

PLAN TO BE PRESENTED MAY 19

Resolution Smooths Johnston's Way For Staff Reorganization

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County school board members cleared the deck Monday night for Superintendent Ralph J. Johnston to reorganize his administrative and supervisory staff, adopting a resolution of authorization and encouragement.

Johnston is finishing work on a plan of reorganization he is expected to present at the board's next meeting Wednesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the central office in Southport, said Chairman Donna Baxter.

Since joining the system seven months ago he has been observing the structure of the system and assessing the capabilities of its administrators, he said.

The resolution written by Johnston and adopted unanimously Monday by the board will allow Johnston to reassign personnel within the system without having to post or advertise the positions. Once reassignments are completed, any vacancies that still exist will be posted, advertised and filled in the usual fashion.

The resolution reaffirms the board's intent to allow the superintendent "a large degree of flexibility in assigning administrators to positions best suited to their talents and abilities" and to meeting system goals.

It also notes that the board has "an inordinate number of principals and assistant principals" employed in interim status, a kind of lengthy probationary period. That happened partly because of the change in superintendents and the possibility that a new superintendent might want to create his own team of administrators.

Monday night the board also accepted a new plan by the superintendent for presenting candidates recom-

mended for employment.

In future school board members will be sent resumes and applications of qualified persons. They are to call Johnston if they have concerns about a particular candidate and that person would be taken from the list of candidates which would be considered in open session, instead of behind closed doors.

"Then only the things that really need to be discussed in executive session would be discussed there," said Johnston. "I think that is in keeping with the spirit of the state's Open Meetings Law. It's a better way to be open in what we do."

In other business the board addressed these issues:

■Education Foundation: Former school board member Robert Slockett, president of the reorganizing Brunswick County Education Foundation, requested 1) a resolution giving the foundation "partnership status" with the schools and 2) Superintendent Ralph Johnston calling a joint meeting of the school board and Brunswick Community College Board of Trustees regarding an action plan proposed a year ago for developing the Brunswick County Math-Science Alliance.

■Presidential Classroom: West Brunswick junior class president Dan Martin of Sunset Beach, reported on his participation in the Presidential Classroom, which provided an "insider's look" at how the federal government operates.

■Classroom on Wheels: JTPA Coordinator Anne Mitchell and teacher Harold Johnson reported that the grant-funded "Classroom on Wheels" is providing general after-school tutoring for more than 80 students in

Navassa, Bolivia and Town Creek and that the bus that is to serve as the actual classroom is nearly ready for use.

■MATCH Program: Carol Midgett of the county Geometry Team's MATCH (Mathematics Ambassadors Teaching Children How) program for middle and elementary school teachers said next year training will focus on geometry, measurement and probability and statistics, areas teachers said they felt least prepared to teach. An \$18,250 grant from the N.C. Public School Forum will provide week-long, tuition-free summer science day camps for 20 teachers and 60 Brunswick County students in grades 3 through 5.

■A+ Arts In Schools: Southport Elementary School has been awarded a grant to participate in the A+ regional arts program, contingent upon approval of matching funds included in the local budget.

■School Calendar: A 1993-94 school calendar was adopted (See related story in this issue.)

■Lincoln Primary: Assistant Superintendent Bill Turner that several other ventilation- and leakage-related problems at Lincoln Primary School have been corrected and that a professor from A & State University is ready to bring in a team of experts to test and inspect the building and make recommendations in early June for improving indoor air quality.

■Passing Stopped School Buses: A motion was adopted supporting state legislation to make it easier to prosecute drivers who pass stopped school buses, with William Fairley voting against the measure.

■Reaccreditation: A motion was adopted to pursue reaccreditation of the county's high schools by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools in spring 1995.

■Office Support Personnel Pay Schedule: A revised pay schedule for office support personnel was adopted, retroactive to April 1. Committee member Polly Russ said the plan realigns jobs with like duties regardless of whether they are at the central office or a school, is "fair to everybody," and will make the school system more attractive to qualified candidates when filling vacancies. Among other changes, school secretaries will be called administrative assistants, to better reflect their actual duties. The retroactive pay will show up on employees' pay checks at the end of May and in mid-June, said Finance Officer Rudi Fallon.

■School Improvement: A proposed policy drafted by member William Fairley outlining content and submittal procedures for individual school's Performance Based Accountability Plans in the future was approved, with a second reading required next month. The policy addresses weaknesses in the system used this year.

