

# The Warren Record

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## Public Housing Concept Comes Under Discussion

By THURLETTA M. BROWN  
News Editor

Although no citizens presented themselves for comment at last Wednesday night's public hearing on the establishment of a Public Housing Authority or Redevelopment Commission for Warren County, the board of county commissioners devoted the scheduled 15 minutes to discussion of the proposal.

"It's just another handout," Commissioner William Skinner said.

The Rev. Donald J. Wess, pastor of Coley Springs Baptist Church who was present for another matter, challenged that evaluation, noting that Rocky Mount had an excellent plan for housing. The Rocky Mount project has utilized the former R. N. Wilson Elementary School building as housing for senior citizens.

"I take issue with the thought that this would be just another handout or welfare," he countered, "and that is not the case. We need housing, and I would think our county would explore every avenue."

Chairman Eva Clayton confirmed that the benefits to be gained were indeed a form of assistance, but noted the worth of such a venture. "Income levels are so low in Warren County," she noted. "Unless projects are structured with federal monies or subsidies, there will be large numbers of persons in substandard housing," she surmised. "Cost is a question—Warren County can't afford to provide it."

Commissioner George Shearin noted the dire need in the county for public housing. "It is hard to believe, but a number of our residents live on only \$4,000 per year."

Community Development Director Reedy Carter reported that statistics he had received indicated that Warren County ranked second in the state in overcrowding, citing statistics which estimated 8.9 persons to one room. "We are also number two in the ranking when it comes to plumbing," he reported.

### Children Going To Fair Early

Warren County school children will be dismissed today (Wednesday) at 1 p.m. by action taken last Thursday night by the board of education.

The request, made by the Warrenton Lion's Club, was unanimously approved following discussion of policy, the history of such dismissals, and the potential for academic enrichment from the agricultural fair experience.

Superintendent Mike Williams reminded the board that the State Department of Public Instruction stipulated that each school day was to contain 5.5 hours of academic instruction. He also reminded the board that permission for early dismissal had been denied last year.

Board member Richard Roddy noted the potential for academic enrichment existed for those students who viewed the agricultural exhibits.

Board member Yarborough Williams agreed, noting that the event was a county-sponsored one and that the board was "obliged to support the community."

Comments from students this week revealed their surprise at the decision, but all seemed genuinely pleased with the opportunity to go to the fair.

Carter explained that a Public Housing Authority would lease housing, serve as a conduit for federal funds, and issue Section 9 certificates that would allow renters to get subsidies. "Renters typically pay 15-30 percent of their gross incomes," he said, "and the rest comes from Section 8."

Chairman Clayton noted that the Redevelopment Commission option was not as adaptable for Warren's situation, stating the commission was more appropriate for urban areas with active acquisition and demolition. "The Public Housing Authority would be a separate (from the board) organization" she said. "With that structure in place, the Public Housing Authority board could seek federal funds to fund housing."

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that a minimum of 25 residents of a county file a petition with the clerk of the board of county commissioners to demonstrate their belief that a public housing authority is needed.

Carter produced for commissioners a petition containing the signatures of 26 or 27 Warren County residents.

If the need is determined by Warren County commissioners, a resolution will be adopted, a board will be appointed and an application will be submitted to the Secretary of State to receive incorporation. Once the proposed housing authority has been incorporated, other forms and applications are filed with HUD to request funding. "The process is quite involved," Chairman Clayton noted.

"Hopefully something good will come out of this," commissioner Shearin said.

In other business, the board: —Endorsed procedures for selecting board of health members, and appointed the Rev. Donald J. Wess to the board of health, for a term expiring in January, 1989.

—Re-appointed Dr. Cosmos N. George, Mrs. Linda Blackburn, Mrs. Ann Copley and Mrs. Amy Norwood to the board of health for terms expiring January, 1990.

Appointed Mrs. Vilma Gatling to the Kerr-Tar Private Industry Council.

