

# New methods Schools hot topic in north Brunswick

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student services management team which will provide one-on-one daily contact with at-risk students; nurturing classes designed to maximize opportunities for success for at-risk students; flex scheduling that gives students opportunities for enrichment classes, reteaching/retesting and make-up time for absences; and an after-school learning lab.

While the regular school day will begin with the first bell at 8 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m., there will be opportunities for learning from 7:10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A school day will consist of eight 48-minute classes. Ninth and tenth periods will be added at the end of the day for enrichment classes, research and development and the learning lab. An optional zero period class will be added from 7:10 to 8 a.m. Core classes -- English, math, science and social studies -- will be offered from 3 to 5 p.m. for students needing a flex schedule.

"We're trying to make school an interesting place," Sellers told the board. Discipline will be handled "in a more positive way, trying not to be as punitive."

To that end, the school will have a "Choices room" for students who break rules. It will take the place of in-school suspension.

Students who are late for class, who skip class or who disrupt class will report to "Choices" and will be held responsible for making up work they missed on an hour-for-hour basis.

The new policy also states that students who miss more than ten days of school, excused or unexcused, will fail the course for the year. However, before things get that far students are given opportunities to make up the work they missed. After the fourth absence, they must make up the work hour-for-hour within five days of the absence, and when that's done that absence is erased.

At North Brunswick, the approach for learning enhancement will be a little different.

Four teachers will be available from 3:05 to 4 p.m. five days a week to help students having trouble in math, science, English and social studies. Harris said the learning labs would start about the sixth week of school.

A Saturday school will be available to students who break rules and would normally end up with in-school suspension and for those who need to make up absences.

"This chill-out option is a thing that's going to work for us," Harris told the board. It is similar to the "Choices" class that will be set up at South Brunswick High.

Harris estimated the school would need an additional \$10,200 to carry out the program he proposed to the board. The money would be used for teacher salaries.

With a puzzled look, board chairman Donna Baxter asked Harris why he requested additional funding for his learning enhancement programs when neither South Brunswick nor West Brunswick had.

"I don't think there's any enhancement program that's not going to cost you money," he said.

Sellers said teachers at South Brunswick will be able to flex their work schedules so they can work the same number of hours a day, but schedule their time early or late in the day, at no additional cost to the school system.

Board member Polly Russ encouraged the board to support Harris' proposal.

"I don't want to stifle what North Brunswick wants to do. Our high schools are obviously on the right track," she said.

By Marybeth Bianchi  
Feature Editor

The most important message to come out of last week's meeting in the sweltering heat of the North Brunswick High School gym was directed toward parents:

Get involved. Demand more from the school system, but be willing to give your fair share.

The two-hour meeting organized by the Northern Mayors Council had the potential to be unruly, especially as the temperature and tempers rose in the non-air-conditioned gym. Speaker after speaker talked about the poor condition of the schools and education in the Leland area, but few got angry at school officials and most encouraged parental involvement.

"All we're asking for is the opportunity to have a say-so. Please listen," Jean, a mother of six, implored school board members and administrators in attendance. "We won't get hostile. We only get hostile when you won't listen to us."

Tina Child, president of the Lincoln Primary PTA, told parents to get involved in their children's education.

"The more you get involved ... you'll know what's going on and you'll make the difference," she said. "Be a part of your child's education."

While 250 volunteers at Lincoln donated 4,000 hours of their time during the 1991-92 school year, more volunteers are needed at Leland Middle and North Brunswick High schools, Child pointed out.

*'If our parents are telling our children everything is bad, that's what they're going to believe. Too many good things are going on for you to say everything is bad at the north end of Brunswick County.'*

Polly Russ



make demands ... "and get to the voters box and vote our conscious," Mrs. Thomas urged.

Pointing out that North Brunswick is not alone in the county when it comes to school-related problems, board member Polly Russ from Shallotte urged unity and a change of attitude.

"We need to quit saying 'the north end of the county'. You are doing some great things, but unfortunately the negative things are what they hear about.

"If our parents are telling our children everything is bad, that's what they're going to believe. Too many good things are going on for you to say everything is bad at the north end of Brunswick County."

"If you're a parent and you haven't been to the schools, then shame on you," chided working mother Letha Thomas, who made a videotape of the good and bad differences that exist among the county's 11 schools.

For example, there are computers in every classroom at Southport Elementary School. However, they were not put there by the school system, but through the efforts of the school's PTO.

