

# Bus Policy Places Adults In Drivers' Seat

BY TERRY POPE

A policy that will begin phasing in all adult school bus drivers for Brunswick County's 11 schools was approved by a 3-1 vote of the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night.

Under the new policy, the five elementary schools will begin placing emphasis on hiring all adult drivers beginning in the fall. The plan calls for phasing in adult drivers at all 11 schools over a period of three years, "provided that a sufficient number of adult drivers can be obtained," said School Superintendent Gene Yarbrough.

It will only "give preference" to hiring adults under the new pay scale also approved by the board Monday. Under the revised pay scale, drivers with one year experience or less would earn \$4.35 per hour while top salary for 12 years or more experience would be \$5.38 per hour.

School business manager Samuel

Adcock said the state will fund the new pay scale entirely, based on merit pay for more experienced drivers. In the past, the state would only allow \$4.25 per hour for all school bus drivers, regardless of age or experience.

The policy does not rule out the possibility of having to hire some student drivers for elementary schools next year, if enough adults are not available to fill the seats. The policy will not affect student drivers who already have their bus driver's license. Middle schools would begin hiring all adults in the 1986-87 school year while high schools would seek all adult drivers in the 1987-88 school year.

Board members tabled the policy at their meeting in late May, and agreed to bring it back off the table Monday by a 3-1 vote. Board member Jane Causey, who asked for more information at the May meeting on the rate of student driver accidents in

Brunswick County, said she was "satisfied" by the figures presented by School Transportation Supervisor Bill Turner Monday. She cast the crucial vote in bringing the matter back before the board.

However, board member James Clemmons, who voted against reviving the discussion, also voted against the policy. The figures Turner presented to the board did not show which drivers were at fault in the accidents listed, which could "throw the whole thing out of wack," Clemmons said.

According to Turner's statistics, in the 1983-84 school year there were 14 accidents involving student drivers under age 19 and four accidents involving adult drivers age 20-55. In the 1984-85 school year, there were 11 accidents involving student drivers and five involving adult drivers.

During the 1984-85 school year, there were 50 student drivers and 78 adult drivers in Brunswick County. That means 22 percent of student drivers and seven percent of adult drivers had accidents last year, or a three to one ratio, Turner said.

"Again, it's who was responsible, or who was at fault that's important," Clemmons said. "That's the way to get a true picture of it."

Turner said he had no way of obtaining that information without digging through court files of every accident listed.

Clemmons said he could not vote on the policy because the information provided was "inconclusive. It's not

fair." He added that the schools were already hiring adult drivers whenever possible, without the new policy.

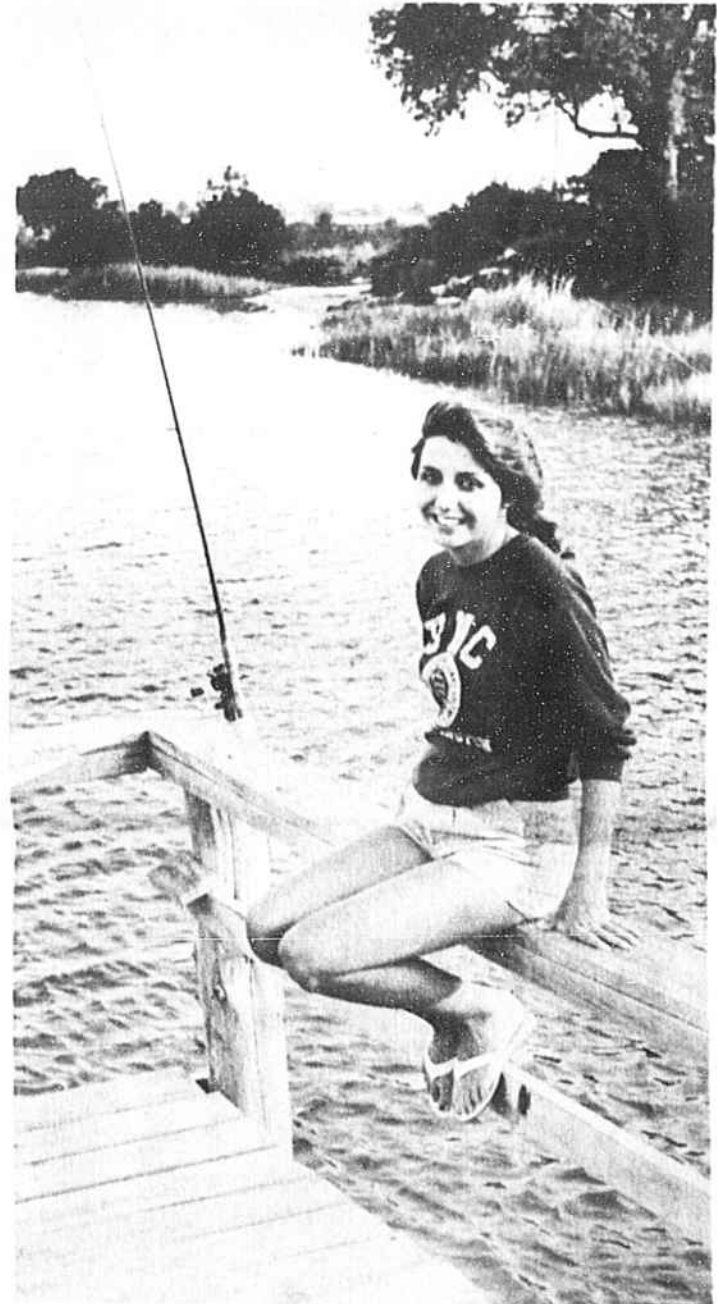
"The statistics show that student drivers are having more accidents," Superintendent Yarbrough said, "whoever's at fault. And I think it will quiet a lot of fears the parents have out there, particularly the parents of small children."

