

POPE CALLS FOR RESIGNATIONS

'Report Card' Shows Gains In 19 Of 28 Standards Marked

BY SUSAN USHER

Armed with chart and a pointer, Assistant Superintendent Mose Lewis reviewed the Brunswick County Schools 1991 "report card" with school board members Monday night, on the heels of a call from one audience member for the entire board's resignation.

Lewis, who is assistant superintendent for instruction, told the board that the overall summaries included on the report are three-year averages, which means that any progress made during the previous year results in a gain for the three-year period, however slight.

Brunswick County showed "some positive movement" in 19 of the 28 standards evaluated on the State Department of Public Instruction report card, said Lewis.

Brunswick County exceeded the 75 percent level required for accreditation, but was categorized as having below average achievement and as below par when compared to the state averages and to systems considered as "similar" across the state. "Par" was based on "advantagement" factors that include percentage of students on free and reduced lunches and levels of parental education.

The school system did not end up on a list of 23 school units in danger of takeover by the state. Lewis said he doesn't know how close the system might have come to being in that group.

The system did fail to meet the state standard at some level in two areas, Algebra I and attendance, and was warned that it must show improvement on its 1992 report card in three other areas or lose credit in those areas toward accreditation.

The algebra scores most likely dropped because the school system has begun channeling a larger percentage of students into Algebra I, which becomes a required course for

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Assistant Superintendent

graduation starting with the Class of '95.

"You do that and the numbers drop; we have to live with that," said Lewis.

Scores for Algebra II went up, most likely because students "self select" themselves out of more advanced classes.

In attendance the system missed the state's 94 percent mark by a half-percent.

"Attendance we may or may not be able to handle, but the ones dealing with academic performance—we can handle that," said Lewis, in predicting the system's efforts to bring up its performance.

As part of his presentation he reviewed the system's year-by-year goals under the Senate Bill 2 five-year school improvement plan, to which the report card is tied. The school system met its goals for the year in 13 areas, he said.

As for its approach for achieving greater results, Lewis said, the administration is giving schools flexibility along with accountability.

"We're recommending more nurturing at all levels. We're telling principals we do not care how you mix or match your people or how they teach," he said. "Teach the way you are comfortable with what you're doing—there's no one way."

Call For Resignations

At the start of the meeting, Thomasboro area resident Janet Pope called on the entire board to resign and allow another board to be

seated that would "take its responsibilities more seriously".

She said teachers, students and parents were not to blame for what she called an "F" on the report card, but the school board and its administration for allowing the schools to serve as "guinea pigs". She questioned whether the community is willing to accept an "F".

According to her calculations, the county school system "must be dead last in the whole country".

The board recessed Monday's meeting until 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10, at the central office at Southport.

Meanwhile it had two other meetings scheduled. Members met Tuesday night at Bolivia with county commissioners to present the system's five-year construction plan and to discuss budget preparations. A policy workshop with principals is scheduled at 9 a.m. Saturday, also at the central office.

More "Nurturing"

School board members agreed to a request from West Brunswick High School to establish a "nurturing" class for certain ninth graders as part of its Outcome Based Education (OBE) project.

A small number of students do not come for after school help and need more assistance, said Principal Ed Lemon. "There is always that

group of kids who drop out, don't attend and have discipline problems. We want to put together one class and find out what will work with them."

Lemon said the OBE program focuses not on "basics," but on the higher order skills such as thinking, problem-solving and creativity, that students will need to know as adults in order to cope with society's rapid changes.

Hands-On Training

Leland Sanitary District is cutting a deal with North Brunswick High School business students of teacher Carlie Luck in a joint use/transfer of property agreement approved by the board Monday.

The district office has bought a new computer to replace its Tandy 3000. Once the business students run "hard copies" of the 1,300-plus account histories stored on the computer, it will become the school's. That deal includes keyboard, monitor, printer and a palm-held meter reading computer suitable for inventory control. The equipment has been designated for that particular school, said Sanitary District Chairman Jean Speight, because it was paid for by local residents' water bills.

"I'm sure they would like their children and grandchildren to get the benefit of using it," she added.

Mrs. Speight said she wishes more businesses and government agencies would find similar ways to work with local schools to provide equip and out-of-school training opportunities.

Other Business

In other business the board:
■Recognized William "Bunny" Babson, maintenance supervisor, and staff for installing the new

wastewater treatment system at West Brunswick High School themselves at a cost of about \$48,000 and savings estimated by the state at \$75,000.

■Amended the budget to reflect an increase of \$27,950 in fines and forfeitures received as a result of a change in plea bargain agreement procedure by the District Attorney's office, and approved several other changes related to the system's banking, including doubling the limit from \$5,000 to \$10,000 on the credit card used to buy airline tickets and hold room reservations for staff travel, as recommended by Finance Officer Rudi Fallon.

■Approved the consent agenda, which included nine student trips and three student transfers.

■Heard of a county team's selection to participate in a "Strategy for Change" elementary school science conference, with all expenses paid by the conference sponsors.

■Heard from Bill Turner, assistant superintendent, that security and fire alarms in the schools are being upgraded as needed following a survey of all facilities.

■Appointed Royce Brown and Wayne White to the Leland Middle School Advisory Council.

■Received copies of the school system's Senate Bill 2 five-year plan for school improvement and accountability, which includes the system's goals for improving student performance in key areas.

■Heard from representatives of American Family Life Assurance Company on a proposed "cafeteria plan" of benefits and supplemental insurance available in conjunction with the plan.

■Heard from Turner that Union Primary School should be connected

to county water by mid-summer and that Supply Elementary School will be connected.

■Heard from member Polly Russ, who wanted to clarify to audience members that other schools, such as Shallotte Middle and Union Primary, are not being "slighted" as the units works to ready the new school and will see organizational changes and improvements as well.

■Heard from Gloria Yount, staff development coordinator, that the county level School Improvement Team was to have completed sessions at all 11 schools by today (Thursday), with a work session for all teams scheduled.

■Met behind closed doors to discuss personnel and attorney/client matters.

■Received a proposal, via Mrs. Russ, from the YWCA of Wilmington for providing after school day care at selected Brunswick County Schools starting with the fall term, for consideration at the March meeting.

■Authorized advertising for sale a Burroughs computing system that was replaced by an IBM system provided by the state.

■Received an invitation, via Union Primary School Assistant Principal Tom Simmons, to visit a year-round elementary school, Park View, in the Mooresville Graded School District.

■Heard from Turner that the first round of drug testing has begun for the 252 employees whose jobs include driving system vehicles—bus drivers, coaches, the superintendent and some other administrative personnel, including Turner. He said 19 of the first 20 persons whose names were drawn at random have been tested, with the results "all negative".

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