

# School Board Adopts \$19.65 Million County Budget Request

BY SUSAN USHER

After more than two hours of discussion, Brunswick County Board of Education members adopted their proposed 1994-95 budget last Thursday without any changes.

This year the public schools are asking county commissioners for \$11.28 million in current expenses, or 29.26 percent more than received last year, plus \$8.37 million in capital outlay funds.

The current expense budget reflects an increase of \$1.87 million over this year's local budget, but \$2.55 million over this year's county allocation. (The school system balanced its current budget using the last \$600,000 in its reserves.)

The bulk of the capital outlay budget, \$5.66 million, is for construction of the new Leland Elementary School.

The proposed budget was adopted unanimously the day after a public hearing at which one speaker thanked the board for providing good information, but advised it was "too little, too late."

"This is a public relations job that should have begun weeks ago, even six months ago," said Tom Pope.

"You can trust the public," he admonished the board. "We are not out to get you. We trust you; we send our children to you."

Without that trust and commitment, he suggested, the schools won't get public support. Instead, he said, "your arrogance will be responded to on poll day."

When school board members met Thursday to take one last look at the budget request before its adoption, board member Thurman Gause's questioned the jump in the request, asking, "Isn't that ridiculous?"

"We've got to ask for what we need," member Polly Russ reminded him.

The request may seem high because it addresses "concerns that we have put off for six years," Chairman Donna Baxter said. "We're trying to make the budget process work."

The budget reflects requests funneled up from classroom teachers, principals and supervisors, then reviewed and cut by a budget committee.

The sought-for county allocation would be part of a total budget of about \$44 million, including state and federal funds. The estimated \$2 million increase over this year reflects \$5.66 million budgeted for the new school.

The school board also voted Thursday to ask county commissioners to approve use of \$300,000 in ADM (average daily membership) state project funds to cover the cost of an addition at West Brunswick High School that will cost more than the \$774,254 commissioners had allocated this year. Bids for a smaller project at North Brunswick High School are within budget at \$543,021.

## Hearing Draws Few Questions

Few questions were raised last Wednesday night at Supply Elementary School during the informal public hearing on next year's proposed budget. It was the first such hearing held by the school system in at least 13 years. Called on short notice, it drew approximately 50 people, mostly school system employees and their spouses. Everyone had a chance to look at a summary of the budget, but had to turn their copies in at the close of the hearing.

PTA Council Chairman Glenda Browning asked if Brunswick County Commissioners were aware of the school system's capital needs over the next five years, to which member Bill Fairley replied, "They don't believe it, but they are aware of it."

Before adopting the budget Thursday, School board members satisfied themselves regarding several specific questions raised at the hearing.

One speaker had questioned the rumored loss of a Chapter 1 remedial reading position at Southport Elementary School.

Assistant Superintendent Jan Calhoun confirmed the cut. He said carryover funds from last year allowed program director Patricia Ward to continue all Chapter 1 positions this year, but that money is gone. Southport Elementary was "grandfathered" to receive services in 1994-95, but will lose services in 1995-96 because the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced school meals has dropped below the level that determines a school's eligibility for the federally-funded remediation program.

"We had to reduce one staff position outright next year, so we chose the school that will lose services the following year," said Calhoun. The reduction will be taken care of by not filling a vacancy.

To accommodate other expected Chapter 1 program changes such as

a new emphasis on prevention, Calhoun said the county has already begun shifting its focus to the lower grades including pre-kindergarten, and is eliminating services to sixth graders.

The county is shifting to use of the Reading Recovery approach for reading remediation, with the goal of having two teachers per school and two teacher/leaders for the county.

"If we keep the same kind of remedial program we have now, we will have to look at local funds in the future," he told the board.

For next year, though, he said obtaining county funding to continue the extended day program at the high schools is a higher priority because "it leaves a bigger hole in our services to kids."

Mary Yates, president of the county chapter of the North Carolina Association for Teachers, had questioned paying dues for school system membership in the North Carolina Association of School Administrators. Superintendent Ralph Johnston said that joining as a system allowed payment of dues based on the size of the system, and inclusion of assistant principals. The association does not lobby for or provide legal intervention on behalf of its members, but provides staff development and consultation to member units for the cost of travel only.