Appointed to the Domiciliary Home Community Advisory Council, pending their acceptance, Mrs. Mary D. Williams, Mrs. Julia Fitz and Mrs. Nannie Spruill. Mrs. Geneva Fitz was named as an alternate.

—Appropriated \$50 to Caswell Center of Kinston for its annual Operation Santa Claus program.

### Record Reached

The price of tobacco in Warrenton has reached a new record for the year, with tobacco selling for \$1.69 per pound last Wednesday. According to Mrs. Alice R. Robertson, sales supervisor, this is the "best average yet for this year."

Last Wednesday, 3,041,954 pounds of tobacco were sold, amounting to \$579,147.02 in sales, with only two percent going to Stabilization stocks. The high average per pound was an improvement from last week's average \$1.67 per pound.

At the Warrenton Tobacco Market, 2,691,302 pounds of tobacco have been sold so far this year, bringing in \$4,037,586.14. The average price per pound for this year is \$1.50, with five percent going into Stabilization.

Sales are scheduled to continue next week on Monday and Wednesday.



Fall made its appearance this week in Warren County, bringing with it a slight nip in the morning air and a few scattered leaves—with the promise of more of both to come. The camera was able to capture the serenity of the clouds which hovered over this field be-

tween Littleton and Vaughan, thanks to the watchful eye of the photographer and her desire to preserve the beauty of this scene for all to share.  
(Staff Photo by Dianne T. Rodwell)

### Superintendent Tells Board

## Assembly Generous To Warren

By THURLETTA M. BROWN  
News Editor

The Warren County Board of Education reconvened last Thursday night to continue the work remaining following adjournment after 11 p.m. last Monday night.

Matters of federal funding, student performance and personnel were discussed by members of the board, who were able to end their meeting at an hour some thirty minutes earlier than the one which had preceded earlier in the week.

Superintendent Mike Williams reported that education had gotten more funds from the General Assembly than he had ever remembered being appropriated in past years.

These allocations mean a great deal to small, less affluent counties that do not have the resources to provide all that is needed for their schools.

Educational officials have ranked Warren County 64th of the state's 100 counties in dollars spent per child for academic purposes. Although about 22 percent of the county's total budget is spent on education, the \$1,247 spent per Warren County child compares poorly with the amounts spent by the more affluent counties in the state.

The Basic Education Plan (BEP) was implemented in 1983 by the General Assembly to provide for an adequate, standardized, minimum educational program for all children in the state. According to Superintendent Williams, the BEP has helped to reduce class size, provide additional teachers for grades K-12, provide services for exceptional children, increase the resources available for vocational education and provide for instructional supplies.

Eight new positions have been funded: two assistant principals, one upper level Spanish teacher, two teachers for exceptional children, two elementary school music teachers and one middle school music teacher.

BEP will also permit the expansion of summer school programming. Last summer, 145 students in grades one through four, six and eight attended summer school here. Of those, 110 who were not promoted at the end of the regular school year were deemed ready to advance to the

next grade at the close of the summer session. According to Williams, BEP may permit expansion to areas other than remediation, such as band camps or computer camps. Next summer, the program will expand to include grades one through 11.

The superintendent also noted that non-BEP items funded by the General Assembly included texts for exceptional children, funds for student information management systems—about \$17,000 in computer equipment, and a \$250 stipend to teachers completing the Effective Teacher Training program.

Certain "special provisions" now have the full impact of law, he noted, among them the ban of standard norm-referenced tests in grades one and two, in favor of criterion-referenced tests. Criterion-referenced tests measure performance of a given task, while norm-referenced tests measure performance against the "yardstick" of norms established by statistical reference groups of students.

Other special provisions include: the use of vocational funds below the middle school level, if grade six is included; instruction in CPR and Heimlich maneuver technique for staff; and the elimination of the \$250 stipend for first-time teachers, who complete the Effective Teacher Training program.

