

THE ZEBULON RECORD

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THE OFFICIAL ANSWER ON THE BOND ISSUE

The following questions concerning the issuance of bonds to provide funds for necessary school improvements in Wake County have quite naturally been asked all over the county. In an effort to acquaint the taxpayers with the facts of the matter, The Zebulon Record is presenting the following answers given by the Wake County Board of Education, the Board of Commissioners, School Superintendent Randolph Benton, and County Treasurer J. Milton Mangum.

Has a survey and an estimate of all the needs of the County been made?

Yes. A Survey Report—120 pages—was made in 1949 by the Division of Surveys, School of Education, University of North Carolina. The Wake County Board of Education, with the help of District School Officials, has made a careful study and estimate of costs.

Will each school and school district be assured of having its need taken care of?

It is believed that Bond money plus state school building funds and the capital outlay levy by the Commissioners will take care of the needs in all schools.

Why can the needs not be provided by levying the tax sufficient to pay for buildings as they are needed?

Practically, there is a ten year accumulation of building needs to be met now.

Increasing enrollment is calling for additional rooms. An additional Capital Outlay levy of 35c would produce less than one million dollars for Wake County and Raleigh.

What assurance is there that the tax rate will not have to be raised if the \$4,250,000.00 Bond Issue carries?

The tax rate for school purposes is sufficient to:

1. Carry present indebtedness.
2. Provide ample levy for new bonds.
3. Maintain Current Expense levy.
4. Still provide Capital Outlay of 10c to 14c.

What division of the funds has been worked out as between Raleigh and Wake County School Units?

Division of proposed bond funds on an equal basis as between the two units was put into the request made to the County Commissioners. This division seems to be fair and equitable.

Will teachers and other employees get any financial consideration if bonds are approved?

None whatsoever. Bond funds can be used only for capital improvements.

Will buildings and improvements be commenced as soon as bond money is available?

The plan is to meet the needs in the order of their urgency and to meet all needs as promptly as practicable.

Will the schools have a Capital Outlay levy sufficient to take care of additional needs as they arise?

With money provided by the bonds, if voted, the balance of Capital Outlay levy should be ample to meet the needs as they arise.

If the bond issue does not pass, what action will be taken?

According to the Board of Commissioners, taxes will have to be increased heavily. See statement by W. W. "Bill" Holding on back page of this newspaper.

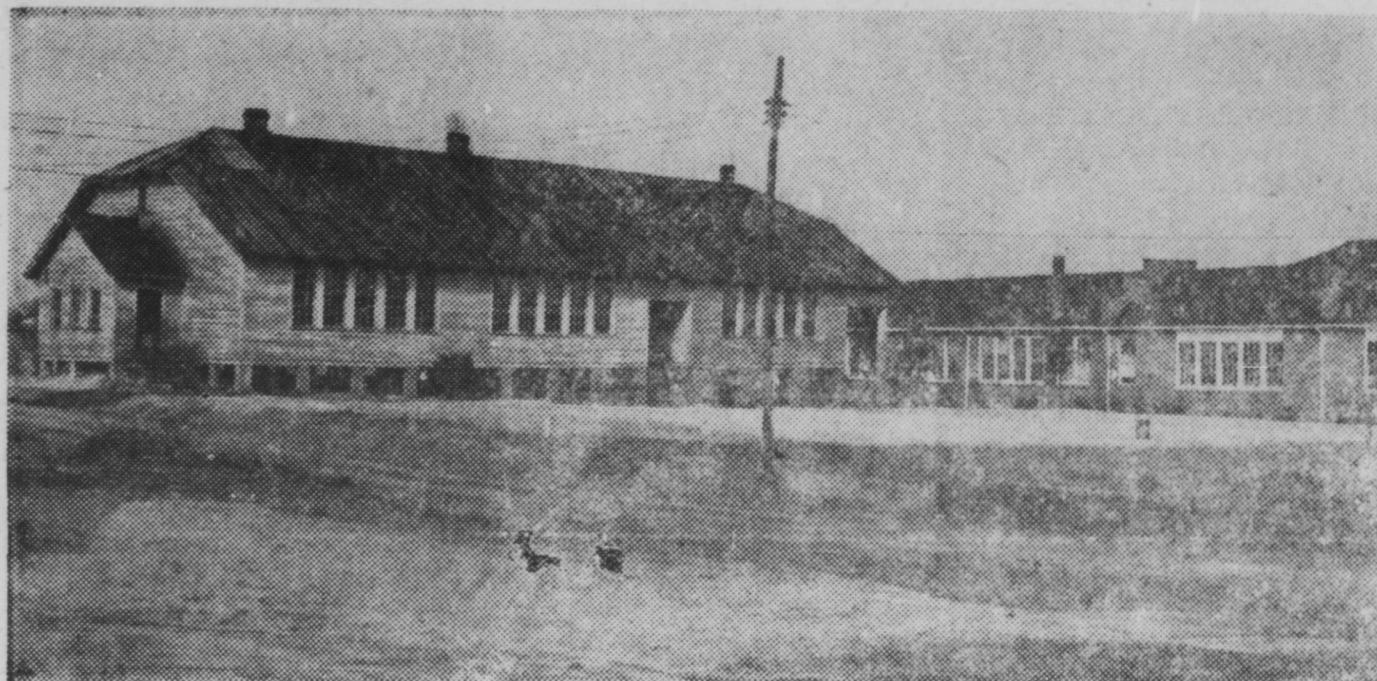
If the Wake County school levy were to be doubled, would enough money be raised to take care of this program next year?

