



POLLARD WINS CONTEST: Toretta Pollard recently competed and won on the district level in the Voice of Democracy speech contest. She will advance to the state level to compete for further honors. If successful she will compete in the national finals.

Toretta Pollard Receives Voice Of Democracy Win

Toretta Pollard, a sophomore at Rocky Mount Senior High, has won in a district competition in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Contest.

In December Toretta won on the local basis and in January she won the District. She is on her way to competing in State Competition and if she wins on the State Level she will go on to compete on the National Level in Washington, D.C. The winner in Washington will take a trip to California.

Toretta stated that she had to write a speech, record it, and

send it away to be evaluated. She is very excited about competing in the National Competition. She also said that many people were so proud of her that they sent her the newspaper clippings concerning the contest.

Also the Veterans of Foreign Wars gave a very nice dinner in honor of the three Local winners at their new Club House.

Toretta said that her biggest hobby is reading. She is now serving as Secretary of the Sophomore Class for the second semester.

Board Approves Grouping

On January 17 the school board, with 6-2 vote, decided to keep the present grouping systems.

"Why can't we develop tests locally?" Mr. Clarence Wiggins kept asking during a study meeting of the Rocky Mount Board of Education on January 10. In response to Mr. Wiggins questions as to whether the Readiness Test given to first-grade children is effective in deciding the level a child should be placed, Dr. Ben Currin, superintendent of schools replied, "if we had local tests we would then be testing ourselves, and the average person would not have confidence in any testing we did to measure ourselves."

After reading grouping reports, Wiggins also questioned the ratios of blacks and whites in the accelerated classes. There are 50% blacks in the school

population and only 26% are in the accelerated classes. "Why aren't black students doing better on National tests?" questioned Wiggins. Jeanette Pittman, director of pupil personnel, and the five principals, Steven Wrenn, T.V. Foster, Richard Hicks, Douglas Watts, and Elton Newbern, explained that a lot of criteria based on socio-economic background, neighborhood, and home life would answer this. To some, learning at home is important, and to others, it's not.

In the next meeting held on January 17, Tom Harris, chairman, said "we are attempting to measure things that are not always measurable because every child is different and we are attempting to put lay people in the place of professionals."

The vote was then taken.

Senior High Enrollment To Drop In Near Future

Many problems have arisen at Senior High because of the overcrowded situation which now exists. However, according to Principal Elton Newbern and Superintendent Ben Currin this situation should be alleviated within the next four or five years.

Some of the problems caused by the large student population of approximately 1614 are a lack of classrooms for some courses, and the lack of a room for class research in the library. Also, some teachers move around to different rooms for different periods.

Dr. Currin stated that a drop in the birth rate in Rocky Mount has caused a drop in school enrollment in the lower grades, and that this drop will eventually be felt at Senior High. He also remarked that no additional building is feasible at the present time because the crowded situation would end about the same time the building would be completed.

The present enrollment in the City School System consists of 425 in the 12th grade, 600 in the 11th, 589 in the 10th, 620 in the ninth, and 643 in the eighth. Then the drop in enrollment is evident. Starting with a seventh grade of 552, enrollment drops steadily through a sixth grade of 493, and a fifth grade of 462, to a fourth grade of 535. A slight increase in students finish the enrollment with a third grade of 486, a second grade of 470, and a first grade of 512.

The drop is slightly deceiving according to Dr. Currin. Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a Catholic elementary school feeds into the city system after the sixth grade usually adding 30 students to the seventh grade class. Dr. Currin also noted that the City School System picks up an additional 8-12 students after grades seven, eight, and nine from various private schools.

The present sixth grade class should then have 60 more

students when it reaches Senior High or 553 students. When the figures are totaled for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, Senior High should expect 1570 students in six years. But there is another factor in predicting the school population: the drop-out rate. Dr. Currin estimated that 100 students per class would drop-out between the 11th and 12th grades for various reasons. Thus, a total of 1470 students, or almost 150 students less inhabit Senior High in 1982.

Mr. Newbern commented that although the students population will soon drop 150 students below the present level, teachers will be lost because of the quota system.

The immediate future does not look quite so bright according to the eighth and ninth grade enrollments. George R. Edwards was enlarged to hold 1100 students. The school population is 1263.



OFFICERS ELECTED: New class officers are left to right: top row, seniors, Joseph Williams, president; Amy Fisher, vice president; Cynthia McKnight, secretary, absent from picture; and Lanie Powell, treasurer; second row: juniors, Stephen Phillips, president; Freddie Woods, vice president; Jim Thorp, secretary; and Brad Craft, treasurer; bottom row, sophomores, Audrey Cooper, president; Keitha Lawrence, vice president; Toretta Pollard, secretary, absent from picture; and Kim Flora, treasurer.

Class Officers Elected

Here in the days of the big elections, Senior High too, has chosen new officers for the three classes: '79, '78 and '77. Not a single candidate though ran on a platform concerning unemployment, conservation, or even defense spending; but each has promised to do a good job and to be a better officer than any preceding him.

In an interview with the three presidents, Audrey Cooper

(sophomore), Stephen Phillips (junior), and Joseph Williams (senior), questions were raised as to what they planned to do differently than preceding presidents. Audry expressed a concern over the lack of involvement of the sophomores.

She plans to have more programs and fund raising projects so that the students might become a closer body. Stephen plans to look at his new

job through the eyes of the average student and do those things that would prove beneficial to the Junior class as a whole. Joseph Williams wants to bring the officers closer to the students through class meetings where they can get the opinion of the class. Joseph closed in a very matter-of-fact manner by saying, "I want the class of '77 to be the closest class ever to graduate from Senior High!"