

Project Acumen: A JGHS Pilot Program

For the past several months, the John Graham faculty has been engaged in a pilot program — "Project Acumen" — with special emphasis on "Mainstreaming." The purpose of the project was to prepare teachers to educate exceptional children in the regular class settings. "Acumen" is the outgrowth of Public School Law 91-230. The state Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with ESEA Title VI, has funded this project yearly for the varying levels of education beginning with the primary and middle grades. This year the project placed emphasis on the secondary grades. The term "mainstreaming" has been used frequently and in different ways during the last few years. Along with its varied meanings has come confusion regarding what the word really means. While there may not be a definition that is universally agreed on, there are some basic themes that can be looked to for an understanding of the intent of mainstreaming.

To our staff, "mainstreaming" meant the following: providing the most appropriate education for each child in the least restrictive setting and looking for and creating alternatives that would help general educators serve children with learning or adjustment problems in the regular setting.

The overall objective at John Graham was to find ways and means to help teachers understand and deal with the wide range of students with diversified abilities. Teachers studied and evaluated their attitudes toward students, their teaching methods, and their teaching styles. Effective methods and techniques were devised to diagnose and prescribe for the different achievement levels in each classroom. Many approaches were used to assist in reaching our goal. Dr. Betty Levey, consultant from East Carolina University, guided us in all of our endeavors.

Professional books and samples of a wide variety of

tests and kits on instructional materials were added to the media collection. They were examined and used to meet the diversity in achievement and ability found in each classroom. Library books and textbooks were evaluated to find appropriate levels for students achieving at different rates. These resources were available to teachers as they tried a variety of approaches—some new, some old, and some modified.


As a component of Project Acumen, teachers visited two sites, Roanoke Rapids and Goldsboro City Schools, to broaden their perspectives and to gain new insight for future incorporation of ideas in their classrooms. At least one other administrative unit, Concord City Schools, will be visited before the close of school.

In spite of these concerted efforts by the faculty, many problems remain unsolved. Far too many students are still chronic absentees; far too many students are still failing. At the end of the first semester, 40 percent of the


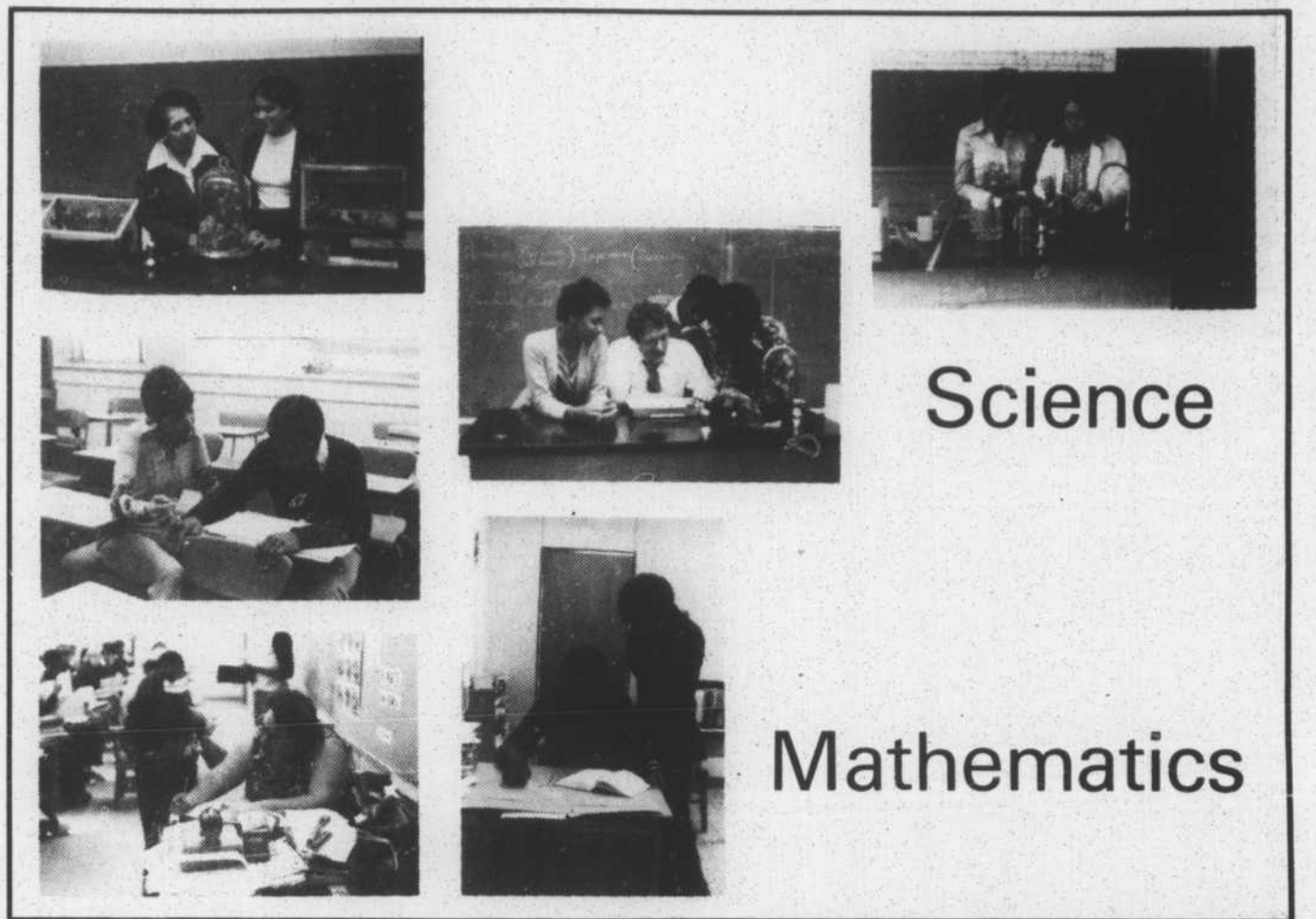
student body had failed at least one or more subjects. The dropout rate has remained constant, approximately 6 percent.

