

Needs Assessment

Last year in New Hanover, more than 40 percent of black students were suspended between one and four times as often as their white classmates. It was the sixth year in a row that the black to white suspension ratio increased in New Hanover County. Also last year, 77 percent of black students in grades three through eight passed state end-of-grade reading tests, compared with 95 percent of white students.

Murrayville is a school with a diverse population. Since the start of the school year, the Murrayville staff has written 232 office referrals. These referrals have led to 46 suspensions (131 school days lost). The suspension rate is 37 for black students and 9 for white students. The reasons for suspension have varied from noncompliant behavior to physical aggressiveness toward another student or teacher. At the end of the 2nd quarter a school wide end of grade assessment was completed by the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. The assessment was to show the percentage of students who were on target to pass the end of grade assessments. The assessment score breakdown was this; 3rd grade 34% displayed growth, 4th grade 42% displayed growth, 5th grade 44% displayed growth. This is well below the county and state averages. Acquired data such as this is integral for a school such as Murrayville to assess and reflect on their classroom management strategies. Murrayville staff members were observed by our team of professionals and evaluated according to the INTASC standards of North Carolina. The team focused on time on task, instructional strategies, motivational techniques, feedback on student work and utilizing behavior management techniques and plans. Our findings included irrelevant, slow moving lessons plans, rooms with no visual behavior management plans, low level of questioning and a lack of appropriate communication techniques between the parent and school.

To coincide with our findings, the staff was given a survey of their experiences so far this school year, below are the areas they feel as a staff is in the greatest need:

- 1) Murrayville teachers request more training in classroom management strategies and skills.
- 2) Murrayville teachers request classroom motivational strategies for minority students.
- 3) Murrayville teachers request consistent communication techniques with the parents and students
- 4) Murrayville teachers request strategies to implement and utilize classroom assessments correctly
- 5) Murrayville teachers request strategies in math and reading to promote success and achieve and be recognized as a "School of Excellence" according to North Carolina guidelines.