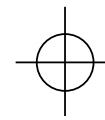


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A Bridge to the Future

Rockingham County Schools Annual Report — 2000-2001



Introduction

Schools are a reflection of the people they serve, and never has that been more apparent than in Rockingham County, a diverse community that is in a period of transition from a textile- and tobacco-based economy to one that will serve the citizens for the 21st century.

The school system is in a period of transition as well, with new leadership coming in at the administrative and board level. But who better to lead the county's 14,500 students through that period than the 25 principals, 1,000 teachers/specialists, central office staff and 680 support staff?

Over the past year, we have dealt with budget uncertainties, new student accountability standards, and legislative mandates. We have rallied our parents, set high expectations for our students, informed our community of state standards and established essential skills for promotion.

We have assessed our instructional strategies, discarded those that proved ineffective and replaced them with strategies that work. We have refined our alternative learning programs and the SCORE Center to better meet the needs of at risk students.

We have accepted the challenge of providing a sound basic education for all students and built our school improvement plans around bridging the achievement gap between minority and majority groups. We have collaborated with community agencies and individuals to provide guidance, remediation and support for students and staff as we seek to successfully engage students in learning.

Without question, during this period of transition for everyone, Rockingham County Schools will serve as a bridge to the future for your children. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,
George R. Fleetwood
Superintendent

Bill Holcomb
Interim Superintendent

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

For the second consecutive year, five of Rockingham County's 25 schools were named "Schools of Distinction" in the state's ABCs of Public Education accountability program.

Bethany, Central and Monroeton elementary schools, as well as New Vision Intermediate and Rockingham County Middle, earned the distinction as more than 80 percent of students at each school tested at or above grade level. It marks the fourth consecutive year Monroeton has been a "School of Distinction," while RCMS has earned the honor each of the two years it has served students.

Rockingham County Middle also was one of two schools in the county — along with Morehead High School



— to be named "exemplary" under the state's testing formula, which was revised dramatically during the 2000-2001 year. Morehead has been "exemplary" for four consecutive years.

Other highlights from the ABCs report:

"Expected" Growth Schools: Bethany, Central, Monroeton, New Vision, Stoneville, Wentworth, Williamsburg, McMichael, The SCORE Center

Proficient Schools: Douglas, Draper, Holmes, Lawsonville, Leaksville/Spray, Lincoln, Moss Street, Reidsville Intermediate, Reidsville Middle, South End, Western Rockingham Middle, Reidsville High, Rockingham County High

Low-Performing Schools: None for the fourth straight year. All but two of the schools had more than 60 percent of their students at or above grade level. Two schools had more than 50 percent of students testing at or above grade level.

FACILITIES

For the past five years, much effort and millions of dollars have gone into the construction and renovation of Rockingham County's schools.

Phase I of this process ended during the 2000-2001 school year with the completion of Lincoln Elementary in northeast Rockingham County. In Phase I, which started with the Long-Range Facility Plan established in 1996, Wentworth and Lincoln elementary schools were built, as was Rockingham County Middle School, and all of the system's schools were air conditioned.

With the support of the County Commissioners, the Board of Education now has the funding in place to complete Phase II.

Construction is underway on Huntsville Elementary, which will serve the southwestern area of the county.

Land has been acquired to provide for the replacement of Williamsburg, Monroeton, and Bethany elementary schools. In addition, renovation and construction projects for New Vision Intermediate, Dillard Primary, and Western Rockingham Middle School have been initiated.

Construction should be underway

for Williamsburg and Monroeton by spring of 2002. Additions to Reidsville Middle School and a new Bethany elementary school should soon follow.

With these improvements, our schools will be able to move to a county-wide PK-5 elementary school, 6-8 middle school, and 9-12 high school organization pattern with K-5 year-round magnet programs at New Vision and Moss Street schools.

The schools will have in place a sound instructional program designed to meet the needs of the students they serve and ready to handle the anticipated growth forecast along the southern border of the county.



TECHNOLOGY



During the 2000-2001 school year, Rockingham County Schools expanded its model program of technology training for administrators and teachers to include media specialists in grades K-8 and 8th grade teachers.

All administrators have participated in Leader of the Pack Technology Staff Development. Class reunions and "Birds-of-a-Feather" workshops allowed previous Leader of the Pack participants to stay up-to-date on new technologies and resources. The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund Grant Program was used in combination with state technology funds and local staff development money to fund the program.

The technology staff development program has been expanded to include middle school media specialists in a "train-the-trainer" approach.

During the 2000-2001 school year, more teachers received instruction to learn to use the technology available to them as an integral part of teaching throughout the curriculum.

Staff members are now using resources such as Internet (ie. Learn NC, NC WiseOwl, etc.), MS Works, MS Office and Hyperstudio to help students become technologically literate.

