

SIXTH IN MONTHLY SERIES:

Flexibility

North School Faculty's Aim In Teaching

Story By Elizabeth Stewart

Photos By Tom McIntyre

Because of a wide diversity of abilities in students at North School, the faculty's aim is to be flexible, getting the most from each child without frustrating him.

This philosophy of education, according to Principal Richard Greene, in his 10th year in Kings Mountain and eighth year at North, offers different approaches to teaching which can be seen in virtually every classroom.

"It's easy for a teacher to program one lesson," says Greene, "but we at North believe we must be flexible in order to give our children a feeling of security, putting them first."

Mr. Greene, who came to the North plant from East School after a year at Park Grace, says reduction of class size from 36-38 to 25 has provided a more flexible program and a more individualized school, recalling his first experience in the classroom here when class size was approximately 36-38 for one teacher.

Principal Greene is quite proud of the state school kindergarten program, now in its fifth year, initiated in this district at North, the second year for the Governor's Primary Reading Program, and its Head Start Program, which was also initiated in the system at North for four-year-olds, a class of approximately 18 students.

What is North School doing for our children is the question the Association of Classroom Teachers asks in this another series of feature stories on the schools.

One innovation in teaching is an overhead projector in the fifth grade mathematics class instructed by Martha (Mrs. Glee E.) Bridges. The students can actually see sub-

traction and addition through audio visual aids and Mrs. Bridges, in her ninth year at North, feels it draws attention, and is much easier to use than a chalkboard. Record players, film strip projectors, and tapes are all used in this program. One method the veteran teacher uses to illustrate fractions is by dividing in thirds or fourths an angelfood cake in the classroom, each boy or girl getting a fraction of the goodie.

Mrs. Bridges says the overall goal is achieved in this method, pointing also to the wide diversity of abilities in the classroom.

Jane Talbert, a new teacher in her first year as librarian at North, instructs all students at least once a week in library skills and provides materials to all teachers, also checking out books to all pupils. The library is a busy spot at North and children in K-5 enjoy using its beautiful facilities. From the library area, the visitor can see the spacious commons area and springtime is a pretty season when the azaleas and dogwoods bloom.

Teachers also use "carry-over" specialized skills in music, physical education, speech, and psychology in the classrooms after regular visits from these specialists to the plant each week. On any given day, you can observe students in PE classes which were organized by a specialized instructor who visits on a regular basis and which the classroom teachers uses daily.

School is for children and not for adults is a theme the 18 regular classroom teachers emphasize for 461 children in K-fifth grades, including three classes of kindergarten pupils and a class of 31 exceptional children, plus Head Start class of 18 four-year-olds.

"We believe in working with the total child," said Principal Greene, focusing not only on his academic needs but on his social and physical needs.

Focusing on physical needs, for instance, North School serves breakfast to 150 children on a daily basis, some of these children coming from deprived homes and others coming from the more "well to do."

"It's important for a child to appreciate what he has and also to appreciate what he may not have," said Greene, who described school as a "growth process for all."

"We haven't departed from the basic skills but we use new approaches to teach them," he declared.

Kings Mountain's first state supported Kindergarten was begun at North School five years ago with 25 students with Mrs. Willie Marable as instructor. The program is "going

strong" with three classes now and Linda Hardin Stewart is Mrs. Marable's aide.

Identifying children with special needs is another target at North School where parents are brought to the campus for conferences with the teachers after a complete evaluation of the child and an individualized written plan with suggestions from the teacher, the learning disabilities teacher and school psychologist. Federal Law 94142 passed by the state legislature will have a great impact on this program, says Greene, who pointed out the law, which was passed without the resources to implement it, will force school systems to involve parents in decisions which affect the kids, particularly the handicapped child.

Mr. Greene said he and his staff "feel good" about a self-study now underway, purpose of which is to attain accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Fifteen committees are at work, surveying the school and the community, writing a philosophy of education, and explaining in depth a design for learning, all of which will be included in the self-study.

"This study will give us a close look at our strengths and also our weaknesses," said Principal Greene.

