



1996 All-State Academic Scholars

SPECIAL SECTION



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WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

SUNDAY/APRIL 28, 1996

MADISON, WISCONSIN

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SUCCESS *for* ALL?

■ Madison schools are among the best in the nation, but the achievement gap between black and white students is growing

By Andy Hall

Wisconsin State Journal

Year by year, African Americans are falling further behind whites in the Madison School District despite nearly a decade of efforts to boost their achievement levels.

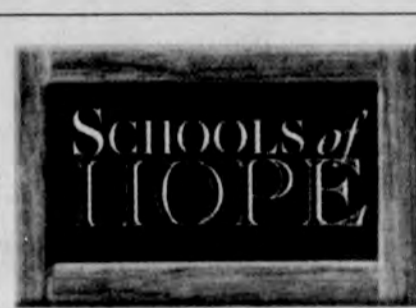
While the district, the second-largest school system in Wisconsin, continues to enjoy national acclaim for its overall high academic performance, the racial gap in grade point averages and test scores is widening, a Wisconsin State Journal analysis shows.

The racial gap in test scores is larger in Madison than any other Wisconsin school system that has a significant enrollment of African Americans, according to a State Journal analysis of state Department of Public Instruction data. The disparities between the GPAs of whites and blacks have increased throughout the 1990s.

"That's massive," said Madison Urban League Executive Director Johnny Mickler, whose organization began sounding the alarm about the GPA gap with a major report in 1987.

"At this point in time, it should be

Please see **SUCCESS?**, Page 15A



TODAY — Achievement gap: What can be done to narrow it?

MONDAY — Student views: From top to bottom of the class.

TUESDAY — Career track: Are students learning the right things?

WEDNESDAY — Excellence's price: Madison's emphasis on college debated.

NEXT SUNDAY — Boosting achievement: Madison's new directions.

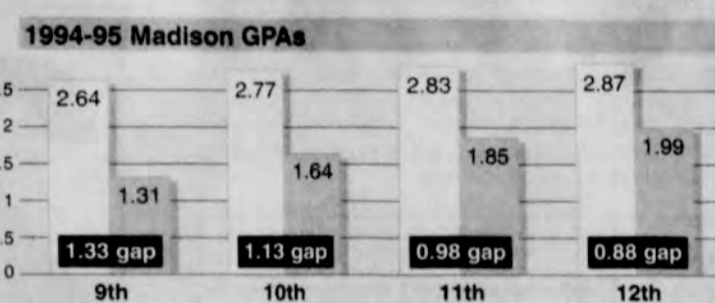
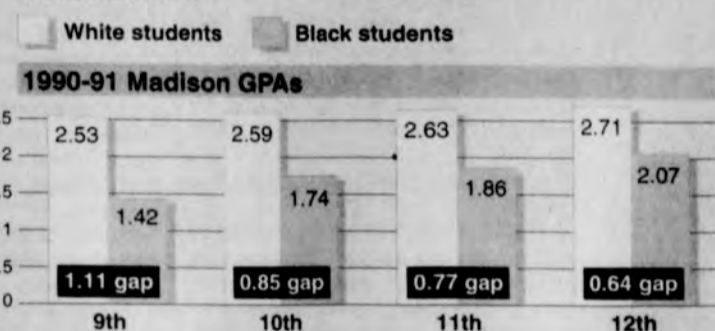
MONDAY, May 6 — Surviving in society: How can Madison prepare students better?

TUESDAY, May 7 — Citizens: Students' civic knowledge assessed.

WEDNESDAY, May 8 — Settling an agenda: Ideas for improving student achievement.

GPAs: The Madison race gap widens

Listed are cumulative grade point averages of Madison School District students.



The averages are calculated by multiplying the number of course credits by the point value of each grade earned (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0), then dividing the sum of these products by the total number of credits earned.

SOURCE: Madison School District

WSJ

Some find way to excel against the odds

■ Schools are filled with children who work hard and value education. Here's the story of one Madison student who succeeds where others fail.

By Andy Hall

Wisconsin State Journal

Too ill to eat, battling bronchitis, facing a Spanish test and a band concert, junior Timeka Rumph had plenty of reasons to stay home from school.

But there she sat in a lobby at Madison East High School, taking another dose of prescription pills and taking pride in her own grittiness.