MAINTENANCE & TRANSPORTATION

The 27 members of the Rockingham County Schools maintenance staff not only make repairs to the facilities at 32 sites, but also perform several renovations each year, including this newly renovated computer lab at Dillard Primary. Pictured from left are Richard Tate, Donnie Carter, Paul Lasley, and maintenance director Dwane Strader. Seated is Dillard Principal Myra Moore.



The Rockingham County Schools Transportation Department operates 155 regular buses that carry almost 6,000 students more than 9,600 miles each day. The department also is in charge of the maintenance and upkeep of the system's vehicles.

With only one accident involving another vehicle and four accidents total (mailboxes, sliding into a ditch etc.) in 2000-2001, our drivers have maintained an excellent safety record.

Each driver receives specialized training in safety. Coupled with a new cell phone communication system on each bus, your child's driver is now only a phone call away from summoning help should any emergency arise.

CHILD NUTRITION



Rockingham County Schools' Child Nutrition Department served 445,853 school breakfasts and 1,722,694 lunches to students during the 2000-2001 school year.

Cafeteria staffs are in place at 24 of the system's 25 schools (the exception being the SCORE Center) and low-cost, nutritional meals are available for students and staff members.

Board of Education: 2000-2001

District 1: Herman Hines
District 2: Sandi Gann
District 3: Debra Paschal, Elaine McCollum
District 4: Nell Rose
District 5: Celeste DePriest
District 6: Wayne Kirkman
District 7: Carol Wright
District 8: Mary Martin, Tim Scales

Superintendent: George R. Fleetwood
Associate Superintendent-Administrative Services: Bill Holcomb
Assistant Superintendent-Financial Services: David Wise
Assistant Superintendent-Instructional Services: Jean Steverson
Assistant Superintendent-Human Resources: Lonnie Sechrist

HUMAN RESOURCES

Rockingham County Schools enjoyed one of its best years in terms of teacher retention and employment.

Our turnover rate fell from a high of 15.3 percent in 1999 to 10.1 percent during the 2000-2001 year.

Reasons for the reduction include:

- Personal attention provided to beginning teachers by the system's ILT (Initially Licensed Teachers) coordinator;

- An increased teacher supplement (5%); and

- The opportunity to employ more teachers from the local area.

In 2000-2001, the school system employed 106 new licensed personnel, including 81 teachers.

Forty-three teachers were natives of Rockingham County and 32 were from other North Carolina counties. Seventeen came from Virginia, two from West Virginia, and one each from Arkansas, Georgia and Maryland.

The Visiting International Faculty (VIF) program brought nine teachers to our county. The teachers hailed from such countries as Canada, Columbia, Costa Rica, Germany, Jamaica and South Africa.

The quality, experience level, and enthusiasm for the profession of teaching among our new staff is very impressive.

Improved teacher supplements, help with relocation expenses, and special "perks" from a supportive business community have all helped retain these valuable new

About Those Hired: 2000-2001

Number Hired	106	Areas of Licensure	
Female	86	Elementary	36
Male	20	Middle	22
		High	23
Number Minority	23	Other	25
Black	18	(Guidance, media, exceptional children, administration, English as a Second Language, social worker, etc.)	
Hispanic	5		
Where They Came From		College Degree	
Rockingham County	43	Masters' level	28
North Carolina	32	Bachelor of Science	47
Georgia	1	Bachelor of Arts	31
Maryland	1		
West Virginia	2	College Graduates From North Carolina	
Canada	1	UNCG	22
Columbia	3	NC A&T	8
Costa Rica	1	Appalachian State	7
Germany	1	East Carolina	4
Jamaica	1	High Point	4
Peru	1	Elon College	3
South Africa	1	UNC-Wilmington	2
		Bennett	2
Initially Licensed	51	Greensboro College	2
No experience	47	Other	9
Experience	4		
Lateral Entry	21	Virginia	
Emergency Permits	8	Averett	3
		Radford	3
		Other	6
VIF Program	9	West Virginia	6
ESL	4	Pennsylvania	3
Math/Science	3	Other U.S. colleges/ universities	13
Spanish	1	Outside United States	9
French	1		
Number Recruited	21		