Board member Doug Baxley, who made the motion to approve the policy, said the degree of traffic along U.S. 17 was enough to justify hiring more mature adult drivers. The program can be tested in the first year, while the board has an opportunity to monitor it, he added.

"But you're doing exactly what you've said," Clemmons said. "You're getting them (adults) when you can. You can make all the policy you want. If you can't get enough adult drivers, you're going to have to get student drivers."

The board also agreed Monday to form a School Bus Safety Advisory Board composed of one nominee from each school board member and one principal to be nominated by Yarbrough. Baxley nominated Holden Beach resident Judy Holden to serve on the committee Monday.

Other nominations from school board members will be presented at the next meeting. The board is scheduled to meet July 18 at 7 p.m. to review the schools' four-year improvement plan and again on July 23 with the county commissioners.



STAFF PHOTO BY MATTHEW FLYLER

## Pretty As A Picture

Dottie Robertson of Holden Beach strikes a pretty pose as she waits for a bite fishing off a dock at Sunset Beach. Dottie, who graduated from West Brunswick High last month, plans to attend UNC-Wilmington in the fall.

# Board Hires New Principal For West

Brunswick County Board of Education members met in executive session for nearly two hours Monday night before voting unanimously to hire Dr. David Corley of Columbus, N.C., as West Brunswick High School's next principal.

Corley, 46, will begin as principal at the school Monday, July 8, said Assistant Superintendent Stephanna Tewey, who is in charge of personnel. He will replace Principal Roland English, who will work at the central office in Southport beginning in August until his retirement.

Corley was interviewed as the top candidate for the job by the board Monday night. He received his bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Pittsburg and a doctorate in education from William and Mary University in Virginia.

A 24-year education veteran, Corley has served as high school principal at Columbus, N.C., and as assistant superintendent for instruction with the Harrisburg (Va.) City School system.

In other personnel decisions Monday, the board agreed to retain its business manager, Samuel Adcock, for another month until August 6. Adcock, 50, had earlier announced plans to retire effective July 1.

The board also hired Mickey Daniels, 27, a physical education

coach and social studies instructor for North Brunswick High School. Daniels served as an assistant football coach at UNC-Chapel Hill under coach Dick Crum before announcing plans to coach the NBHS Scorpions next season.

In other business Monday, the board approved a two-year energy management contract with A.E. LeBlanc Inc. of Raleigh to install energy management devices at three schools in the fall.

The computerized controls will cost \$83,000 and will be installed at Leland Middle, South Brunswick High and West Brunswick High schools next year. They will provide a guaranteed energy savings for the schools of \$46,000 a year, which will be used to purchase the equipment.

At the end of two years, the board has the option to add the remaining eight county schools to the system for an additional three years.

Installation of the equipment should be complete possibly by mid-August, but no later than Sept. 1.

Chairman Dr. James Forstner also informed the board Monday that Raymond Ludlum, who has been serving as the schools' appointee on the Brunswick Technical College Board of Trustees, has resigned that seat. The board will decide on a replacement at its next meeting.

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