"I still felt bad this morning, but my mom said, 'I think you can do it,'" Rumph said between sniffs.

On that gentle, sunny spring day, Rumph put aside her illness, her worries about boyfriends and attending the prom, and went on to ace her test, turn in a smooth trumpet performance and pack her bags for a teacher-chaperoned spring break trip to Italy.

Her hustle serves as a reminder that Madison's schools are filled with children who work hard and value education.

After nearly a decade of failing to bring the grades of many Madison black students closer to those of whites, what can be learned from the lives of African Americans who, like Rumph, do excel?

For one, Rumph has a dedicated supporting cast — people like her teachers Theresa Calderon in Spanish and Gary Miller in history, administrator Lee Thomas, longtime friend and classmate Kelly Kramer, and parent Carolyn Rumph.

The effects of such supporters' work are visible at any school, documented in research and flowing throughout the pages of more than 40 diaries students have been writing for



State Journal photo/CRAIG SCHREINER

Timeka Rumph listens to the music as she waits to play her part during a recent band concert at East High School.

the Wisconsin State Journal's Schools of Hope project.

Regardless of their race, students who succeed at school generally:

■ Feel at home or have a sense of belonging at school.

■ Believe educators — some, anyway — respect their opinions and cultures, and help them grow into

adulthood. Friendship between teachers and students is valued, but respect is more important to students.

■ Are prodded by high expectations from parents, peers, teachers, school administrators, potential employers and community members.

These students won't use hardships in their lives — such as poverty — as excuses for failing in school.

■ Appreciate teachers' efforts to make tough classes entertaining, and to show how the materials will be relevant later in life.

When all of these factors are in

Please see **EXCEL**, Page 14A

■ More related stories/13A, 14A, 15A

■ Students share diaries/1B

■ Editor's column/1B

Need for urgent action on school problems stressed

By Andy Hall

Wisconsin State Journal

The racial gap in Madison schools poses such a threat to the well-being of residents and businesses that it should be attacked with all the resources the community can muster, according to a broad range of local leaders.

And several key figures propose using the Schools of Hope journalism project to unify that effort. Last week they mapped out a strategy and began a study of what's being done — inside and outside the schools — to improve

low achievers' grades.

"That's my dream ... that Schools of Hope truly would generate schools of hope," Madison schools superintendent Cheryl Wilhoite said.

"We're the city that can do this. And we must do this."

Schools of Hope, a civic journalism effort of the Wisconsin State Journal and WISC-TV (Ch. 3), includes a leadership team of 20 local leaders, including Wilhoite and representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, the teachers union, juvenile courts, business, local governments,

United Way of Dane County, UW-Madison and Madison Area Technical College.

The leaders' panel meets in public to discuss issues raised by reporters' research. Frustrations surfaced at the most recent meeting, April 11, after State Journal reporters briefed the panel on their research into the district's academic achievement patterns.

The major finding: Grade point averages for Madison whites are climbing while those of blacks are falling during the 1990s.

School board member Ray Allen said he and Madison mayoral aide Enis Ragland, president of the local chapter of 100 Black Men, have already started seeking "the aggressive involvement of African Americans and other minorities."

"We've got everybody else telling us what to do about our kids," Allen said. "And that's been irking me for a very long time."

Officials' statements that African American students in Madison gener-

Please see **ACTION**, Page 2A

\$950,000 settlement ends lawsuit

Family satisfied Dodge County answered for son's shooting

By Ed Treleven

Wisconsin State Journal

Dodge County will pay \$950,000 to settle a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by the family of a Beaver Dam man shot to death by a sheriff's detective during a drug raid, attorneys said Saturday.

The lawsuit, filed by the family of Scott Bryant, was settled Thursday in U.S. District Court in Milwaukee, said Scott Rasmussen, attorney for Boyd and Shirley Bryant of Fox Lake.

Scott Bryant, 29, was shot to death April 17, 1995, by Detective Robert Neuman of the Dodge County Sheriff's Department as Neuman and other officers burst into Bryant's mobile home to execute a search warrant.

Bryant's 8-year-old son, Colten, was in the home when Bryant was shot. The deputies found a small amount of marijuana in the trailer.

