

Parents Lobby For New Primary School For Leland Area

...At Commission Meeting

BY TERRY POPE

Parents say Lincoln Primary School in Leland is so overcrowded that students are distracted and can't learn.

Their request for a new northern elementary school sparked a positive response from one Brunswick County commissioner at the board's meeting in Bolivia Monday night.

District 5 Commissioner Donald Shaw of Leland asked his fellow board members to "explore on their own" the conditions at Lincoln Primary and to "try to find the money to build this school."

Earlier in the day, Shaw took a tour of the school, which has an enrollment of 760 students but was built for about 500.

Glenda Browning and Tina Child, Parent Teacher Association members, presented the board a petition with about 1,200 signatures from residents who want a new school. They blame the county's overall low test scores on poor student performance at Lincoln.

"I was really embarrassed and ashamed," said Shaw. "I had not been through that school before."

Shaw said he saw overcrowded classrooms.

"It was more like a confinement really," said Shaw. "The students were in a state of confusion."

A new elementary school, Ms. Browning said, would allow northern Brunswick County to have a true middle school. Presently, Lincoln

houses grades K-3. Fourth and fifth graders attend Leland Middle School.

Elementary schools normally house grades K-5. Citing a report titled, "The Best Last Chance," Ms. Browning told commissioners that education experts proclaim the middle school concept as the best way of making sure fifth graders have the tools to perform well academically.

"If we don't reach them by that point, we've lost them," said Ms. Browning.

The Brunswick County Board of Education has a new elementary school for the area near the bottom of its five-year list of construction needs. A new elementary school is currently under construction in Supply.

"They said if they had the money they would build the school sooner," said Ms. Browning.

By law, counties are required to fund education, but the priority of projects is determined by the schools, not commissioners, said Board of Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden.

One-half cent of sales taxes collected in a county are used to fund school capital projects, said County Finance Director Lithia Hahn. In Brunswick County, that amounts to \$1.6 million this fiscal year, money that can be used to either build new schools or to upgrade existing buildings.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton agreed that it is still a lo-



LINCOLN PRIMARY parents Tina Child (left) and Glenda Browning ask Brunswick County Commissioners Monday for funds to build a new elementary school in the Leland community.

cal school board matter.

"As far as getting the priority changed, we can't do that," he added.

Number one on the school board's priority list now is a new central office, said Holden. The schools may build an office complex at the Brunswick County Government Center and move from its current center in Southport, a building which once served as a nursing home and is in need of repairs.

"One thing I want to see before discussing buildings," said Holden, "is what are the goals and how do you (school board) plan to improve the educational environment in

Brunswick County's schools. I haven't heard them. The only thing I've heard is that they want a new headquarters."

Kindergarten students enter Lincoln Primary at lower learning levels because there is no preschool program, said Ms. Child. Of 180 kindergarten students, 50 percent still function at an age 3 level, 28 percent at an age 4 level and 22 percent at average or above.

"We know there are real problems in the Leland area," said Ms. Child. "Lincoln Primary is already so overcrowded that in seven to eight years we're probably going to have a trailer park out back."

...At School Board Meeting

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Parents of children in the northern end of Brunswick County are agitating in two educational directions.

They want an elementary school built in that area as soon as possible and they see an urgent need for a pre-school program.

Polly Grady, president of Lincoln Primary Parent Teacher Association, told the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday that there are more than 1,000 names on a petition circulated in Leland to get a new school there.

"We understand that the Supply school is a priority and must come first," she said. "We don't want to set anyone back, but our petition is to the state to increase the percentage of sales tax coming back to the county to build schools."

One-half cent of the county's sales tax—a projected \$1.6 million this year—is returned for use in school capital improvement projects.

"I hope other county residents will also sign petitions to increase this amount," Ms. Grady said, "so we can build our other school."

She also reported on the need for a pre-school program. "We test all our kindergartners at Lincoln Primary School," she said, "and of the 150 attending this year, 50 percent function test at the 3-year-old level; 28 percent test at 4-year-old level, and 22 percent are average or below. We have five students who are above average."

Grady added that half the 78 students recommended for remedial work function below grade level. "By their fourth year, they're one year behind," she said. "We have day care and Head Start, but we need the preschool program. The YWCA is excited about helping us set it up, and we've located a church where we can have it."

