

# Plan establishes schools for our future

Whether you're a student, parent, taxpayer, volunteer, school employee or other citizen of Forsyth County, reorganization of the school system will affect you.

For many years, people in Forsyth County have asked for a longer stay at each school. Dissatisfaction with the "4-2-2-2-2" structure was indicated in the 1977 Community Survey. For more than five years, the Board of Education has worked on developing a more satisfactory plan, beginning with four-year, developing a reorganization plan for all grade levels. There has been extensive public debate over each decision, and modifications have been

made in the plan to meet many concerns.

The new structure provides for three levels of schools: high schools serving grades 9-12, middle schools for grades 6-8, and elementary schools for grades K-5. The reorganization also calls for closing several schools and changing the use of others. Some construction and renovations will be necessary to provide equivalent facilities for all students. Passage of local bond issue last November has made the funds available to make this possible.

A structure with four-year high schools, middle schools and elementary schools has many ad-



High Schools: Grades 9-12



Middle Schools: Grades 6-8



Elementary Schools: Grades K-5

vantages over the current structure. Academic quality will be improved through more efficient use of staff. Extracurricular and athletic activities will be strengthened as students have more years to build skills and loyalties together. Costs will be lowered through less duplication of courses, materials, and staff. Taxpayers, parents, students and

staff will all benefit. Change is never easy. There will be a transition period, in which some students and teachers will be inconvenienced by temporary crowded facilities. But convinced, however, that this reorganization will improve the quality of education we offer the students of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County.

# Reorganization of schools affects all students

**When will school reorganization take effect?**

In the fall of 1984. Will districts be changed from the current ones?

Yes. All schools will have at least one grade change and new district lines.

**Will there be a "feeder pattern" like the one we have now?**

No. The reorganization plan is based on independent districts for each level.

**Why did the Board choose independent districts rather than a feeder plan?**

Independent districts provide greater flexibility in assigning students, so that buildings can be used more efficiently. District lines are drawn for each school without affecting district lines at other grade levels. In the future, lines could be adjusted at the elementary level, for example, to reduce overcrowding or compen-

sate for declining enrollment with no impact on the middle and high school levels.

**Why are satellite districts necessary? Why can't everyone just go to the nearest schools?**

In order to meet our continuing obligation to operate a desegregated school system, the Board of Education set a goal to balance the racial composition of each school to within five percentage points to the racial balance to each organizational level. This means that schools should be from about 30 percent to 45 percent minority when this plan is implemented. If everyone went to the nearest school, some schools would be over 90 percent minority and others less than 10 percent. Satellite districts are necessary to balance enrollments at all schools.

**Why do we have a "4-2-2-2-2" plan now?**

Prior to 1954, Winston-Salem and Forsyth County operated racially segregated schools. Despite efforts to desegregate the schools after 1954, the Supreme Court directed the Federal District Court in 1971 to eliminate all vestiges of the dual school system in our county.

In accordance with this directive the Court ordered full integration of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in the fall of 1971. The Board, staff and many citizens studied a variety of structures. With the existing buildings and racial distribution of students at that time, the 4-2-2-2-2 structure was the best plan to comply with the court order without building new facilities.

**Are we still under the supervision of the court?**

No. The Catherine Scott suit was dismissed in 1981. We do not

have to return to the court for approval of changes in the pupil assignment plan. However, a change which resulted in any significant number of once race schools would probably be considered a violation of the constitutional rights of minority school children.

**Which schools will be used under the reorganization plan?**

The plan uses twenty-nine elementary schools for grades K-5, twelve middle schools for grades 6-8, eight high schools for grades 9-12, and four special schools as follows:

**Why does the plan include eight high schools when the previous plan had only seven?**

The Board of Education voted to add an eighth high school in order to reduce anticipated overcrowding in the eastern part of Forsyth County. The eighth high school also reduces the average enrollment of the high schools.

# Parents can help students

**How can I help my child adjust to all these changes?**

School Psychologist Patricia Browning and Carolyn McPherson have these suggestions to ease the transition:

## Before school opens:

- Be positive about the coming changes: Remember the more positive and forward-looking you are, the more your child will look forward to the new year! Some points to make: opportunities to make new friends, more extracurricular activities offered in larger school settings, newer buildings for many students, possibly more chances for leadership.

- Learning to adjust to change is part of healthy emotional growth. Although schools will remain more familiar than unfamiliar, there will be many changes in staff, grade structure, and district lines. Try not to pre-judge or form impressions.

- Anticipate the possibility of some beginning-of-the-year confusion. Help your child see that some situations call for flexibility and may be humorous. (The first time you laugh at yourself you have taken a big step toward growing up.)

- Expect some changes in daily schedules and routine from past school years.

- Find out about your "new" school prior to school opening. Do not let the new school be a strange place-take your child there. Drive by and/or visit at a reasonable time after receiving your school assignment.

- Talk to your child before the beginning of school year. If you detect fears and anxieties help him/her talk through them rationally. Be aware of support per-

sonnel in the schools if your child seems to be having extensive difficulties. In addition to the principal teachers, school counselors, psychologists, and social workers are available.

## After school opens:

- Support your child through initial changes in adjustment for crowded conditions, schedule variations, shifting equipment, and the hundred-and-one things that go along with the opening of a "new" schools.

- Encourage patience! You can help your child see that adults do not always "have it all together" in all situations. (A good thing for parents to remember, too-give the system some time to adjust!)

- Promote helpful attitudes. Your child can be helpful to new students as they try to find their way around a building; they can volunteer to help teachers with classroom chores; they can listen carefully for teacher's instructions.

- Invite new as well as existing friends of your child to your home. Encourage social growth in this new setting.

- Keep in close contact with your child's teachers, especially through the first year of the reorganization plan.

- Be involved in as many school activities as you can-volunteer services, PTSA, grade parents, etc. Both you and your child will find much useful information in the school handbook provided for each child.

**Remember:**  
You are the key to the success or failure of the reorganization plan for your child.

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