"The family feels good about the settlement because they feel the county and Neuman have had to answer for what happened," Rasmussen said.

Dodge County had offered \$200,000 to settle the case, said Rasmussen, while the family asked for \$1.5 million.

In settling, Dodge County admits no wrongdoing. Insurance, not taxpayers, will pay the settlement, said the county's attorney, John Moore of Madison.

Neuman told state investigators he didn't remember the moment the shot was fired. A special prosecutor later determined that although Neuman had handled his gun in a negligent manner, he probably didn't commit a crime when he shot Bryant in the

Please see **LAWSUIT**, Page 6A

Exotic illnesses take a bite from suburbia

By Paul Salopek

Chicago Tribune

LA CRESCENT, Minn. — For Bobbie Bringe, the summer clouds of mosquitoes in her back yard have always been a small price to pay for life in suburban paradise.

Bringe's peaceful street, a skateboarder's dream, winds up a hill overlooking the sky-colored currents of the Mississippi River. The lawns are flawless. The corner Kwik Trip store boasts FedEx service for the neighborhood professionals. And as for the whining bugs — well, they just came with the woody turf of her subdivision, a bedroom community for the nearby city of La Crosse, Wis.

But then, last summer, a mosquito bored into Bringe's 10-year-old son Jonathan. An exotic virus in the insect's saliva — most likely picked up from chipmunks or squirrels — invaded his bloodstream. And the disease attacked his nervous system.

"The doctors didn't know what it was — they told us it was a flu and to just wait it out," said Bringe, a school psychologist. "He had chills. He dehydrated. He burned up with fever for four days."

On the fifth day, specialists finally pegged the symptoms to La Crosse encephalitis, a disease rare in humans that leaves half of its victims brain damaged. The mosquitoes that carry the virus breed in tree

Please see **ILLNESSES**, Page 10A

IMPROVED STOCK TABLES

Starting today, the Wisconsin State Journal is offering improved stock and mutual fund tables. The tables feature a more readable typeface as well as an expanded number of New York, NASDAQ and mutual fund listings. For details, see **Money/1C**.

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Madison Forecast:
Today: Cloudy with rain and showers developing. High 55.
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Cable companies expand role, offer phone, Internet services

By Jeannine Aversa
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The cable that brings a pretty picture into your home can — and soon will in many places — hook your computer to the Internet and carry your local telephone calls, too.

Unleashed by a new telecommunications law, cable companies, like telephone companies, are taking steps to offer their customers a wide range of services — from local and long-distance to cable and computer connections.

Already going for a piece of the \$100 billion-a-year local phone business, Time Warner Cable is providing residential local service to cable customers in Rochester, N.Y.

Cablevision Systems Corp. is doing the same for customers on Long Island, N.Y. Harron Communications is offering businesses phone services in Utica, N.Y.

And in Alexandria, Va., Jones Intercable is providing local phone service to 101 people living in apartments and condos. Installation is free. The company charges \$37.32 a month for a package of cable and local phone service, said spokesman Jim Carlson.

Over the next five years “the challenge will be to stay ahead of the competition . . . not just with programming, promotion and service, but to get into the phone business and the computer hookup business,” said Ted Turner, chairman of Turner Broadcasting System Inc. and incoming chairman of the National Cable Television Association board.

“The winners,” Turner says, “will be the ones that do the best job.”

As the association prepares to convene today through Wednesday in Los Angeles for its annual convention, the technical and financial challenges standing in the way will be a prime topic of discussion.

Chief among the worries: Will people trust their cable company to provide local phone and other new services?

The cable industry — still haunted by years-old horror stories about poor customer service despite vast improvements — says it has learned valuable lessons and gained public trust.

“We’re seeing the meter moving over toward cable’s having great service,” Turner said. But he lamented the old customer service stories: “We’re going to carry it to (our) grave!”

Telephone companies, not immune to service problems themselves, say they plan to exploit that

‘The challenge will be to stay ahead of the competition . . . not just with programming, promotion and service, but to get into the phone business and the computer hookup business.’

Ted Turner
chairman of Turner Broadcasting System Inc.

perception as they compete against cable for both phone and cable customers.

Meanwhile, some cable companies also are connecting customers’ home computers via cable modems and coaxial cable lines.

