



Dozens of certificates were distributed Friday to deserving fifth graders at Southport Elementary School. Awards were presented for physical fitness, chorus, art, French, perfect attendance, spelling bee, young readers, young authors and outstanding achievements.

Supt. Hankins resigns post he held two years

By Marybeth Bianchi
Feature Editor

After 40 years as an educator, P. R. Hankins is throwing in the towel. The superintendent of schools handed his resignation to the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night. In a letter dated May 18, he informed board chairman Donna Baxter that he plans to leave the job he's held for almost two years after his contract expires on September 30.

"I think it's time," Hankins said after the meeting. "I decided it's time for me to do that. I can keep on working, but it won't mean a lot to me ... it would not be as gratifying because I'll be working for Uncle Sam." He noted that because of the current tax structure he would be better off financially to retire when his contract expires.

"I owe it to me to take some 'R



HANKINS

and R," he said. Travel and fishing are two of the activities that will be on his agenda this fall.

Looking emotionally strained after the announcement, Donna Baxter,

board chairman, declined to comment at the conclusion of the meeting and could not be reached Tuesday.

A Brunswick County native, Hankins has spent 35 years in the local school system, starting in 1952 at Union High School. After military service and a stint in Anson County, he returned home and began moving up through the ranks, from elementary school principal to director for audio-visual education where he organized the first film-and-record library for the county. He was promoted to assistant superintendent in 1973 and began managing federal programs in the school system, which included the implementation of the Chapter I reading program. In 1988, Hankins received another promotion to associate superintendent, and in 1990 he signed a two-year contract to serve as superintendent of schools.

The news of Hankins' retirement shouldn't come as much of a surprise to many, since it is something he has talked about the past several years. When he was appointed interim superintendent in July, 1990, he said he didn't plan on seeking the job full-time because he was too close to retirement. But he accepted it when the board chose him over three other candidates.

Looking back over his tenure as superintendent, Hankins said, "I've had some good successes. This has been a couple of rewarding years. It was good experience.

"I've been able to impact on some students and employees. I think I've made a difference."

The search for a new superintendent is something in which Hankins intends to be involved.

Then, he said, "I'll try to wrap up some loose ends and move out at the end of September."

Board hears review

South Middle project better than 'chill out'

By Marybeth Bianchi
Feature Editor

South Brunswick Middle is well on its way to implementing the Comprehensive Management Concept, the school's principal told the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night.

Les Tubb reviewed some of the program's chief components and explained how the school staff is tailoring them to complement the middle school concept.

"The faculty wants to make sure we keep the middle school philosophy in place," Tubb said, giving students a chance to succeed and take responsibility for their failures.

Mike Occhipinti of the N. C. Department of Public Instruction has scheduled a May 27 visit to South Brunswick Middle to work with faculty on the "nuts and bolts of the program", Tubb said. Parents will get a chance to learn more about it during a May 28 meeting of the school's newly formed PTA.

Tubb told the board the adviser/advisee program, which currently has a 1-to-26 teacher-student ratio, will be down-sized by a change in scheduling, giving every faculty member responsibility for just 15 students.

While Tubb considers all middle school students to be at-risk, those who face more serious problems will be assigned to A/A groups where they can get the additional attention they require.

The student services management team will include about ten people who will meet daily for one period to work on problems associated with high-risk students.

In-school suspension will be changed to "chill-out" and discipline and attendance policies will be reviewed to determine when students will be sent to "chill out".

South Brunswick Middle is also looking at extending the school day and incorporating some principles of outcome-based education, where students are given additional opportunities for academic success. Tubb said assistant superintendent Bill Turner is looking for ways to make buses available to transport students who stay after regular school hours.

Tubb said the school is also pursuing a greater networking of school and community resources.

Although he said the staff has been enthusiastic about comprehensive management, Tubb told the board that teachers are feeling especially frustrated with the additional stress of dealing with the end of a school year.

Just as South Brunswick Middle's staff is working to improve education at its school, teachers across Brunswick County will be helping each other become better educators, the school system's staff development coordinator told the board on Monday.

"We have to get better at our delivery of instruction," said Gloria Yount. Instead of workshops led by outside experts, Yount suggested the school system use "the best of the best" of local teachers to offer staff development to their peers.

Sixty teachers have already been identified as possible candidates and the list will be narrowed to about a dozen to become a "cadre of trainers," Yount explained. Training for those teachers will begin in August.

"It's nice we can finally recognize the talent we have," board member Polly Russ commented.

One example of teachers helping other teachers was provided by

Carol Midgett, a first grade instructor at Southport Elementary School, who along with co-workers Harriet Powell and Sandra Mullins organized the Brunswick County Geometry Team. The team attended a seminar on implementing the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics curriculum and evaluation standards in geometry and have been sharing what they learned with educators in Brunswick and New Hanover counties and others across the state.

An update was given on another grassroots effort to raise the level of instruction in Brunswick County.

Frank Blackmon presented a report on recommendations for the development of the Center for the Advancement of Math/Science Education as proposed by members of the Brunswick County Math/Science Alliance.

The goal of the center would be to enhance science and mathematics education in the elementary and secondary schools and the community college. A hands-on approach to teaching would be the focus of instruction.

In the proposal is a suggested organizational chart, which includes a coordinating committee and six sub-committees, which Blackmon recommended be made up of business people, educators, parents and students. It also explains the role and duties of the center's paid director.

"We believe to get something done, that the people of Brunswick County can believe in and maintain in perpetuity, there will have to be involvement by the people of Brunswick County," he said. "There's a lot of talent in this county, an incredible amount of untapped talent."

We just need to go out and ask." Chairman Donna Baxter said this was the first she and superintendent P. R. Hankins had heard of the recommendations, and since Blackmon would be presenting them to the Brunswick Community College trustees later this week, the board should delay taking action on the proposal until it could be fully reviewed by the two institutions.

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