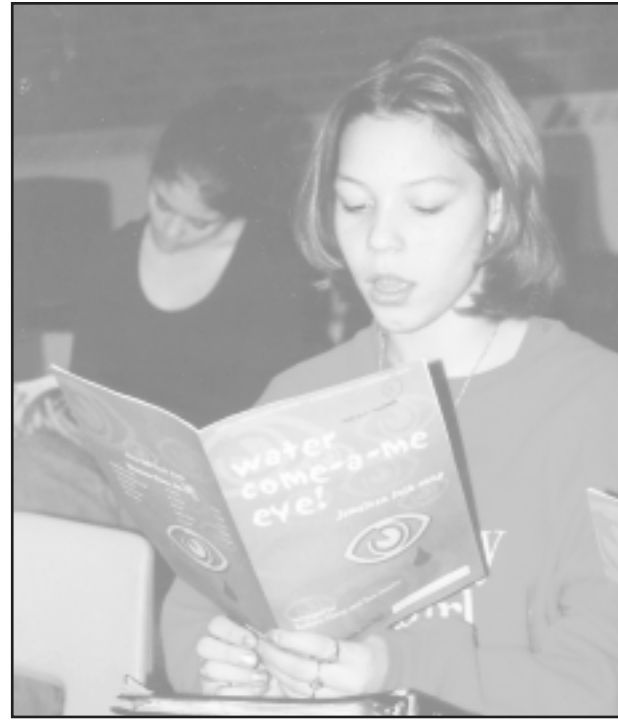
members of our community.

Our schools continue to lead the Triad in the percentage of teachers who have acquired National Board Certification.

At the end of the 2000-2001 school year, we had 35 teachers

who carry this qualification.

These teachers have successfully shown to a national board of review that they meet the rigorous requirements necessary to demonstrate excellence in teaching.



FINANCE

Rockingham County Schools total budget for 2000-01 was \$107,902,533, of which \$66,985,437 went directly to instructional programs.

Here is the breakdown of how the majority of the funds were spent:

Salaries

- \$65,097,021 (without benefits)
- \$78,347,047 (with benefits)

New Construction

- \$4,334,055

Child Nutrition

- \$5,678,187

Utilities

- \$2,593,260

The Finance Department of Rockingham County Schools publishes its own annual report in December. Copies of the report are available to the general public.

ATHLETICS

Morehead High School's athletes won the 2000-2001 Burlington Cup for having the highest grade point average of the four high schools. McMichael earned the FNB Sportsmanship Award.

Rockingham County's four high schools defeated visiting teams 95-58 in the FNB Third Annual Football Jamboree, sponsored by First National Bank-Southeast.

McMichael, Morehead, Reidsville and Rockingham County faced off against Central Davidson, Patrick County, Surry Central and South Stokes in the annual scrimmage, held prior to the start of the 2001-2002 football season.

Adam Lindsey, a junior at Reidsville High School, won first place at the conference, regional and state meets in cross country.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Rockingham County Schools is one member of a three-way collaboration. The partnership between parents, the community and the schools works to foster the growth and development of children. Together, our partnership creates the climate and produces the support necessary to prepare the next generation of citizens.

Parent Resource Center

The Parent Resource Center is continuing to build on its already stellar reputation, having been recognized in 1999 as one of nine school systems in North Carolina with the "Governor's Award for Excellence in Education."

The center expanded in 2000-2001 and is now located at the Eden Mall, the Western Rockingham Early Childhood Center at Dillard Primary School, and the Reidsville Early Childhood Center at Reidsville High School. The centers are filled with ideas, games, books and materials which parents will find helpful in a number of ways.

The center provides a unique bridge from the school system to the members of the community. It is available to all families of Rockingham County.

Teachers refer families to the center using a recommendation card on



which the child's teacher lists goals that the student needs additional resources to accomplish.

Parents are also referred to the center by Morehead Hospital, Head Start and other parents. Awareness of the Parent Center is promoted through community outreach projects like Tots-N-Training, which is a monthly take-home program for parents of 2-5 year olds.

Teachers distribute the Tots-N-Training packets that include a picture book, newsletter with articles promoting parent/child interaction, and a "prize" for the child that supports one of the learning activities in the newsletter.

Last year, more than 250 parents and students attended workshops at the centers. Staff members also made presentations at the National Title I Directors Conference in Phoenix, Ariz., the Interna-

tional Reading Association Conference in New Orleans, La., and at the National School Boards Association's annual bright ideas fair in San Diego.

For more information contact Sandy Morrison, Parent Center Coordinator, at 623-8098.

Homework Assistance Line

Use of the Homework Assistance Line more than doubled in 2000-2001.

Housed at the Parent Resource Center, the Homework Assistance Line is available from 4 to 8 p.m.



Mondays through Thursdays from October to May. Two certified teachers are available to talk with parents and students about their homework

needs.