The superintendent listed for the board the bills which had been ratified by the General Assembly that would affect educational policy and practice:

(1) S.B. 184 requires that dropouts be referred to the appropriate services, for example community colleges or technical institutes; (2) S.B. 573 mandates that student bus drivers be at least 17 years of age by Oct. 1; (3) H.B. 200 deals with the confidentiality of personnel files of school employees; (4) H.B. 231 adopts policies regarding the use of corporal punishment in the schools; (5) H.S. 458 requires public schools to report to local health directors any communicable diseases; (6) H.S. 960 prohibits misuse of confidential information; (7) H.B. 1011 eliminates central payrolls; and (8) H.B. 1019 limits activity buses to 55 miles per hour.

Williams noted that "the jury was still out on the matter of age

of student bus drivers," but reported the state was confident. "We'll just have to wait and see," he said. He also noted that the board would need to develop more detailed policies with regard to contents and accessibility of employee personnel files.

"The General Assembly's actions will foster a different relationship between boards of education and county commissioners," the superintendent said. "The Critical Needs Fund will not meet all our needs, but we are very encouraged." New guidelines mandate that counties apply by specific project, with a joint application submitted by both boards.

The issue of student performance was also addressed following the superintendent's report on end-of-course tests in algebra I, algebra II and biology conducted last spring.

In algebra I, five forms of a 95-question test were administered to 21 John Graham students, six Norlina Middle School students and 126 Warren County High School students. Sixty questions, identical on all five forms, comprised the "core" of the test. Thirty-five questions varied in each of the five forms, resulting in 175 question-options. A total of 235 questions were active in the tests administered.

In testing sites across the state, students answered 39.2 of the 60 "core" questions correctly. At WCHS, the 126 students taking the test answered 36.6 correctly. The 21 John Graham students answered 36.3 correctly and the six Norlina Middle school students answered 46.0 questions correctly.

Superintendent Williams noted that the sample size at Norlina was so small that test results should be interpreted with caution. Statisticians have found that extremely small sample sizes have questionable statistical significance since one or more high scores can skew the reported mean for the test. According to the superintendent, the Norlina group could have been comprised of a more select group of students.

Students across the state taking the algebra I test answered 144.8 of the 235 variable-plus-core questions correctly. For WCHS, the average number correct was 135.7. For John Graham, the

average correct was 127.6, and for Norlina, 173.

The algebra II test was administered to 32 ninth- and tenth-graders at WCHS. The variable-question-format was not a part of the algebra II test; only 56 questions, identical on all tests, were asked. For North Carolina students taking the test, 37.7 of the questions were answered correctly. At Warren County High, 32.9 was the average score.

The biology test involved five forms of a 100-question test. Sixty-six questions formed the "core," that portion of the test that was identical in all test rooms; and 34 (34 x 5) questions varied by classroom, for a total of 236 variable-plus-core question options. These items were administered to 212 students at Warren County High School.

Across the state, students answered correctly 30 of the 66 "core" questions. At WCHS, 34.2 was the average number correct. North Carolina students answered 137.2 of the variable-plus-core questions correctly. At WCHS, 121 was the average number of correct responses.

Board member Yarborough Williams questioned why only six students at Norlina had taken the test.

The superintendent noted that algebra I was not a requirement, but represented acceleration by a few students. "By providing algebra in grade eight," he said, "an additional year of math could be made available to students." The superintendent noted that there was a danger in putting students into the advanced course before they were ready.

Board member Richard Roddy noted that 27 students (21 John Graham and 6 Norlina) translated into a group of "better than 10 percent" who were ahead of themselves. "You don't get too many more than 10 percent in the above average category on the bell curve," he said.

A bell curve is a statistical concept that demonstrates performance. Most scores tend to cluster in the middle; only a small percentage tend to score on the upper and lower ends of the scale.

Williams queried whether the board was satisfied with only 10 percent being able to achieve "a little bit above average."  
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