■Summer School: Summer school will be offered for specific students in grades 3, 6 and 8 from June 21 through July 29, with no program for high school students. No money was available to provide courses without charge and Superintendent Ralph Johnston said there wasn't enough interest to offer a tuition-based program. Most of the county's summer school funds have been used to provide ongoing remediation during the school year after school and on Saturdays.

New School Calendar Avoids Mid-Week Starts And Stops

BY SUSAN USHER

Maximizing "time on task" for teachers was the driving force in creating a 1993-94 school calendar adopted on a 4-1 vote by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Meeting four hours Monday night at South Brunswick High School in Boiling Spring Lakes, the board approved a school calendar that calls for teachers to report Aug. 23 and students Aug. 30.

June 10 would be the last day of classes, with high schools having the choice of holding commencement June 11 or June 12.

Board member Polly Russ voted against the motion by Yvonne Russ to adopt the calendar, saying teachers had expressed concerns to her.

In discussion prior to the vote, Russ questioned scheduling only four workdays at the start of school, with eight at the end, and starting the school year near the end of the month. She said teachers would have to change their budgets because, under the new calendar, pay day will move from the 13th of each month to the 22nd of the month. Pay day is set based on the date teachers begin work each school year.

However, William Fairley, a member of the calendar committee, said the teachers who served on the committee did not express much concern over either issue.

He said the calendar was devised to get "a full solid week out of virtually every calendar week," eliminating as many mid-week starts and stops as possible. For example, students are dismissed at their usual times on Fridays, Dec. 17 and April 1, for the winter and Easter holidays.

"We wanted a calendar that would maximize time on task for teachers," said Fairley. "That was the driving force. I view this as a very compact and efficient calendar for the school year."

The concern about payday, he

1993-1994 Brunswick County School Calendar

Aug. 23	.....	First day for teachers
Aug. 30	.....	First day for students
Sept. 6	.....	Labor Day holiday—no school
Sept. 8-9	.....	Pre-testing days
Sept. 17	.....	Teacher workday—no classes
Nov. 5	.....	Teacher workday—no classes
Nov. 11	.....	Veteran's Day holiday—no school
Nov. 12	.....	Report cards issued
Nov. 25-26	.....	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 17	.....	Students dismiss at regular time for holidays
Dec. 20	.....	Teacher workday—no classes
Dec. 21-31	.....	Christmas, New Year's—no school
Jan. 17	.....	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday—no school
Jan. 28	.....	Teacher workday—no classes
Feb. 4	.....	Report cards issued
March 4	.....	Teacher workday—no classes
April 1	.....	Students dismiss at regular time for holiday
April 4-8	.....	Easter holiday—no school
April 15	.....	Report cards issued
May 30	.....	Memorial Day holiday—no school
June 7-8	.....	Post-testing days
June 10	.....	Last day of school for students
June 11-12	.....	High school graduations

said, "doesn't seem to be an appropriate driving force for designing a calendar. It ought to be what is good for the students."

While it may be too late for any change to take effect this school year, Fairley said the calendar committee wants to seek passage of a local bill that would allow the Brunswick County Schools to issue paychecks on a given day of the month, such as

the 15th, rather than tying payday to the date school begins.

The county principals' organization had submitted an alternative calendar for the committee's consideration. It called for students to return to class Aug. 23 with the last day of school around June 6, South Brunswick Middle School Vice Principal Tom Simmons noted after the meeting.

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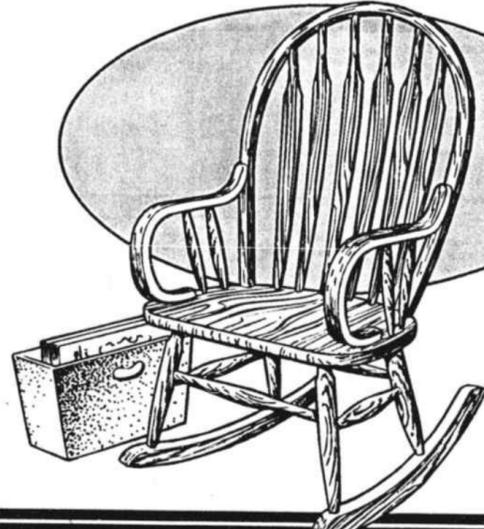
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