"It's up to you to do some of this on our own," Child told the Leland area parents gathered in the gym. The school system did match funds raised by the parents to purchase \$7,500 worth of computer equipment for the North Brunswick schools, she said.

"They are willing to help us if we help ourselves. If we get out and work, they are willing to work with us," Child commented.

Earlier in the year the three PTAs compiled an 11-page list of concerns and possible solutions that was presented to the board of education. Several of those items have already been addressed, Child pointed out. For instance, concerned that a majority of kindergarten children were starting school at three- and four-year-old levels, the school system obtained a grant to fund a summer enrichment program to get kindergarten children off on the right footing for the start of school in August.

"That's one of the things our administration has done for us this year," Child pointed out. She said she is trying to get a preschool program started in northern Brunswick County, because children enrolled in Head Start spend more time riding a bus to the program located at Ransom, in Columbus County, than actually learning. Head Start is working on a plan to house a program near Lincoln Primary by the 1993-94 school year.

"We all need to take the blame that North (Brunswick) has been getting the shaft. This end of the county has never gotten its fair share," one father complained.

Another said he was never able to arrange a meeting with his child's teacher to discuss problems, while a father of two said he doesn't fault the teachers for problems in the school.

"The teachers are really doing a fine job ... in really trying conditions," he said.

Sudie Mintz asked, "What can we do about teachers who are not teaching but have tenure and say there's nothing we can do?"

School board member Bob Slockett urged parents to voice their complaints about teachers. "This will be very helpful in obtaining the necessary documentation."

The board of education can do nothing about removing teachers with tenure without documentation provided by the school principal, board chairman Donna Baxter explained. Principals evaluate teachers twice a year and must compile evidence the individual is not doing his

or her job. "We can do nothing without it. The principals must do their jobs. They must document. We do have teachers who are not doing their job," Baxter acknowledged. "But our hands are tied. Principals must do their job."

Joe Bryant urged parents to be more aware of what their children are taking to school.

"The gun problem is not the school's problem. It's the parents' problem," he said. Children shouldn't be allowed to leave their house with a weapon, he said. "If we would do that at home, we would not have a problem with guns and knives at school."

Several speakers urged parents to get out and vote for the school board and county commission candidates who would do the most for them.

"If you want to see changes you need to be prepared to support tax increases and bond issues," said Artis Bryant.

Improvement in the school system will only come about if parents

## Youngsters assisted by reading program

By Marybeth Bianchi  
Feature Editor

Sixteen four-year-olds at Lincoln and Union primary schools will get a jump start on reading through an expansion of the Chapter I program.

Chapter I is designed to give students who score below grade average on reading tests extra help.

Patricia Ward, Chapter I supervisor, told the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night that parents of four-year-olds will be notified in August of the pre-kindergarten program screening process. The 16 children with the lowest scores will be accepted into programs at the two schools, which will be offered all day, five days a week. The school system will provide transportation for the students.

The regular Chapter I program will be expanded into the second grade during the 1992-93 school year, Ward said, and will be offered at nine schools in the county, including the new Supply Elementary School.

The federally funded program expects to serve 1,070 of the 1,500 eligible students at a cost of \$1.3 million. Six additional teachers and a part-time parent coordinator will be added to the Chapter I staff.

Chapter I serves children who test below grade level on math as well as reading, but the program supervisor said Brunswick County focuses on the reading program because students did not seem to have difficulty in doing math computations. The problems arose when they were required to do word problems, indicating problems with their comprehension skills, Ward told the board.

Because Chapter I eligibility is tied into California Achievement Test scores, Ward said she doesn't know what screening criteria will be used for the program next year when the CAT is eliminated.

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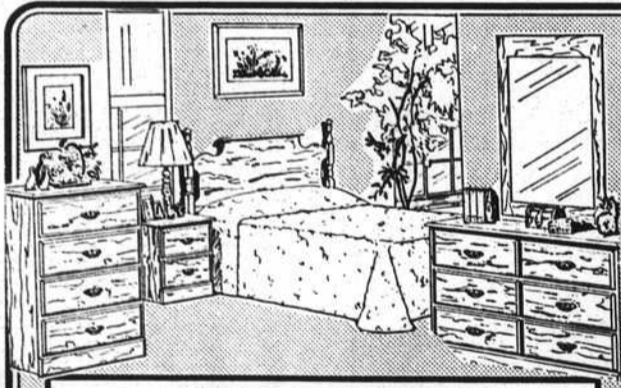
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