

Proposed Rule Would End Employee Smoking Inside School Buildings

BY SUSAN USHER

Teachers and other county school system employees will have to step outside their building for a smoke under a policy proposed Monday by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

It was one of six policies introduced by the board at its first meeting since an April 26-27 retreat at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill.

Under the new smoking policy employees also would not be allowed to use tobacco products—such as

chewing tobacco—while supervising students at school functions.

Presently employees are allowed to smoke in designated areas inside buildings.

However, not all employees are abiding by the policy and it is not achieving its goal. Air circulation systems in the schools move smoke from one building to another, said Chairman Donna Baxter.

While she expects the proposed policy to be unpopular with some employees, she said she thinks the policy is needed.

"We think students have the right to go to school in a smoke-free environment."

—Donna Baxter, Chairman
Board of Education



"We think students have the right to go to school in a smoke-free environment," she said. "Some are getting sick on it. I get more calls about parents regarding this..."

Furthermore, she said, employees should realize that they are role models for students.

It would be up to the principal of the school, with the aid of the assistant superintendent of operations, to designate what Ms. Baxter termed a "discrete" place outdoors as a staff smoking area.

The policy doesn't address enforcement or any proposed penalty for violation of the policy.

Hold Line On Pay

Another proposed policy would help hold down the local money needed to continue paying salaries of tenured supervisors and principals who have been shifted involuntarily to lower paying positions, but not demoted.

Presently they continue at their old rate of pay, receiving any across-the-board pay increases or supplement increases provided other employees.

However, the state pays only the portion of the salary represented by the state schedule figure for the current position. Local money must be used to make up the difference.

"We have about 10 employees that come under this," Chairman Donna Baxter said after a 5 1/2-hour school board meeting at South Brunswick High School Monday. "You'd be surprised how much it is costing us."

The proposed policy calls for maintaining the same total annual compensation for such persons until the compensation for the new position reaches or exceeds that of the final year in the previous position. Only then would they begin receiving any cost-of-living or other increases. Months of employment would remain the same.

Annual salary for certified staff who have been transferred or reassigned involuntarily before the policy is approved will be determined at the time the policy goes into effect. Then it will remain the same until changed under the policy.

When a certified staff member asks for and receives a change in assignment he or she will be paid based on the state salary schedule and local supplement for the new

position. This could result in either an increase or decrease in compensation.

Policies Get First Reading

Four other policies also received first reading Monday night and are expected to come up for second reading and a vote at the board's regular meeting in June:

These are as follows:

■**Drug testing for drivers:** Staff members are refining a proposed policy that would make any drivers who operate county vehicles transporting students subject to drug testing and the potential loss of their job if results of both the test and confirmation test came up positive.

Use of controlled substances or illegal drugs could endanger the lives of student passengers, Chairman Donna Baxter pointed out as the impetus for the policy. "We don't want this to be held up. We know we need this one now," she said, because existing policies don't cover this gray area.

Still to be determined are the timing and frequency of the tests, which would cost approximately \$64 each excluding start-up expenses and pay for a medical review officer.

Ms. Baxter said drivers who were approached on the topic by Assistant Superintendent William Turner thought it a good idea—an attitude she said should ideally be that of by all drivers.

■**Student athlete insurance:** All students participating in interscholastic athletics—as athletes, managers, cheerleaders—will be required to purchase school insurance. Participation is defined to include practice. Insurance costs \$10 a year and may go to \$12; each school would decide how to handle the expense for any student who not afford insurance.

■**Travel review:** The board proposes to amend its travel policy to provide for all administrative staff travel plans to be reviewed and approved in advance by the superintendent, while the board would review and approve travel requests from school board

members or the superintendent. Reimbursement would be at the rate for the least expensive mode of travel. The existing policy allows the superintendent to approve administrative staff trips only up to a \$350 total cost limit.

■**Second meeting:** The board proposes to help a second regular meeting each month, at 7:30 a.m. on the third Monday, unless that date falls on a legal holiday, in which case another date would be set. The board will continue meeting the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Personnel Discussed

Monday's meeting was continued until Monday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. at the board of education office in Southport. The board's next regular meeting is June 3 at South Brunswick Middle School.

Next Monday night the board is expected to continue discussing various personnel and attorney-client matters, including review of employees under consideration for tenure and assignments and contracts for the 1991-92 school year.

Unspecified personnel and attorney-client matters were the topic of one 45-minute executive session called near the start of Monday's meeting and part of another two-hour session later in the board meeting, which ended shortly after 11:30 p.m. Also, while behind closed doors, the board discussed independent contractors as it related to an irregular bid submitted for the Supply Elementary School construction project.

