

Team Makes School Improvement A Philosophy

BY SUSAN USHER

An eight-member "school improvement team" began selling a new philosophical approach this week to their co-workers within the Brunswick County Schools, one aimed at making local schools more effective.

"If what we're doing now in the classroom is not doing for our students what we want it to, then we need to stop doing it," said Superintendent P.R. Hankins, one of the eight team members who recently completed their first round of training in Raleigh.

Hankins was speaking to the Brunswick County Board of Education, which met for five hours Saturday at the central office. Two hours was spent handling routine business, and the balance mainly hearing from the county's new School Improvement Team.

Brunswick County is one of 33

school systems in North Carolina accepted in the Effective Schools project this year. County team members have made a three-year commitment to helping make local schools more effective and more equitable, to make them places in which all students consistently learn and achieve.

It is a commitment they say fellow school system employees must make as well in order for the effort to succeed. Commitment will mean accepting that each is part of the problem and the solution and believing that they can change and can make a difference. Those who don't "hop on board," they warned figuratively, may get left behind or run over.

In addition to Hankins other team members include Mose Lewis, assistant superintendent for curriculum; Gloria Yount, staff development director; Joe Butler, Lincoln Primary principal; Robert Harris, North Brunswick High principal; Warren Fenton, an English teacher at West Brunswick High; Mary Katherine Griffith, a social studies teacher at Waccamaw Elementary; Gracie McLarty, a sixth grade teacher at Leland Middle.

Said Fenton, "If we want to improve we must become more effective and to do that we must change."

"We're not looking at this as another program," he continued, with Yount reiterating similar points. "It's a philosophy. It will serve as an umbrella for these other programs we already have in place."

Those programs include approaches such as cooperative learning, Reading Recovery and Outcome Based Education.

The Effective Schools philosophy requires no new money and now new personnel to implement—only the commitment of everyone involved to their team and acceptance of effective schools research, he said. Each school will eventually choose its own improvement team and begin mapping its own goals.

"Our mission statement will be to teach all students to our fullest potential," said Harris. "If we do that you will see effective schools. You will see good things."

Said Lewis, "It's all going to be a mind game. The name of the game is change. We owe it to the kids. We owe it to all of us."

Lewis said that instead of dictating

programs for schools to follow, the central office staff will provide support as needed to meet goals set by the schools themselves based on the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Added Ms. McLarty, "This approach allows each school to heal itself."

Changed expectations for staff and students will play a major part in the new philosophy. Instead of projecting that a certain percentage of students are bound to fail, as expected with the traditional bell-shaped grading curve, said Lincoln Primary School Principal Joe Butler, all staff should expect students to be able to master essential school skills with their help. School achievement will be expected to reflect more of a "J-curve," starting at a certain point and showing continued progress.

School improvement will be measured on the basis of student outcomes—the skills and abilities students exhibit, from achievement to citizenship and responsibility.

"We're beginning to focus in the direction of school improvement," said Hankins. "I think we're getting there and that we're on the way to a better day," said Hankins.

Calabash Planning Board Fills Out Its Membership

BY DORI C. GURGANUS

The Calabash Planning and Zoning Board is just about ready to select a new chairman and vice-chairman, an action that will ease the operations of the previously jeopardized group.

Pati Lewellyn, acting chairman of the board, said that once the members all become "familiar and comfortable working with each other," that they could go about naming administrative staff.

The board has been working with only four members since Aug. 27 when the entire seven-member planning board resigned. Four members finally rescinded their resignations after negotiations with the town commissioners.

One of the three resigning members was Chairman Tom Brendford. Ms. Lewellyn was vice chairman at the time, and assumed the position of acting chairman.

Ms. Lewellyn said only four members were necessary to make a quorum, and that a workshop and one regular meeting have been held since August with the members who hadn't resigned.

Town commissioners, at last Tuesday's regular meeting, appointed Bruce Kibblehouse and Mary Lou Taylor to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board.

Now with six members, Ms. Lewellyn said she hopes the board can begin working on choosing a new chairman and vice-chairman,

and that she was sure that action would be taken soon. She said she was not interested in remaining as head of the group.

"I'm very glad these two were chosen," she said of Kibblehouse and Taylor. "They'll be a big asset to the board."

Ms. Taylor was sworn in last week at the town hall, and Kibblehouse should be sworn in sometime this week, Ms. Lewellyn said.

The Calabash Planning and Zoning Board, according to its governing ordinance, is made up of seven members who live within the corporate boundaries of the town. Five are selected from District 2, and two from District 1. They are appointed

by the town commissioners.

Of the present group, Lewellyn and Forrest King are from District 1, and Taylor, Kibblehouse, Warren Peinack and Bruce Bunt are from District 2.

Three persons are selected to serve as representatives from the ETA (extra-territorial area). They vote only on matters affecting the ETA.

Town commissioners must still name a seventh member, from District 2, to the planning board. Ms. Lewellyn said that a few names have been suggested to Mayor Pro tem George Anderson, and that commissioners will probably make an appointment at their Dec. 10 meeting.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Marshall Named Chairman

Jean Marshall, executive director of Brunswick Adult Day Care Inc. in Shallotte and Southport, has been named state conference chairman for the North Carolina Adult Day Care Association.

Working with Association President Pat Baker, Ms. Marshall said she hopes to bring the September 1992 state conference to the local area for the first time.

Reports For Duty

Navy Fireman Billy D. Inman, son of Shelton and Martha Inman of Route 2, Ash, recently reported for duty with the aircraft carrier pre-commissioning unit *George Washington*, based at Newport News, Va.

Inman is a 1988 graduate of West Brunswick High School in Shallotte and joined the Navy in May of this year.

Completes Training

Navy Seaman Recruit Chris A. Davis, son of Doris M. Davis of Southport, recently completed training at Recruit Training Command, Orlando, Fla.

Recruits are taught general military subjects designed to prepare them for further academic and on-the-job training in one of the Navy's occupational fields.

Fireman Graduates

Coast Guard Fireman Apprentice Richard S. Adkins, son of Barry and Donna Adkins of Southport, recent-

ly graduated from the Coast Guard Training Center.

During the course at Cape May, N.J., students are taught general military subjects to prepare them for further academic and on-the-job training, leading toward qualification in one of the Coast Guard's occupational fields.

Chooses Army

Ronald J. Brady of Ash has enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve, with training to take place at the 993rd TC Company in Wilmington.

Brady is a 1988 graduate of West Brunswick High School, Shallotte.

Trains As Marine

Marine Private Jeffrey R. Rice, son of Richard Rice of Leland, recently completed recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C.

Rice participated in physical conditioning and was taught military skills including first aid, rifle marksmanship and close-order drill as well as teamwork and self-discipline.

Completes Training

Navy Airman Recruit Ronald B. Dickinson, a 1991 graduate of Brunswick Community College in Supply, recently completed training at Recruit Training Command, San Diego, Calif.

Dickinson was taught military subjects including seamanship, close-order drill, first-aid and naval history to prepare him for further on-the-job and academic training in one of the Navy's occupational fields.

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