North School combines the traditional with individualized teaching and much flexibility on part of the teachers.

There is one incident of team teaching at North, no open classroom, as such. Principal Greene said it's his philosophy that if "team teaching" is to work that the teachers themselves must decide to work together, no way can an administrator make that decision.

North School initiated parent-teacher conferences for evaluation purposes and parents have responded well to them, said Greene. Each parent is called to the school twice a year for conferences and although there is a traditional report card, this plan much better "shows the parent just what his child is doing."

Mr. Greene can see many improvements each year at North School, believes his faculty is doing a better job each year.

"We haven't solved all our problems but we're working at them," said Greene.

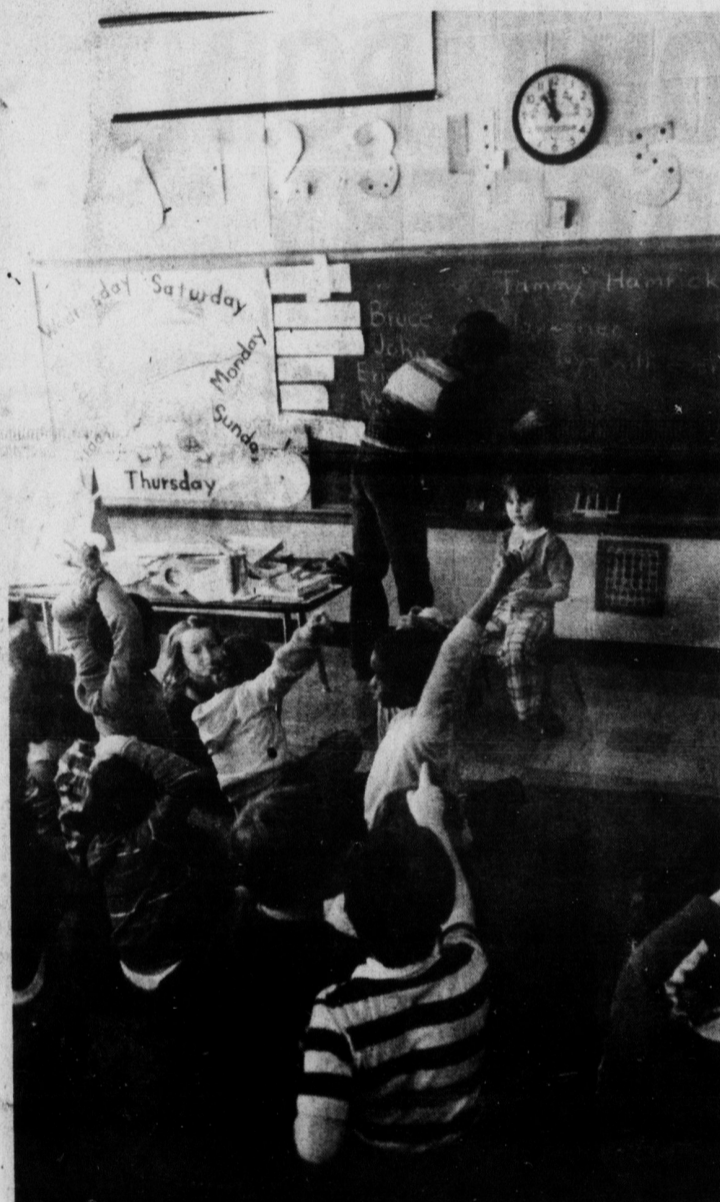
(Please Turn To Page 6B)

