

Former Business Manager Seeks School Board Forum

BY SUSAN USHER

The former business manager of the Brunswick County Board of Education has asked for a hearing before the board regarding her Jan. 16 dismissal by Superintendent John Kaufhold.

Elaine Shappell was fired by the superintendent a week after he posted notice of the post's vacancy at the board of education office in Southport. Notices were posted the day after Kaufhold discussed his intentions regarding Mrs. Shappell with the school board in closed-door session. Mrs. Shappell called in sick the remainder of the week, and received by certified mail a letter from Kaufhold giving her the option of resigning voluntarily or outright dismissal. She told local media, "Given the circumstances I can't resign." The business manager serves at the pleasure of the superintendent; however board attorney Glen Peterson said the board will honor Mrs. Shappell's request for a hearing.

Regarding the finance department, at Monday's meeting, in open session, Kaufhold shared with the board three recommendations made by the school system's auditing firm, Turlington & Flowers of Lumberton. The week of Mrs. Shappell's dismissal, auditor Charles Flowers spent two days at the board office at Kaufhold's request reviewing office procedures and management practices. Kaufhold said those recommendations included reorganizing the office so that one person is responsible for all bank reconciliations, simplifying the purchase order system and generating monthly reports.

At its December meeting, in executive session, the board had discussed having a consultant from the Department of Public Instruction come in to complete a time management/organizational analysis with the idea of reorganizing the department to make it function more efficiently. However, Kaufhold said he called the auditor in because it was faster and because the auditor was already familiar with the department's problems.

During the past month, Kaufhold said the business office staff made its two payroll deadlines, and pro-

gressed in catching up reconciliations and preparing past-due reports, purchase orders and payment on invoices. However, during a break in the meeting, Mrs. Shappell said the volume of purchase orders and invoices processed were normal workload. As for reconciliations, she said the staff person responsible for federal reconciliations had those in order before Shappell's dismissal, and that reconciliations from the auditor were not received until Dec. 22.

The board made Priscilla Gaskill's appointment as interim finance officer official retroactively Monday with a 3-2 vote. Bob Slockett and Donna Baxter were opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the board:

—Following an hour-long executive session, continued Monday's meeting until Thursday, Feb. 15, at 6:30 p.m. At that time the board will complete its scheduled evaluation of the superintendent. One member did not have his evaluation materials Monday. Also, the board will conduct a student hearing.

—Heard Baxley appoint a grievance committee of Dot Worth, Bob Slockett and South Brunswick High School faculty member Margaret Poe to a one-year term. However, near the close of the meeting, the board accepted the new chairman's resignation from the committee and appointed Ms. Baxter in Mrs. Worth's place.

—Approved routine personnel actions following the closed-door session.

—Heard from Don Warren, West Brunswick Boosters Club treasurer, and Ed Lemon, principal, regarding plans to improve athletic facilities for West Brunswick High School at Shallotte. So far supporters have raised \$25,000 toward construction of restroom facilities, a concession stand and new bleachers. They will seek 50-50 matching funds from the school board for up to a maximum of \$80,000, the figure set in approving a similar project at South Brunswick High School.

—Approved the consent agenda, which included four student trips, the superintendent's trip to the American Association of School Administrators National Convention in

San Francisco Feb. 23-26; and attendance at the National School Board Association Convention April 21-24 in New Orleans by Slockett and Worth, and E.J. Prevatte of the board's law firm. The student trips include a three-day visit to Washington, D.C., by a group of third-graders from Lincoln Primary School, some of whom shared data with the board on what they are learning about federal government.

—Agreeing with Baxley that the students had "got caught" in a policy transition, granted an exemption to a group of 40 North Brunswick High School seniors planning a May trip to Epcot Center for "Grad Night" and a one-day cruise to the Bahamas. The trip was planned and non-refundable deposits of \$75 per student paid before the board's new student trip policies were adopted. The seniors will miss two days of class. Class officers, faculty advisor Rosa Terry and the school's principal, James McAdams, appeared before the board to ask for a clarification of the policy so they could explain what had happened to the other seniors. Based on the board's policy, the superintendent had initially not approved the trip.