Three strategies have emerged, however, that participants believe will make mainstreaming more successful for all students, whether they are average, handicapped, or talented:

1. A resource lab, managed by a certified teacher, equipped with supportive and/or alternative instructional materials.
2. Continued efforts on the part of the teachers, supported by resources and in-service training, to search out and try a variety of materials and techniques to meet the different needs within their classrooms.
3. Special resource classes for academic subjects (English, social studies and math) for students who are identified as Educable Mentally Retarded, Learning Disabled, or Trainable Mentally Retarded.



English

Science

Mathematics

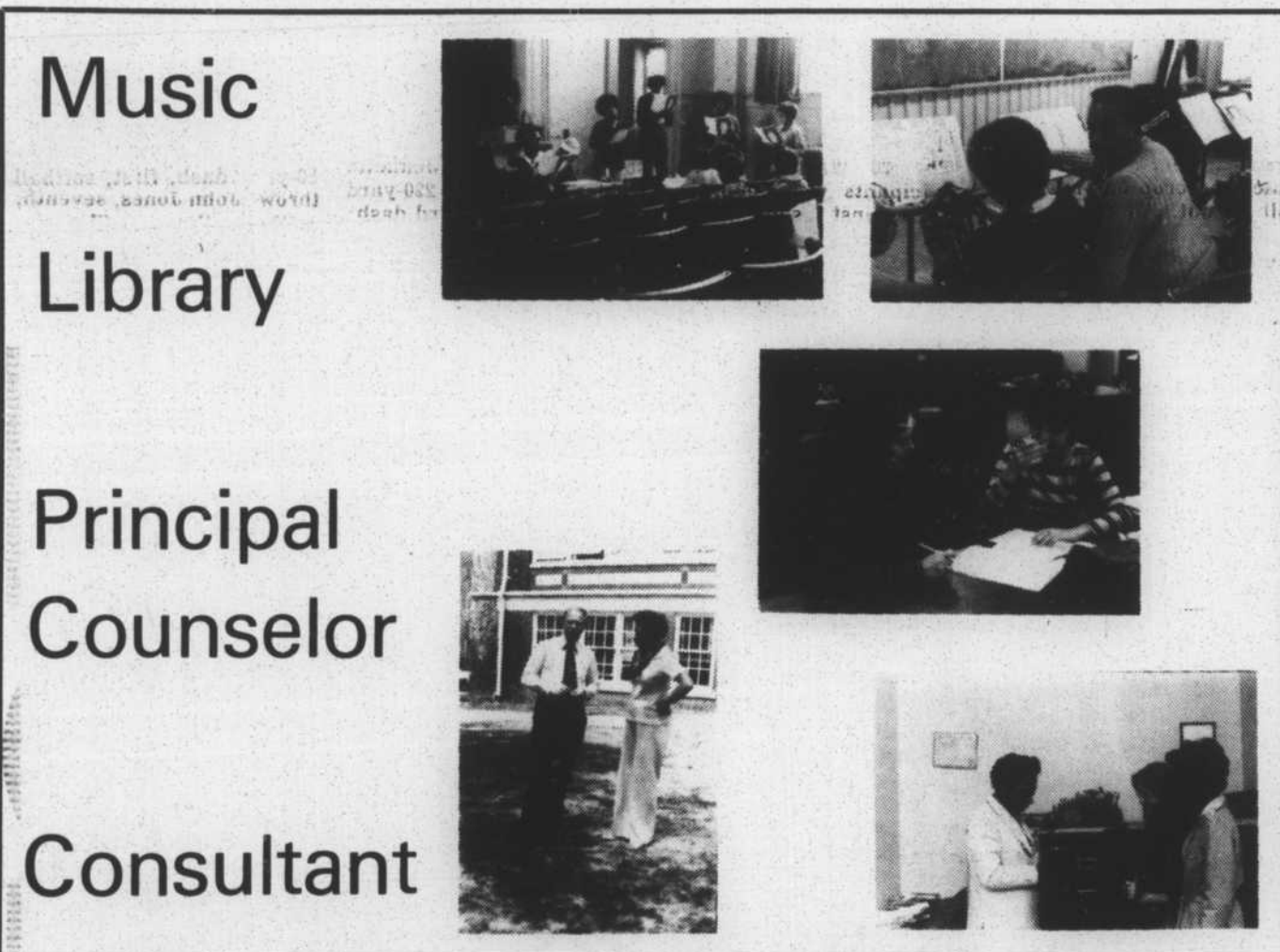
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Music