The school system is the county's largest single employer, with 1,200 workers who support an enrollment of 9,200 students and attendance of about 9,000 a day. Over the next five years the N.C. Department of Public Instruction estimates county school enrollment will climb to 12,500.

Of the 1,200 school system employees, 1,032 are based at the school level. Of the total, 919.5 are paid with state money, 45 with federal, and 66.5 with child nutrition funds.

While supplementing pay for numerous employees from bus drivers to the superintendent, Brunswick County pays the full salaries of 169 people. These include 19 maintenance workers, two assistant principals, 39.3 regular teachers, 2.8 special instructional teachers, four mental, physical health services workers, five programs in Job Training Partnership Act program positions, eight administrative specialists, three teacher assistants and four special instructional teacher assistants.

Eighty-six percent of the county's current expense allocation either directly or indirectly supports students, according to Finance Officer Rudi Connor. Forty percent goes toward instruction, hands-on direct student contact, including employee benefits. School-level support services—from social workers to instructional supervisors, pupil transportation, building cleaning and maintenance, utilities and area technology coordinators, and their employee benefits, account for another 46 percent.

Central operations including business support services and general school system administration costs \$1.54 million in local funds, or 13 percent of the budget; and the Community Schools program that coordinates after-school use of facilities, \$12,295, or 1 percent.

## Continuation Budget

To continue existing programs at the existing level next year will require an additional \$311,336, reflecting higher personnel, utility, insurance and maintenance costs.

That sum includes matching for county-paid employees the 4 percent salary increase anticipated for state-paid employees; and locally funding, at \$94,000, the extended day program that allows students to pursue their diploma outside the traditional school day. At present 80 percent of the program cost is paid by the Private Industry Council through federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds. However, school officials say the program could not be

continued next year with those funds unless a job component was added.

## Expansion Budget

Not covered in the continuation budget are expenses county commissioners paid last year in a special \$1 million technology allocation.

A proposed \$1.56 million expansion budget includes slightly over \$1 million for personnel, including continuing with a computer coordinator for each of the county's 12 schools. The expansion budget also reflects 3 1/2 exceptional children's teachers, one each at Leland Middle and Supply Elementary, and 1 1/2 at Bolivia; an additional physical education teacher at Waccamaw Elementary; six classroom teachers (one each at Bolivia, North Brunswick High, Shallotte Middle, Leland Middle, and two at South Brunswick High); hiring the principal of the new Leland Elementary School at \$43,000; and hiring a site facilitator for Brunswick County Schools' participation in the N.C. Information Highway, \$27,000.

The expansion budget also includes adding an 11th month of employment for high school and middle school assistant principals, \$20,000; a new salary schedule for teacher assistants, \$159,000; a \$50 increase in salary supplement plus benefits for all bus drivers, \$7,600; an increase in the local teachers' supplement, \$181,000; and adjustment to custodial salaries to bring average local salaries in line with state average wages. The 1994-95 budget includes \$22,500, or one month adjustment for June 1995. In 1995-96, the line item will jump by an estimated \$193,722.

The school system is also asking for another \$9,500 for additional supplies and materials for the pupil support services area; \$11,500 to pay substitute custodians; and another \$515,000 to meet instructional services needs.

## Capital Needs

Of the schools' \$8.37 million capital outlay request, \$5.66 million would go toward building the new Leland Elementary School.

A \$900,000 line item for technology-related equipment and site improvement and \$175,000 for instructional equipment reflects a budget emphasis on technology, math and science. Other general items include \$40,000 in custodial equipment; \$75,000 for other roof repairs; \$25,000 for music equipment; and \$39,000, print shop equipment; and vehicles, \$105,000 for one yellow school bus, one activity bus and two maintenance vehicles.

The school-by-school allocations below were agreed upon as priorities by a budget committee that included school administrators: West, \$132,650; Union, \$70,450; Shallotte Middle, \$107,083; Waccamaw, \$195,287; Supply, \$73,650; Bolivia, \$63,538; Lincoln, \$173,350; Leland, \$114,058; North, \$187,940; South Middle, \$70,033; South High, \$162,500; Southport, \$28,185.

