

Chapter Summary and Discussion Questions – colorandcharacter.org

Chapter 4: **Building an Integrated School** 1975-94

Focus: Shaping the culture of an integrated West Charlotte High

Traces the work done by West Charlotte's veteran African American teachers and staff members to mentor younger white teachers and administrators, and to ensure that the school's African American history remained an important part of its identity.

Examines the ways that the diversity of West Charlotte's population fostered a situation in which young people felt able to explore and appreciate differences. Highlights the pride that West Charlotte students felt in the diversity of their school.

Considers the active efforts of teachers and administrators to build racial balance in academic and extracurricular activities.

Explores ongoing cultural divisions in the school, the intellectual and emotional challenges of dealing with a diverse range of people, and the ways that students and teachers sought to address these challenges.

Links the success of school desegregation to other developments that included growing diversity in city government and rapid economic growth.

Questions to explore

What kinds of lessons did West Charlotte students learn from their cross-racial interactions?

What commonalities do you see between the segregated and integrated eras?

How did changes in popular culture affect student life at West Charlotte?

What should a "successfully" integrated school look like?

Connections

What actions have been taken to bring diverse groups of students together at schools you attend/have attended?

What tensions between different groups of students have you experienced?

From your experience, how does a city's overall racial climate affect what happens in its schools?

What do you see as the greatest challenge to creating successfully integrated institutions?