No. It would take approximately ten years to raise the money with a school levy twice as high as at present, while by maintaining the present tax rate the bonds will be retired in thirty years.

Is further consolidation of schools contemplated if bond issue is approved?

No. All plans as approved by the State Board of Education call for no further consolidation of white schools. Colored units will be completed according to present approved plans.

ONE REASON THE BOND ISSUE MUST PASS



This old wood school building, now in use in southern Wake County, is indicative of other conditions which require correction in Raleigh and the rural areas of the county. To meet immediate needs a total of \$4,250,000 is needed in Raleigh and rural Wake County. On Thursday, April 20, the taxpayers of this county will have an opportunity to decide whether this money shall be raised through issuance of bonds, which can be retired by the existing school levy, or through an immediate heavy tax increase. Photograph courtesy of The Raleigh Times.

Wake County to Vote Thursday on School Bond Issue; Wake Officials Discuss Facts

The voters of rural Wake County and the City of Raleigh will go to the polls next Thursday, April 20, to cast their ballots on the question of issuing \$4,250,000 in bonds to provide required buildings for school children.

The bond election, which was called for by the Wake County Board of Commissioners at the request of the Wake County and Raleigh Boards of Education, will determine, according to County Commissioner W. W. Holding, whether the necessary funds to provide classroom and other physical facilities will be provided for by bonds to be retired over a 30-year period or through an immediate drastic increase in taxes.

Expansion of physical facilities is required, school authorities declare, because of the recent terrific increase in the birth rate. Births in Wake County showed a steady climb from 2070 in 1938 to 3281 in 1949. In addition, many families have moved into this county as the various towns have grown, and their children, born elsewhere, have swelled the total number of school children in the county school system.

World War II, with a ban on all building except that related to this country's war effort, added to the problem of housing for the county schools. Following the war a shortage of building materials coupled with stringent governmental regulations resulted in a building backlog of ten years.

Survey Is Made

Faced with this problem, the County Board of Education called upon the University of North Carolina for a school survey. Findings of this survey showed the county schools totally inadequate for present enrollments and recommended that adequate buildings be constructed as soon as possible.

County Commissioners inventoried schools needs and found that in order to satisfy them they would have to raise more than four and a half million dollars. These needs could not be met by levying additional taxes and thus the County school board began to study a proposed bond issue more than a year ago.

The present tax rate in the county is 75 cents per \$100 property valuation per year, which is all that property owners are required to pay.

Only 16 cents on each \$100 tax valuation is needed to finance the bond issue, and school officials propose to transfer this 16 cents from capital outlay to debt service fund to pay for the bonds. This would leave 14 cents in capital outlay for any emergency need that might come up.

Question of Finance

"It all boils down to the fact that the county can afford to build on the installment plan but can not afford to pay cash," says Randolph Benton, Superintendent of Wake County Schools.

The \$4,250,000 bond issue would be paid for over a period of 30 years. Another factor which favors a bond issue at the present time is the low rate of interest at which

the money can be borrowed. Money can be borrowed now at the rate of 2 1/4 per cent interest whereas some of the bonds issue in the past were for interest rates as high as 6 per cent.

State Requirements

North Carolina law requires each county to provide outlay funds for construction, maintenance and repair of school buildings. The ad valorem taxes levied by individual counties provide for this service, in addition to aiding the state in operating school terms longer than six months.

Diversion of these funds from current outlay has added to the problem faced by counties in keeping school buildings in good re-

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Message from the Wake County Superintendent of Schools

From 1940-1950 practically no new school buildings were erected in Raleigh and Wake County. The buildings and improvements in the 12 districts were only partially completed at the time World War II came to stop practically all building operations except for War purposes. Lunch rooms, libraries, and other special services had to be provided for in the buildings already constructed. A few new units have been provided within the last couple of years to take care of more critical needs.

The Boards of Education of the County and City, therefore, face at this time a tremendous backlog of building needs and a rapidly rising birth rate calling for new and additional construction which can not be provided without the issuance of bonds.

Conservative estimates of building and equipment needs in the school of Raleigh and Wake County exceeded the \$4,250,000.00 bond issue which is being proposed. However, with some State funds available for buildings and improvements and with some capital outlay tax money already being levied, the Boards of Education believe that they can meet the needs of the children at a time when these needs are most urgent. The Boards of Education and the Board of County Commissioners were reluctant to call for bonding to provide the necessary building. When the situation was recognized as being critical and when there seemed to be no other way of meeting the needs of the people of Raleigh and Wake County they proposed that the voters should be called upon to decide the matter of financing the school building program.

The people of Wake County and Raleigh are unwilling to deny their children adequate buildings and facilities for a good educational program. Furthermore, it is possible to provide the necessary funds without increasing the tax levy for school purposes, and the people of the entire County will have an opportunity and a duty to perform by expressing their wishes at the polls on April 20, 1950.

RANDOLPH BENTON
Superintendent Wake County Schools