At its infancy now, this portion of the business should grow to \$1.6 billion by 2000, the cable industry says.

Time Warner, working with Hewlett-Packard Co., Motorola Inc., American Online and Excelsior, is providing 200 customers in Elmira, N.Y., with connections to online services, including to the local government so people can check city council hearings or weigh in on school board issues.

After a \$30 installation fee, customers are charged \$24.95 a month for service, which includes Internet access, local e-mail, an electronic version of the local newspaper and the modem rental fee, said spokesman Mike Luftman.

Continental Cablevision provides 18,000 Boston College students cable TV service, Internet access, e-mail and telephone service, said spokesman David Woods. The college pays for the services,

included in students’ tuition.

Tele-Communications Inc. plans to test high-speed Internet hookups to 200 cable homes in Seattle, said Bill Bennett, general manager of TCI’s north Seattle office.

Comcast in Union, N.J., is offering 200 Comcast customers work-at-home services on a trial basis, said spokesman Joe Waz.

“It has all the criteria of success,” said Edward Horowitz, senior vice president of technology for Viacom Inc., which pioneered high-speed cable connections to home computers in Castro Valley, Calif. Viacom’s cable systems have been sold to TCI.

Computer usage in homes connected to cable modems rises considerably — some as much as 35 percent, Horowitz says.

But making cable systems capable of providing such computer connections is not a “trivial thing,” Horowitz said.

Cable modems are 1,000 times faster than a 14.4 kilobits-a-second modem connected to standard copper wire phone lines.

Telephone companies are deploying technology called ISDN that offers a bigger bandwidth than a standard telephone line allowing data to move more quickly. By 2000, 6.7 million homes are expected to use ISDN to tap into the Internet.

ISDN at 128 kilobits a second is still not as fast as the fatter coaxial cable pipeline, which can move data at 10,000 kilobits a second.

Nonetheless cable rival Edward Grebow, president of Tele-TV Systems, a programming venture backed by three Bell telephone companies, predicted it would be “many years” before most cable companies can successfully deploy cable modems.

Action

Continued from Page 1A

ally fare better than black counterparts in other districts “mean nothing” to Allen.

“My response to that is, ‘So what?’ ” Allen said, adding that black residents pay taxes just like whites do. “We’re doing worse than we are with other students.”

Leslie Ann Howard, president of United Way of Dane County, and Ragland agreed to lead a study of issues explored in the State Journal’s analysis of racial achievement disparities.

“I want to emphasize that this leadership team effort will not focus on micromanaging the school district,” Howard said in a memo to panel members.

Rather, she said, the purpose would be to:

- Examine “what is currently being done in the community to improve minority achievement.”
- Analyze those findings and determine “what efforts and programs are successful, potential gaps and opportunities for improvement.”
- Use the Schools of Hope student diary writers as a sounding board to respond to research and suggest reforms. Additional focus groups of teachers and parents might be formed.

Howard proposes completing those tasks in June.

The eventual goal, after promising approaches are pinpointed: Increase the involvement of residents, employers and major local institutions in improving the schools.

John Matthews, executive director of Madison Teachers Inc., the teachers union, said teachers

would be eager to offer insights into what students need to excel.

Such solutions may be as straightforward as asking residents to volunteer in the schools or as complicated as resolving housing and wage problems that cause some cash-strapped families to move repeatedly while school is in session.

Low test scores of non-whites, particularly African Americans, have been a volatile issue in Madison for nearly a decade and continue to worry residents of every major urban area in the United States.

Wilhoite, who is among four finalists to head the Charlotte-

Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina, said Schools of Hope could build comprehensive ties between the district and the community — a feat accomplished in few other urban areas.

Interestingly, she noted that for her proposal to work, with rapid turnover among urban superintendents, “the whole issue is . . . how do you create a stable, long-standing group.”

“Here we are, this slice of the Madison community with our own strategic plan (Madison Schools 2000) and we’re not connected to anybody else,” Wilhoite said.

“I think we can do it. The question is our collective will.”

WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

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Mutual student-teacher respect key to success

"The day was kind of nice. I was late for two classes, but did what I had to do in school. Last week I was late for a lot of classes."