School board member Robert Slockett assured her, "The board has been considering this for a long time, and we're behind you."

Board member Polly Russ added, "Public education is pushing for 4-year-olds in the schools. As a preschool teacher, I shrink from that, but we do need to put our money into Head Start or the Y for this purpose."

A new elementary school for the Leland area is included in the school board's five-year capital improvement plan. However, parents in the north end of the county said Monday the new school should be given higher priority.

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92-93 Calendar Reflects Nine-Week Grading Period

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

A move to a nine-week grading period and scheduling all high school graduations on the same day were the only changes in a 1992-93 calendar for county schools approved Monday by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Board member Polly Russ explained the new features. "A nine-week grading period was highly recommended by administrators and teachers," she said.

The schools are presently operating with a six-week grading period. Bill Shoemaker, principal of Waccamaw Elementary School, said the three six-week periods were simply "too close together." Particularly since the advent of the state's Student Information Management System (SIMS) involving additional paper work, Shoemaker said, "We're sending out progress reports and report cards on top of each other."

He pointed out that parents would nevertheless receive information about their children's academic work more often than every nine weeks. "We're sending home an interim report at five weeks," he said.

Mrs. Russ reported that graduation ceremonies for the three county high schools can be scheduled next year on the same date, June 12, 1993.

"Now that we will have the auditorium at Brunswick Community College, we have the space to hold exercises at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 6 p.m. High school principals asked that graduation be delayed to the 12th so all students can take final exams on the same day, and teachers would have time to do all the necessary grading and other paper work."

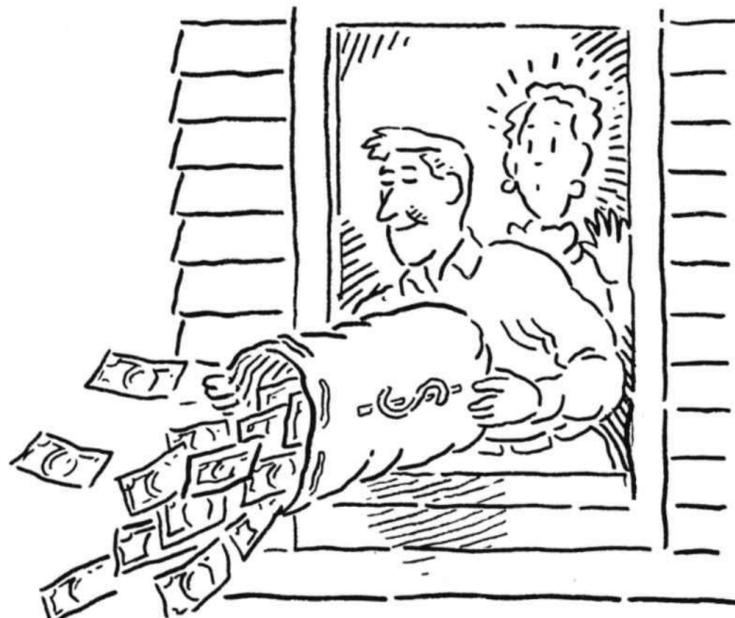
She added that students will have exams on the last three days before the Christmas holidays, "so they can enjoy Christmas and come back to school refreshed."

Another feature noted on the new schedule is that the 10th day of school falls after Labor Day. "That's an important day, because it's when the enrollment figure is used by the state as a basis for making allocations of teachers," she said, "so we need a maximum attendance that day, and have found it must be after Labor Day." September 9, following the September 7 Labor Day holiday, will be the 10th day of enrollment.

According to the calendar, teachers will report to work August 14 and the students' first day of school will be Aug. 26 and their last day will be June 8. Thanksgiving holidays will occur Nov. 26-27, Christmas holidays, Dec. 22 through Jan. 1, which includes six annual leave days. The Easter holiday will be on April 12, followed by annual leave days, April 13-16. Other holidays are Veterans Day, Nov. 11, Martin Luther King Jr. birthday, Jan. 18, and Memorial Day, May 31.

In addition, students will not report to school on teacher workdays: Oct. 30, Nov. 25, Dec. 21, Jan. 22, March 29, and June 9-11. Schools will also dismiss for students at noon for staff development on Sept. 23 and Dec. 4.

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