—Heard from Sam Stathos and Tania Butler on a recent trip to New York City by drama and advanced placement English students at West Brunswick High School.

—Heard from Assistant Superintendent Bill Turner that all but three county schools—Waccamaw, Union and the Alternative School—are on public water systems now.

—Authorized execution of a special order by consent with the Environmental Management that provides for bringing wastewater treatment systems at West Brunswick High, Bolivia Elementary and Waccamaw Elementary schools over a three-year timetable, while maintaining certain effluent quality levels. Should the schools miss deadlines set in the schedule, or violate effluent standards, the fines could range from \$1,000 to \$4,000 per incident. Turner said the school system plans to run three to six months ahead of schedule on all items except the last and most serious, which is construction of a treatment plant at Bolivia Elementary.

N.C. Writing Assessment Scores Vary For Sixth, Eighth Graders

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County students who participated in the state writing assessment last October attained mixed results, according to William Harrison, assistant superintendent for curriculum.

Reviewing scores with members of the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday, Harrison said eighth grade students' performance showed a "substantial" increase over eighth grade students tested a year earlier.

However, sixth graders who took the assessment in the fall did not do as well as their comparable group did a year earlier.

Also, Harrison was concerned that the range of scores varied dramatically across the eight schools involved. "Some of our schools did extremely well and some did not. There was a wide range from the high school to the low."

Discussions have begun with principals and others across the district to determine what factors influenced the scores. Harrison said one factor might be that the type of writing required of the sixth grade students is considered more difficult than that assigned the eighth grade students.

Sixth graders were asked to respond to a "clarification writing" prompt. They were to choose any day of the year that they especially enjoy, tell what that day and explain why they like it.

Eighth graders were asked to respond to a "persuasive writing" prompt regarding plans to add a new

subject at their school. Students were to choose a subject and write a letter convincing the principal that the subject chosen is the one that should be taught.

Each writing assignment was scored by a series of readers on both composing skills, that is, how well the writer communicated his or her ideas, and on conventions, or use of correct English.

Working with a scale of 1 to 4, a score of 2.5 or higher was considered a high composing skills score; a score of 2.0 or below a low score.

Conventions were rated on a plus or minus basis.

Of the 600 county eighth grade students tested, 74 percent, or 444, scored 2.5 or better on composing skills, putting them above the regional and state averages of 62 percent and 60.1 percent respectively. Of those 600 students, 61.3 percent earned a plus on conventions, which was below the regional average of 61.9 and the state average of 63 percent.

The county gave the writing test to 615 sixth grade students, with 49.6 percent of them, or 305, attaining scores of 2.5 or better on composing skills. This compares with the state average of 50.6 and the regional average of 50.4.

In conventions, 62.4 percent of the students earned pluses. On the state level, the percentage was 65.5 percent, and on the regional level, 64.5 percent.

According to Harrison, the test results are a good example of why students need to be given the opportunity to write every day as part of their schoolwork.

New Video Teaches Catch And Release


Fishermen can learn catch and release techniques by watching a new video produced by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

"Pass It On" is a 28-minute video tape that educates fishermen about the importance of saving the catch

for another day. It's part of an ethics program in the Southeast designed to encourage anglers to practice fisheries conservation.

The UNC Sea Grant college program has a limited number of copies of the video available for

loan. Anglers or fishing clubs interested in viewing the tape can contact Sea Grant Marine Advisory Services Director Jim Murray at 737-2454, or write to UNC Sea Grant, Box 8605, NCSU, Raleigh, N.C.



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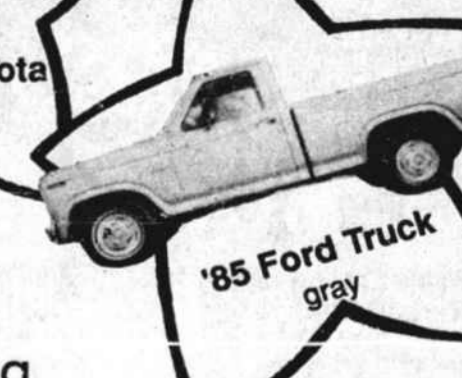
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