— Eugene Lee, for the Schools of Hope diary writing project

By Andy Hall and Phil Brinkman
Wisconsin State Journal

Hear the voice of Eugene Lee. His teachers certainly do. So do his classmates.

Lee is a freshman at Memorial High School, where he exasperates some of his teachers by disrupting classes with loud comments or by disappearing mid-class. Smart, alternately charming and insolent, Lee, who is African American, contends some white teachers are racist and haven't earned his respect.

"If a black student asks a question, it takes a lot longer (for the teacher) to answer," Lee said. He also says teachers prefer to call on whites, so he has decided to blurt answers out instead of raising his hand.

"They try to keep us down, to keep us from getting what we're going to get."

His rationale for rebellion:

"If they don't want to help me, I'll just help myself."

And when conditions are to his liking, Lee eagerly learns and participates. During a recent math quiz, observed by a reporter, he got every answer right.

Right or wrong, Lee's opinions matter. They are clues to why the Madison School District still is failing to reach the majority of African-American students, who tend to have a higher dropout rate, lower grade point average and higher suspension rate.

His view of life was shaped in Chicago, where he grew up in public housing on the city's south side. Two years ago, his mother, worried about the effects of gangs, sent Lee to Madison to live with his aunt.

But after a year, Lee, chafing at his aunt's supervision, moved out. He bounced from group homes to foster homes.

He'd found a pleasant arrangement in a well-kept ranch style home when he began

GET INVOLVED: To comment on issues facing the Madison School District, you can call Superintendent Cheryl Wilhoite at 266-6235. To leave a message on the district's 24-hour tele-access line, call 266-6233. To write to School Board members, address letters to: Board of Education, 545 W. Dayton St., Madison, WI 53703-1995. Comments can also be filed electronically. Send faxes to 266-6253. Address e-mail to: comments@madison.k12.wi.us.

If you'd like information about volunteering in the district, or about involving your business with schools, contact Audrey Lehman in the community partnerships office at 266-6011.

writing a Schools of Hope diary in February.

At that time, Lee said he enjoyed going to school. He said teachers cared about the students, but complained that some teachers and administrators "put down" students and held grudges. He reported that gang problems and racial tensions were problems at school, albeit not as severe as he'd seen in Chicago.

Overall, Lee said he was impressed with the Madison School District. He gave it a B rating.

His own grade point average hovers between a C and a D.

He hasn't escaped his past; he claims that about the time he moved to Madison he joined one of the gangs whose gunfire had rattled outside his elementary school in Chicago.

He said his affiliation is loose and doesn't involve breaking the law. However, he has been involved in so many incidents that he's required to wear an electronic monitor on his ankle so authorities can track his movements. He's been charged with five counts of disorderly conduct and one count of obstructing an officer.

"Some officers, they just mess with you for no reason," Lee said.

He complained, too, that his Afro hairstyle — which he considers to be a prideful statement of his heritage — marks him as a target for police who pester him and ask whether he's dealing drugs.

In his diary, Lee comes across as an outsider who doesn't feel welcome at school. He doesn't feel school is crucial to his success. A February passage:

"The day was so messed up. I was late for all my classes. I got suspended for being late for class seventh hour. They said I was trying to skip class. I don't get it. If you're going to skip class why have books; that's stupid."

"But anyway, the next day was unbelievable. I got in trouble because I told a teacher that it's wrong to show black slave movies every week. I feel that it's wrong."

"We went through enough slave talk in grammar school about how blacks are dirty and poor with no education in life. But they're wrong. I'm getting mine and have a nice deal of money to keep me with food to eat and a house over my head. And a family to be with all the time."

A month ago, Lee reverted to old patterns, ones that had landed him in trouble before.

He began skipping more classes. He stopped coming home some nights and got into arguments with his foster parents. His foster parents kicked him out.