Most elementary schools requested routine carpet and furniture replacement; cafeteria, custodial and physical education equipment; copier purchase contract payments.

Bolivia Elementary, Shallotte Middle and Lincoln Primary are asking for phone system upgrades. Bolivia and Lincoln also need new public announcement systems. Lincoln is asking for \$13,000 for transportation for a proposed split-schedule kindergarten program and \$60,000 for a new boiler for the gym.

Several schools need new heating and air conditioning equipment and Shallotte Middle needs roof repairs.

The middle schools are each requesting \$13,333 for their athletic programs and the high schools, \$19,500 for athletic equipment and \$16,400 each for bleachers; \$7,500 each for wall lockers. North is requesting \$34,300 in vocational equipment, while South Brunswick wants \$15,000 for an aquaculture pond.

# NABER

Chrysler, Plymouth  
Dodge, Jeep, Eagle Inc.

Business 17 North of Wal-Mart  
and Across from Joe's BBQ  
in Shallotte



754-2811 or 1-800-754-2811

# 3%

over invoice on  
any Chrysler,  
Plymouth, Dodge,  
Jeep or Eagle  
product in stock

# NO EXCEPTIONS

Even the hard to get Dodge trucks and Jeep  
Grand Cherokees included.

We'll throw in  
**\$495 Protection Package  
FREE**

## NEW 1994 DODGE CARAVAN

- Fully Equipped •7-Passenger Seating
- Sunscreen Glass •V6 Engine
- Automatic Transmission

\*LEASE PAYMENT ONLY \$228  
for 24 months

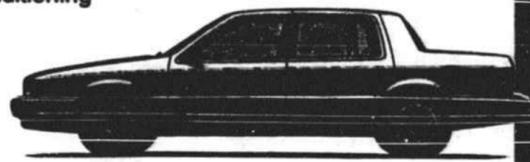


## 1994 ACCLAIMS OR SPIRITS

- Automatic Transmission •Air Conditioning
  - Tilt and Cruise •Rear Defroster
  - Air Bag and Much More
- Several to choose from!

\*STARTING AT  
**\$10,950**

\*\$176.45 per mo. for 60 mo.

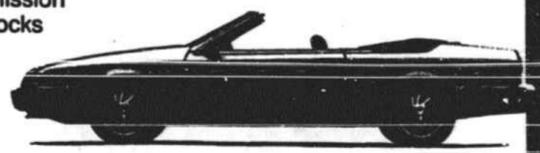


## 1993 CHRYSLER LEBARON CONVERTIBLE GTC

- Power Seats •Automatic Transmission
- Power Windows •Power Door Locks
- Power Top •V6 Engine

\*STARTING AT  
**\$12,750**

\*\$205.45 per mo. for 60 mo.



## TRUCK CORRAL

- 1992 Chevrolet Silverado—Stepside, New Tires, 37,000 Miles, Extra Clean
- 1990 GMC Sierra Classic—All Buttons, Beautiful Truck, Only 53,000 Miles
- 2 1989 Jeep Cherokees To Choose From. One Limited, One Laredo. Fully Equipped, 4x4
- 1989 Ford F150 XLT Lariat—Only 50,000 Miles, Clean
- 1988 Chevrolet Suburban Silverado—4x4, 350 engine, A/C, Automatic Transmission.
- 1987 Dodge LE 150—4x4, Only 50,000 Miles, Super Nice

**\$300<sup>00</sup>**

Good toward the purchase of any vehicle

Expires May 25, 1994

USED CHEROKEES, CONVERTIBLES AND LUXURY CARS AVAILABLE

Wouldn't You Rather Do Business With a NABER  
**IN SHALLOTTE**

Don't Miss  
The Savings!

May is  
MANUFACTURED  
HOUSING  
Month

There's never been a  
better time to buy!

**CHOICENTER™**  
HOMES BY ANN  
Hwy. 17 N., Shallotte, 754-5147

•Expanded Inventory  
•Free Trips & Prizes  
Sponsored by the NCMHA