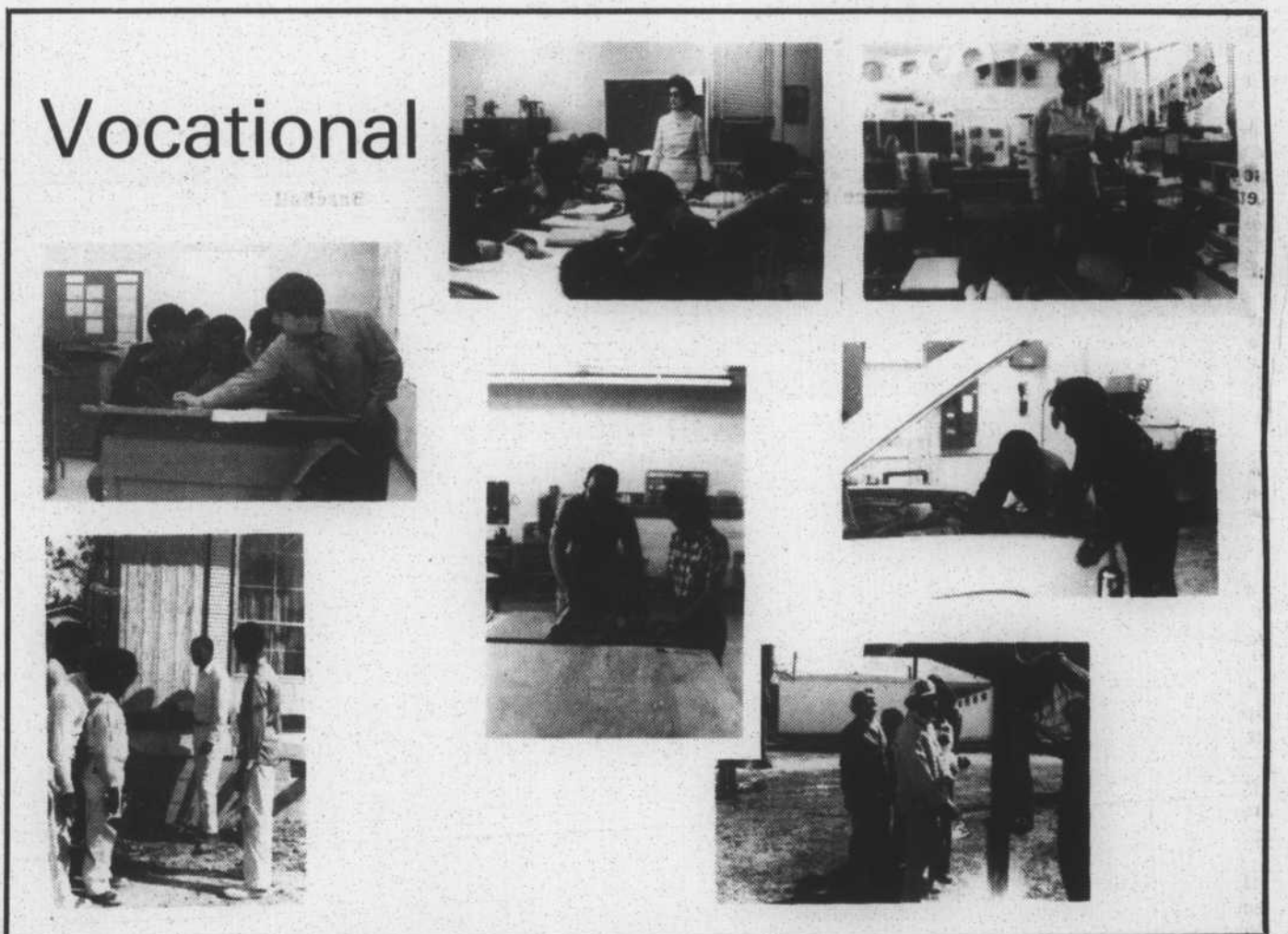
Library

Principal Counselor

Consultant

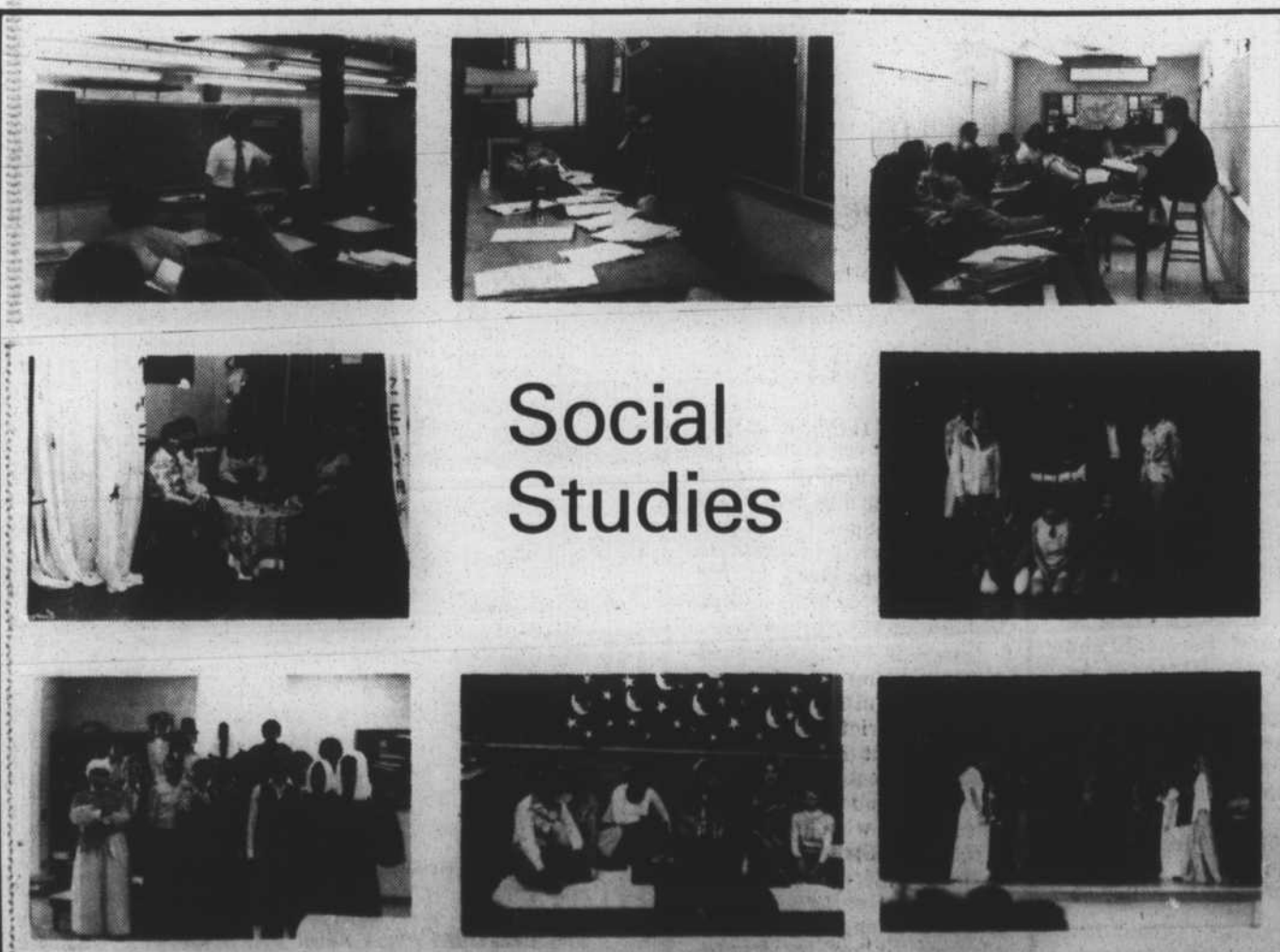


Vocational



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Social Studies



Business

Physical Education

ICT