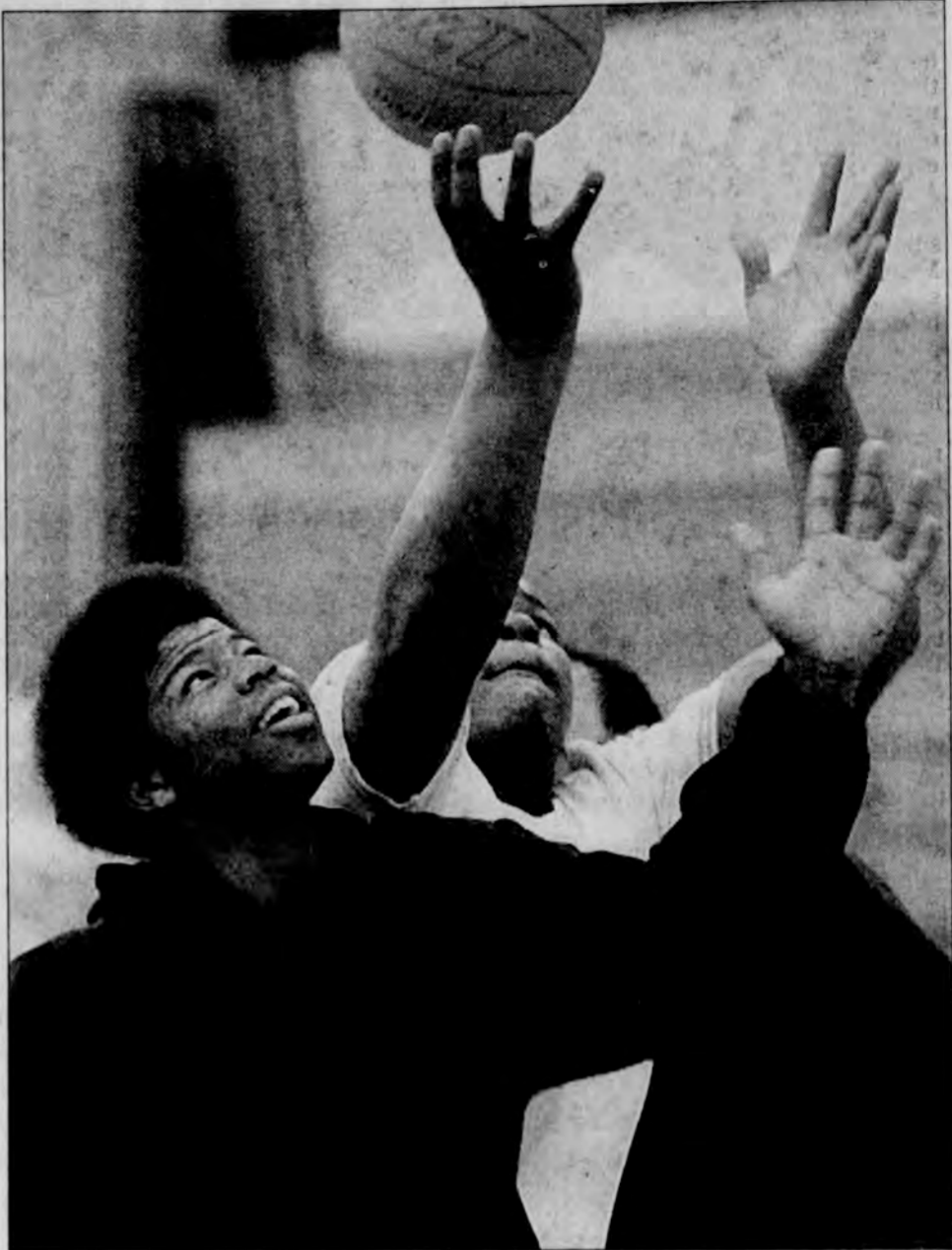
He now lives in a shelter for delinquent youth on Madison's East Side.

About the only place he feels at home anymore is on Memorial's basketball court, where he moves with rugged grace during pickup games. His friends, nearly all of them black, share his love of basketball and his frustrations with teachers.

His time at Memorial may be running out.

This Wednesday, a day that may help determine the course of the rest of his life, Lee is scheduled to attend a court hearing on the disorderly conduct and obstruction charges. The hearing will determine whether he remains under the control of juvenile authorities — or whether he's locked up with adults.

He's 16 years old.



State Journal photo/CRAIG SCHREINER
Eugene Lee plays basketball with friends in the Memorial High School gymnasium.



State Journal photo/CRAIG SCHREINER
Timeka Rumph takes an exam in the foreign language laboratory at East High School. Periodicals from other countries give students a wide-ranging view of world events.

