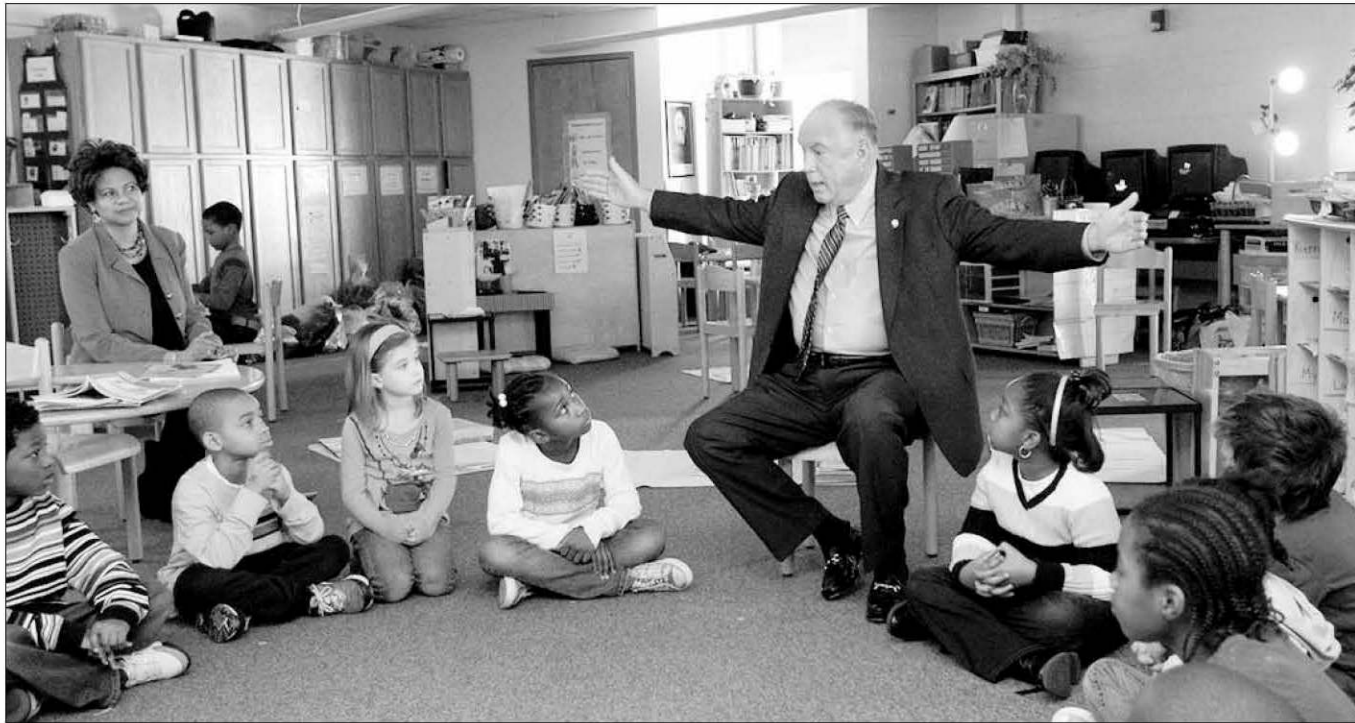


**LOCAL**

Guilford County Commissioner Paul Gibson explains to Casey Tinkham's class about his business travels as he spends Tuesday morning at Erwin Montessori School with Principal Deborah Parker (seated, left). Guilford Education Alliance sponsored the 5th annual Principal for a Day where community leaders shadow principals.

LYNN HEY  
News & Record

# Leaders shadow principals for the day

## ■ Local leaders visit principals to learn about Guilford County Schools.

By MORGAN JOSEY GLOVER  
Staff Writer

Not that Guilford County Commissioner Paul Gibson is any expert, but he'll happily share his impression of Erwin Montessori, a school he visited for the

first time Tuesday.

"You need to get out there," Gibson told someone after his visit. "It was quite impressive."

Gibson was one of about 50 community leaders, business executives and elected officials to participate in Guilford Education Alliance's 5th annual "Principal for a Day" program. The advocacy group pairs local leaders with principals in Guilford

County Schools, hoping that the encounters help visitors overcome public perceptions of the schools and encourage public-private partnerships.

"We don't ask for any further commitment," said Margaret Arbuckle, the alliance's executive director. "But many of the principals for a day end up in a collegial relationship with the principals, and some businesses have adopted

a school and provided resources. Others become outspoken supporters for the schools."

Gibson toured Erwin's halls Tuesday morning, explaining his public duties to curious children and watching fifth-graders present their Black History Month projects. He marveled at the Montessori philosophy in action: soft lights, soft voices, students spread out on the

floors and at tables, working independently.

"Look, all the kids are working," Gibson said. "There are no shenanigans. It's just the atmosphere. I didn't notice it at first, but there are no overhead lights. It's all very subdued."

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