Appeal Dropped

The county school system has dropped efforts to have North Brunswick High School reclassified as a 1-A school as soon as possible for purposes of athletic competition.

At the school's request the Brun-

wick County Board of Education had sought a hearing on the matter before the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

That hearing was granted, said Assistant Superintendent William Harrison, but would have served no purpose.

The notification letter, he said, made it clear that the county request did not fall within the reasons for which exceptions are granted.

Rather than drive 3 1/2 miles for a 15-minute hearing, he said, the appeal was dropped with the school's consent.

Retreat Praised

Speaking for the board, Chairman Donna Baxter described the board's first retreat "enlightening." She said it was helpful in defining working relationships among members and their roles as members of a policy-making board.

The board would like such a retreat again in the fall, she said.

Other Business

In other business, the board heard a report on school food services and declared May National Better Speech and Hearing Month and the week National Teacher Appreciation Week.

Special events during the week in honor of teachers was to include early dismissal of classes Wednesday, May 8, at 1 p.m., said Tom Simmons, NCAE chapter president, as well as in-school activities.

Parents and others in the community will be invited to local schools for free screening clinics sometime this month as part of the school system's observance of speech and hearing month, said Lorene Williams, director of support services. Also, parents and community agencies will be encouraged to refer students with special needs to the schools for assistance.

New School Calendar Adopted

DATE	EVENT
Aug. 21	Students report to school
Sept. 2	Labor Day holiday
Sept. 18	Classes dismissed 11:30 a.m.
Oct. 4	Teacher workday; no classes
Oct. 14	Report cards go out
Oct. 17	Classes dismissed 11:30 a.m.
Oct. 18	Teacher workday; no classes
Nov. 11	Veterans' Day holiday
Nov. 27	Teacher workday
Nov. 28-29	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 2	Report cards go out
Dec. 4	Students dismissed 11:30 a.m.
Dec. 20-Jan. 1	Christmas-New Year's break
Jan. 17	Teacher workday; no classes
Jan. 20	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
Jan. 28	Report cards go out
March 2	Teacher workday; no classes
March 11	Report cards go out
April 17	Teacher workday
April 20-24	Easter break
April 30	Report cards go out
May 25	Memorial Day holiday
June 1	South Brunswick High graduation
June 2	West Brunswick High graduation
June 3	North Brunswick High graduation
	Last day of classes

Note: Teacher report to work the week of Aug. 12. Schools dismiss early Sept. 18, Oct. 17 and Dec. 4 to allow staff development at each school. Students will attend school a full day Dec. 19 and April 16 instead of dismissing early for the holidays. Also, April 14, 15 and 16 are college day at North Brunswick, South Brunswick and West Brunswick high schools respectively. Snow days will be made up at the end of the year.

PACKAGE COSTS \$5.2 MILLION

Supply School Bids Awarded

BY SUSAN USHER

A competitive bidding atmosphere is paying off for the Brunswick County Board of Education, which Monday awarded contracts totaling \$5.23 million for construction of Supply Elementary School.

Work on the 14-month project could begin as early as this week following a construction meeting with contractors that was scheduled Wednesday, said William R. Turner, assistant superintendent for operations.

The new school will be located off U.S. 17 at Supply and is expected to open in fall 1992, according to a schedule developed by Boney Architects of Wilmington. It will serve approximately 650 students in grades K-5, helping to relieve overcrowding at Shallotte Middle, Union Primary and Southport Elementary schools.

Turner said bids came in at \$56 per square foot compared to a projected \$65 per square foot, allowing the board to include optional items totaling \$186,415 in the bids awarded. These included canopies for the entrance and bus entrance; an alternate sound and paging system; gym seating; and the electrical and mechanical systems for the gym seating area.

"Competitive bidding made that possible," he said. Five companies bid on the general contract and as many as 12 companies bid for any one of the various sub-contracts.

He said all contractors for the project were low bidders, with one exception. The low bidder for the mechanical contract did not file required several required forms related to encouragement of minority participation. The school board

went to the next lowest bidder following a ruling by the Attorney General's office, Turner said.

L.P. Cox Co. of Sanford, Inc., received the \$3.79 million general contract. Other contractors are Reagan Electrical Contractors, Inc., Wilmington, electrical, \$483,120; Braxton Britt Plumbing Inc., Wilson, plumbing, \$251,700; and Southern Piping Company, Wilson, mechanical, \$706,295.

Initially plans called for an 80,000-square-foot facility, but the board later increased the size of a group of regular classrooms and of the exceptional children's program area.

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