Excel

Continued from Page 1A

place, as they appear to be for Rumph, school becomes an inviting and rich experience for students.

Rumph has lived in Madison all her life. When she roams the halls of East, she's among friends, warning them of tough tests on the horizon and trading jabs about football loyalties. She's a Dallas Cowboys fan, which prompted her friends to scribble Green Bay Packers endorsements on her locker.

Despite an intensive, college-preparatory class lineup, Rumph maintains a 3.52 grade point average — good enough for induction Wednesday into the National Honor Society. Overall, African-American juniors score a 1.85 grade point average, trailing the white average by nearly a full grade point. But Rumph exceeds the average score for white juniors by about seventh-tenths of a point on a four-point scale.

Rumph refuses to let an additional "risk factor" — the fact that he grew up in a single-parent household — become an excuse or lower standards.

But that home turmoil, which culminated in sixth grade when her alcoholic father walked out or good, helps explain why Rumph seeks stability, and a sense of belonging, at school.

"East High School has always been like my second home," Rumph wrote in her diary of school life.

In turn, she takes any criticism

isms of her school personally.

"My major problem is that everything is centered around the downfall of schools. Why is it that the media can't for once show a headline for a school's excellence? How is our generation supposed to look toward the bright future if we continue to be dragged back into the dark past? No one seems to be able to answer that one."

Rumph said she even sees Calderon as a sort of a mother figure at school.

"She is the greatest Spanish teacher and I can talk to her about anything. She is a teacher that takes interest in her students. Some of them have toilet-papered her house and she never seems to complain."

For the third time, she's signed up for a class with Miller because she respects his teaching style.

"History is the only class I stay alert in, though. Although Mr. Miller gets on my nerves, he really knows how to make history fun."

After watching the movie "Eyes on the Prize," as part of Black History Month studies in Miller's class, Rumph was so excited, "I actually came home from school and talked about it with my mother."

She spent spring break in Italy with 10 other students on a trip chaperoned by Miller.

"I found a new respect for him over there," she said.

Every morning, she arrives at school early to help Thomas, an assistant principal, prepare an electronic listing of announcements.

"I shot hoops with Mr. Thomas today," she wrote. "First he threw some bricks. And then I threw some. ... That man can be so

WISC-TV (Ch. 3) plans coverage

Watch WISC-TV (Ch. 3) for additional Schools of Hope coverage today:

8 a.m.: Wisconsin State Journal reporter Phil Brinkman discusses the issues raised in today's reports with WISC's Roger Putnam on News 3 Sunday Morning.

5:30 p.m.: East High School principal Milton McPike is interviewed on the relationship between attendance and achievement.

Other reports will appear throughout the week on "News 3 at Six."

goofy."

As for her friend Kramer, Rumph said, she's also part of her second home at East High School, part of a network that values A grades and meets C's with a frown.

Her lunchtime friends, a racially diverse collection of a half-dozen girls and one boy, can be found together at the Forum, a large lounge that's a quieter alternative to the cafeteria.

Earlier, a rough time

Although today she's laughing, comfortable in her surroundings, Rumph had a rough time early in school.

"I don't think a lot of people mean to, but they stereotype," Rumph said. "And I think a lot of young African Americans really get caught up in the stereotype. I had a really supportive family and friends who said, 'You can do it.'"

She recalls the criticisms another African-American girl hurled at her in fifth grade.

"I was accused of not being a 'typical black person,'" Rumph said. "Because I got good grades, I lived in a house and I lived in a predominantly white neighborhood. And because I have good grammar, I don't speak in a lot of slang."

"I felt very bad. I would cry and think, 'Why can't I be like everyone else?'"

In middle school, Rumph said, some teachers seemed to "perpetuate stereotypes by expecting her to have bad grammar, live in a low-income neighborhood, earn poor grades and miss a lot of school."

"What I learned is if you know who you are, it doesn't matter what other people think," she said.

She also learned the power of high expectations.

"If they kind of expect more — not too much — then it's not too hard to get an A-minus or a B average, as long as you have those guidelines to go by," she said. "Expect a little more and you may get it."

Mother credited

Now she's talking like her mother. The last time Carolyn Rumph called in sick was 17 years ago — the day Timeka was born.

