

# New Salary Scale Adopted For County's Teacher Aides

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Ada McDonald and a group of other teacher aides left Monday's Brunswick County Board of Education meeting smiling, following the board's adoption of a new pay scale for them.

It will give credit for years of experience and college work completed, removing inequities that Ms. McDonald said prompted her to come to the board last month, asking for a fair salary system.

The new scale was proposed by McDonald and the Teacher Assistant Association, and is identical to that used in New Hanover County. It provides for a beginning teacher to be paid \$834 per month if he/she has a high school diploma, \$867 for 44 hours or more of college work. There are six additional levels, ranging from 1-2 years teaching experience in the state (paid \$867 or \$901, depending on education), to the top level of 18 years or more (paid \$1,096 or \$1,139, depending on education).

Samuel Adcock, finance director for the school system, said the pay scale for aides used several years ago recognized a maximum of 12 years service, whereas the new scale provides for 18 years.

The scale will be used as a one-time conversion for any individual teacher. Once placed on the scale, the teacher will not receive increases in the future except for merit.

Adcock said, "If we activate this schedule, it will cost \$13,000 more than we have in the budget for salaries."

Yarbrough, however, recommended the change. "It removes the inequities and enables aides to go back to college," he said.

Adcock said there are 94 instructional aides this year, with 11 percent having one year's experience, 12 percent with two years, and the remainder having worked in the state school system eight years or longer.

After the vote, Chairman James Forstner asked Ms. McDonald, "Is this what you had in mind?" and she replied, "Yes, we're pleased with it."

The board also approved giving other non-certified employees a \$75 per month salary increase, plus two one-quarter percent increments for merit. In his motion, Board Member Doug Baxley stipulated that Adcock should look into the possibility of a pay scale for them similar to the one approved for aides.



ADA McDONALD, left, surrounded by other teacher aides, listens as the school board discusses the new aide pay scale she proposed.

### Construction Update

Architects Charles Boney and Charles Boney Jr., showed the board plans for the remainder of the construction and renovations at Union and Lincoln Primary Schools.

Bids will be advertised soon for construction of a building at Lincoln extending from the ten-classroom building just renovated, that will house music, art, special education and remedial reading rooms.

Boney Sr. said that of the \$2.5 million budgeted for the project, \$370,000 has been spent on phase one, and it is estimated \$2,147,000 will be spent on phase two, with \$909,000 allocated for Union, \$1.1 million for Lincoln.

The Lincoln renovation is nearly complete, Boney said, as carpets had just arrived that day and installation was beginning Monday night. Bill Turner, special assistant to the superintendent, said chalkboards will arrive at the end of the week, and the ten classrooms would be ready for students by Monday. New doors

and windows, however, will not be installed until next month.

Those ten classes have been meeting in the gym and library since school opened, and Principal Joseph Butler said, "The kids are adapting real well; teachers are motivating them, and parents are very cooperative. We've had no complaints."

At Union, five classrooms are to be renovated, with those students temporarily relocated in the new wing, which will be built first.

### Public Input

Forstner announced that the policy on public address to the school board will be enforced in the future. "Let us know in advance, if possible, when you want to speak to the board, and we may have answers for you. We're not trying to discourage anyone from appearing before the board."

The policy, established in 1983, requires individuals or groups wishing to speak before the board to make a request in writing to the superintendent prior to the meeting, stating the

reason for the request.

It further asks that local school problems be resolved with the school principal or superintendent, and brought to the board only as a last resort. Matters of county-wide importance should be discussed first with the superintendent.

### Life Insurance

Adcock said only 58 percent of school employees had expressed a desire to receive the free \$5,000 in life insurance offered by the board of education. This coverage, which will cost the school system \$720 per month for 800 employees, can be obtained by all employees if 65 percent or more agree to purchase an additional policy of \$10,000 or more at a premium of \$1.80 per month per \$10,000.

"I'm sure we'll get the number we need, hands down," he declared. "There are a lot of forms still out, and others didn't understand the offer."

### Textbooks

Turner reported that 95 percent of newly-adopted textbooks had come in. "What do the other five percent of the kids do?" asked Forstner.

Joseph Butler, Lincoln Primary principal, replied, "Teachers make allowances in their assignments, and

kids share books."

Board member James Clemmons put in, "You should have ordered the books earlier, in June," but Turner responded, "We did and they sent the order back."

Yarbrough said, "They sure know the county of Brunswick is here, because we've literally called them every day, trying to hurry them up."

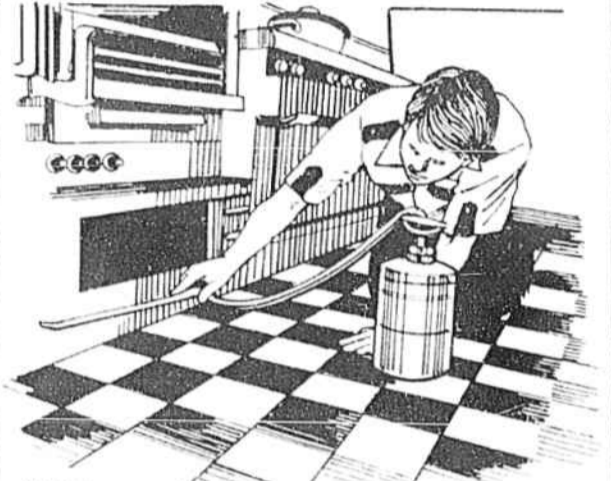
Yarbrough reported on the opening of schools, saying, "We have 8,600

students in school the first week, and the opening went exceptionally well. Seven buses started slowly the first day, and everything else was normal. I've had no negative reports, though I'm sure there are some out there that just haven't gotten to my desk yet."

The board met in executive session to discuss personnel and a lawyer-client matter, with no action taken afterward.

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