hall of First Baptist Church at the Education Coalition's first annual End of School Celebration. Tutors and mentors, students and their families, teachers and administrators—it was a great mix of people and a wonderful night to celebrate the accomplishments that everyone had made over the year.



Asheville Superintendent Robert Logan (l) and Virgil Smith (r)



With the help of a tutor, games become learning opportunities at the Delta House.



Heather Hobart and her daughter Crystal enjoy dinner while Kedrick Justice shows off his Certificate of Achievement.



## Our "Report Card"

Since its inception, the Education Coalition has been committed to having an annual independent evaluation of our program and student performance results.

Having such data allows us to **critically assess our progress** and make strategic changes to improve our service delivery.

We are completing an evaluation of the 2003/04 year and will report those statistics in the next issue. In the meantime, here are some key findings from the 2002/03 evaluation:

- Students who had a tutor or mentor improved their reading level 65% over those who did not have a tutor or mentor.
- 45% of ABEC students increased their attendance rates. Mentoring appeared to be the key factor in reducing absences.
- Positive changes in reading levels and attendance were prevalent across genders, races and socioeconomic groups.

Call 252-5936 Today to Mentor or Tutor



## WRES 100.7 FM

Community Radio is BACK! The **Empowerment Resource Center** has hit the airwaves playing music and locally produced shows that highlight issues and services that affect the people of our area.

To assist ABEC in recruiting tutors and mentors, John Hayes produced a dynamic spot highlighting the importance of making time to become a mentor.

Over the coming year we will produce programs such as interviews with children and their mentors/tutors as well as call-in shows about educational issues. **So keep your radio tuned to WRES.**

*For more on WRES: 281-3065*

## Meet our Staff



**Maggie Smith**  
*Executive Director*

My experience as a director of a YWCA and my eight years in student affairs at UNCA has

taught me how community organizations and educational institutions can, and must, work together. Being a part of a collaborative effort that unites our community to help children succeed in school feels like I've come full circle and I'm excited to be in this place.



**Torie Leslie**  
*Program Coordinator*

My biggest obstacle as a teacher was trying to help students, from different levels of

learning, to grasp the material and challenge them. My poor readers were often the hardest to motivate as they needed more time and attention than I could give in class. As Program Coordinator, I can grant teachers that extra time through the service of our member agencies' mentors and tutors.



**Elisabeth Bocklet**  
*Communication and Outreach Director*

Ten years in the non-profit world has shown me that too often we save

telling our stories and tending relationships for that magical moment when we have the time or money. But busy as we are, good internal & external communication are key to doing a great job. I look forward to building on the good work that has already begun.

## Building Relationships with our Schools



One of the key lessons that we teach all of our tutors and mentors is this:

***"No significant learning occurs without significant relationships."*** Dr. James P. Comer

It is true in a classroom and in life.

So when our Board of Directors responded to a school identified need to add second and third grade to our target group, we knew that we had to take to heart a significant learning of our own: **Don't start any project, no matter how well meaning, without talking to all parties involved.**

Enter two incredibly knowledgeable school administrators: **Dr. Donna**

**James**, Director of Elementary Education with **Buncombe County Schools**, and **Dr. Vicki Dineen**, the Executive Director of Elementary Education for **Asheville City Schools**.

After planning with these women, the Education Coalition is better poised to serve the needs of these students while supporting the learning that is already taking place in their classrooms.

This is a pilot project. We are starting slowly and with a small group. We will evaluate our progress and our impact and determine the next steps accordingly. And of course we'll tell you about it once we get the results.

### Member Agencies

- Asheville City Schools Foundation
- Asheville Parks & Recreation
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of WNC
- Buncombe County Child Care Services
- Children First
- Delta House Life Development of Asheville
- Hillcrest Enrichment
- Links, Inc.
- Mars Hill College
- One Youth at a Time
- Partners Unlimited
- Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Buncombe County
- STEAM-Asheville
- Sycamore Temple Education Program
- UNC-Asheville
- Warren Wilson College
- YMCA of WNC
- YWCA of WNC

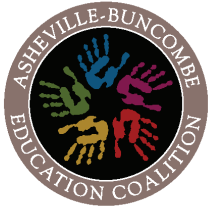
### Partner Organizations

- Alpha Kappa Alpha
- Asheville Altitude
- Asheville Citizen Times
- Asheville City Schools
- National Climatic Data Center
- Rotary Club of Asheville
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville
- Van Winkle Law Firm

## WELCOME

We are incredibly fortunate to have **Aileen Hays** on contract with the Education Coalition this year. Aileen comes to us after eight years as a social worker at Asheville Middle School.

This experience and her connections will be a valuable tool as Aileen strengthens ABEC's current tutor/mentor training and family involvement programs.



Asheville Buncombe Education Coalition  
PO Box 1265  
Asheville NC 28802

Change a child's life. Become a Mentor. Become a Tutor. Call Elisabeth at 252-5936 to learn more.

## Contact Our Staff

**Maggie Smith**, Executive Director

- 236-1228
- msmithabec@bellsouth.net

**Torie Leslie**, Program Coordinator

- 236-2042
- tleslieabec@bellsouth.net

**Elisabeth Bocklet**, Communication and Outreach Director

- 252-5936
- ebockletabec@bellsouth.net

Fax: 828-236-2066

[www.abeducationcoalition.org](http://www.abeducationcoalition.org)

## Our Mission

The Education Coalition is a community-wide collaboration to provide mentoring, tutoring, and support services that will eliminate achievement gaps and help all Asheville City and Buncombe County public school students graduate.

## Our Board of Directors

**Virgil Smith**, Chair—At-Large Board Member

**Kim McGuire**, Vice Chair—At-Large Board Member

**David Bailey**, Secretary—At-Large Board Member

**Kathi Ballard**, Treasurer—Asheville City Schools Foundation

**Lillian Butler**, Hillcrest Enrichment

**Dr. Sandra Byrd**, University of NC Asheville

**Tammy Capps**, Children First

**Eric Cardella**, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Buncombe County

**Isaac Coleman**, At-Large Board Member

**Anderson Davis**, Partners Unlimited

**Helen Edington**, Links, Inc.

**Charlie Glazener**, At-Large Board Member

**Richard Greene**, Buncombe County School Board

**Michelle Grant**, Sycamore Temple Education Program (S.T.E.P.)

**Kyan Hall**, STEAM-Asheville

**Allen Johnson**, Asheville City Schools

**Adelaide Daniels Key**, At-Large Board Member

**John Legerton**, Asheville City School Board

**John Mikos**, YMCA of WNC

**Deb Morris**, Mars Hill College

**Robin Myer**, Big Brother Big Sister of WNC

**Bettie O'Brien**, Buncombe County Child Care Services

**Amy Rickman**, Asheville Parks and Recreation

**Carolyn Wallace**, Warren Wilson College

**Bob Washel**, Buncombe County Schools Foundation

**Shirley Whitesides**, Delta House Life Development of Asheville, Inc.

**Laura Williams**, YWCA of Asheville

**Robbie Williams**, One Youth At A Time