"There's nothing you can't do," Rumph, 52, a clinical dietitian for Meriter Hospital, likes to say.

She has tried some unconventional ploys, such as paying her two daughters modest amounts if they excelled in school. But mostly, she has been involved in their school and their lives: She

Factors linked to success, struggle

Achievement levels of Madison students are linked to a variety of socioeconomic factors, according to research district officials conducted at the request of reporters working on the Schools of Hope project.

The research offers a snapshot of the 3,803 current students — a mix of 10th, 11th and 12th graders — who completed the state's 10th Grade performance test.

THE BREAKDOWN:			ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS		
All students			LOW Percentage below national average (50th percentile)	MIDDLE Percentage between national and Madison district average	HIGH Percentage above Madison average (72nd percentile)
19%	28%	53%			
Household income					
Poor	26	10	2		
Not poor	74	90	98		
Home status					
Two parents	62	75	85		
Single parent	38	25	15		
Parent education					
High school graduate or less	38	22	6		
Vocational or some college	32	27	17		
College graduate	18	28	32		
Graduate school	12	25	45		
School changes per year					
Rate:	26 per 100 students	7 per 100 students			
Number of school changes in Madison District					
Average:	1.5 changes	0.6 changes			
Suspensions					
Rate:	9 per 100 students	1 per 100 students			
Unexcused absences (most recent semester)					
Average:	4.0 absences	0.7 absences			

Percentage of students who are poor

Low achievers: 26%
High achievers: 2%

Percentage of students with single parents:

Low achievers: 38%
High achievers: 15%

Percentage of students whose parents have a high school diploma or less:

Low achievers: 38%
High achievers: 7%

Details on black students

Below is a summary of data pertaining to the 321 black students — a mix of 10th, 11th and 12th graders — who are enrolled in the district and who completed the state's 10th Grade performance test.

THE BREAKDOWN:			ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS		
Black students			LOW Percentage below national average (50th percentile)	MIDDLE Percentage between national and Madison district average	HIGH Percentage above Madison average (72nd percentile)
55%	31%	14%			
Household income					
Poor	61	39	7		
Not poor	39	61	93		
Home status					
Two parents	38	41	56		
Single parent	63	59	44		
Parent education					
High school graduate or less	41	16	11		
Vocational or some college	28	28	28		
College graduate	22	28	22		
Graduate school	9	28	39		
School changes per year					
Rate:	46 per 100 students	12 per 100 students			
Number of school changes in Madison District					
Average:	2.3 changes	0.9 changes			
Suspensions					
Rate:	18 per 100 students	4 per 100 students			
Unexcused absences (most recent semester)					
Average:	4.5 absences	1.1 absences			

Percentage of students who are poor

Black low achievers: 61%
White low achievers: 8%

Percentage of students with single parents:

Black high achievers: 44%
White high achievers: 14%

Rate of school changes: (Rate per 100 students)

Black low achievers: 46
White low achievers: 12

Test scores are the battery totals — reading, math, language, science and social studies — from multiple-choice sections of 10th Grade Wisconsin Student Assessment System tests. Poor students are defined as those eligible for free or reduced lunch. Two-parent households include at least one natural parent.

SOURCE: Madison School District research conducted for Schools of Hope

WSJ graphic/LAURA SPARKS

makes it to their plays. To concerts. To school get-togethers and parent-teacher conferences. She tags along on field trips, even if it means using up vacation days. She volunteers as a room mother. She's a former Parent-Teacher Organization president.

It's the family way: Timeka's grandparents drive from southeast Iowa to attend her band concerts.

Carolyn Rumph remembers hearing about the Madison Urban League's report documenting the

disparities in black and white achievement levels.

That was nearly 10 years ago, in the summer of 1987. Timeka was ready to enroll in third grade. But her mother didn't worry.

"I've never had a problem," Carolyn Rumph said. "I've always been at the schools."

When there were rough spots, she called teachers at home and found them to be helpful.

The Rumph family's success heartens Darlene Maynard, an Af-

rican-American parent who's rearing three young children by herself in the Allied Drive area.

Maynard said she has been scared by all the data showing blacks are four times more likely than whites to score below the 50th percentile — the middle point among all students.

She wants to find out how someone like Carolyn Rumph, someone like her, succeeded with the schools.

"I need to know."