Living Today

SECTION B
Thursday,
March 16, 1978



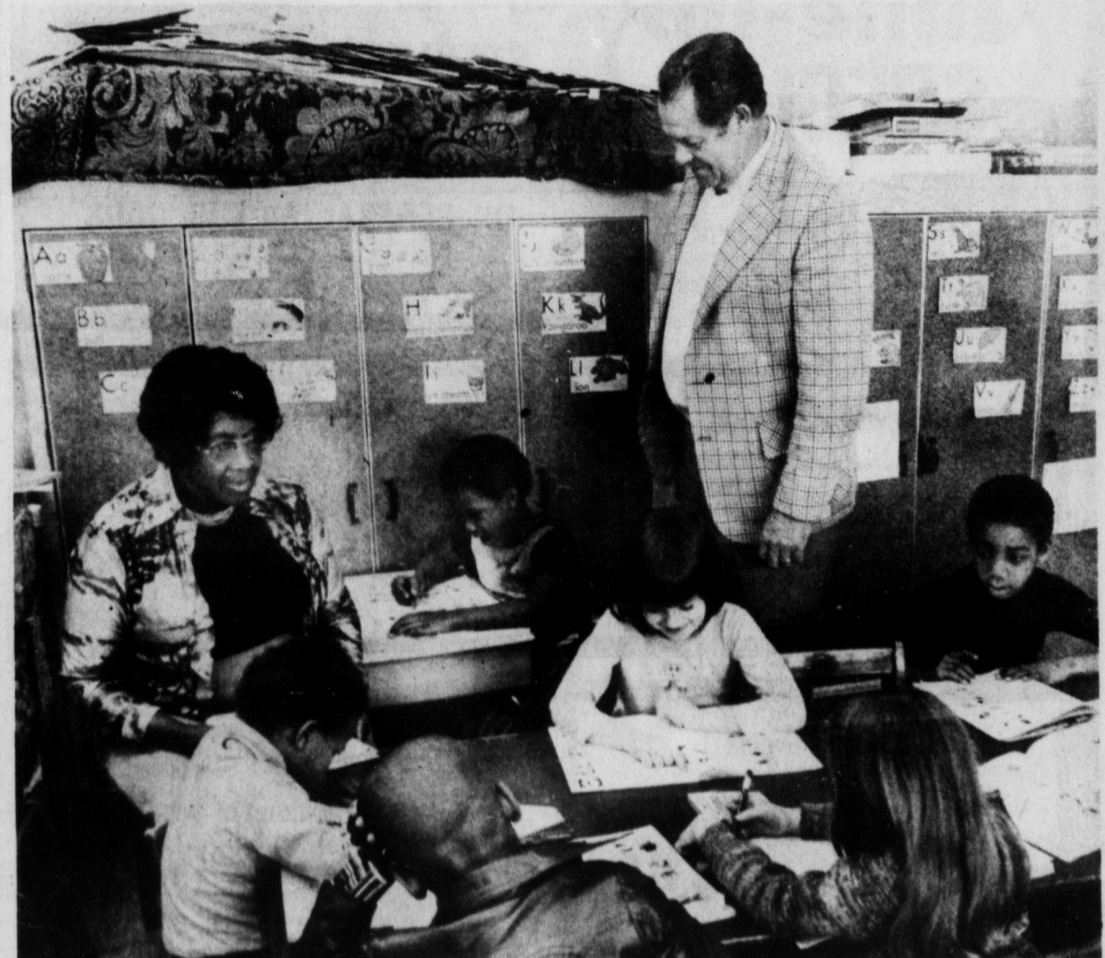
DISCUSS CLASS SCHEDULE - Principal Richard Greene, in his eighth year at North and 10th year in the system, discusses class schedules with Mrs. Beulah Carroll, fifth grade teacher.



PICK SPECIAL PERSON - Mrs. Gold's first grade selects a "special Friday person" and fellow class members discuss Tammy Hamrick above at blackboard whose name was drawn as a special Friday person.



KINDERGARTEN IS BUSY PLACE - Kindergarten students are pictured in Mrs. J. C. Marable's and Mrs. Mack Stewart's classroom, a comfortable spot which includes numerous centers, including the popular kitchen spot.



GROUP READING - Robert Hoster, a student in Mrs. Mildred Spake and Mrs. R. L. Garvin's first grade, reads for school board member Bill McDaniel, who observes a reading class where students are participating for the second year in the Governor's Reading Program. Mrs. Garvin assists other students as Hoster reads for McDaniel.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, & SATURDAY