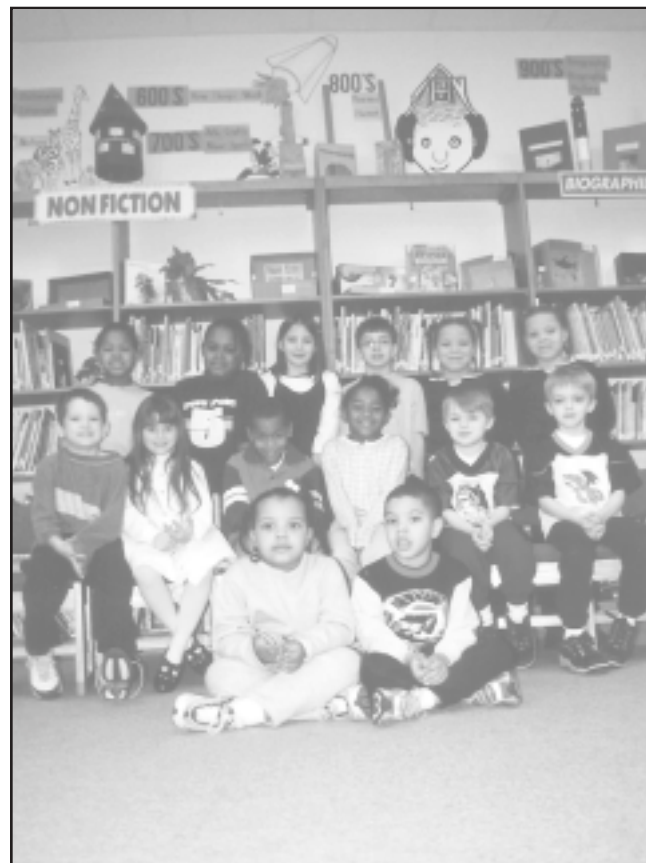
In its first year, 1,003 calls were logged into the free service. In 2000-2001, the number was 2,099 — a 109 percent increase.

Communities in Schools

Several schools have initiated Communities in Schools (CIS) programs where interested citizens can join with others in working one-on-one with a student in need of academic support or the friendship of a caring adult.

Programs now are in place at Holmes Middle School and More-

head High School in Eden, and Reidsville Intermediate and Reidsville Middle School in Reidsville.



Elementary Schools

The elementary schools have achieved success in helping students to learn and grow academically, emotionally, and socially.

In 2000-2001, the Four-Block Balanced Literacy Program was implemented system-wide in grades 3-5. This year a balanced literacy program for grades K-2 is being implemented, with Dillard Primary School serving as the model literacy school and demonstration site.

Programming continues to focus on the whole child. Along with preparation for academic success, students will participate in art, music, and physical education. Character education programs stressing responsibility, respect, kindness, courage, and integrity are also part of the elementary school experience.

Thinking Maps and Write from the Beginning (WFTB) are also standard in every school. Training in the use of Thinking Maps is offered on a continuing basis and

Highlights...

■ **South End Elementary School** was one of 23 schools named as a "Signature School" by the Piedmont Triad Education Consortium, which is comprised of 16 school systems in the Triad.

■ **Draper Elementary School** was named as one of 12 Lighthouse Schools in North Carolina by North Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The school was highlighted based on creative use of funding and staff to reduce class size to a ratio of one teacher per 15 students.

■ **Tina Hicks** of New Vision Intermediate School was named Rockingham County Schools "Teacher of the Year" for 2000-2001.

all K-5 teachers will be trained in WFTB this year. Staff development in reading and writing continues to be a major focus.



Middle Schools

The four middle schools in Rockingham County provided middle grade youngsters with academic, athletic, social and emotional experiences to foster their growth and development.

Each of the middle schools operates under the middle school philosophy. This module explores all of the developmental issues associated with middle schoolers and suggests ways teachers and administrators can make and implement decisions that promote students' self-acceptance and continued growth. All four middle schools in the system are now using "block" scheduling and team teaching to help middle school students bridge the developmental stages which occur between elementary school and high school.

We are proud of the end-of-grade test results earned last year in all our middle schools. Good leadership from our principals and energetic and dedicated teachers promise even higher achievement this year.

New English/Language Arts textbooks have been introduced this fall. This new series offers students a multitude of resources with which to work and an emphasis on reading and writing skills across all content areas.

Middle school students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of new electives over their three-year career in middle school.

Highlights...

■ The SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) process for two of our schools was completed in 2000-01. **Holmes Middle School** successfully completed its five-year re-accreditation visit in March 2001. **Rockingham County Middle School** received its initial SACS accreditation after their first visit that same month.

■ Middle school math teachers met with high school math teachers to decide on new courses needed and grade 8 Algebra I eligibility criteria. The outcomes of these meetings were a definitive set of criteria for these students taking Algebra I in eighth grade, and a new eighth grade math course called Advanced Math. The development of this curriculum was completed in June 2001.

■ The Federal Demonstration Grant, Algebraic Thinking, was in two middle schools during 2000-01. **Western Rockingham Middle School** and **Reidsville Middle School** used this approach with students who have disabilities as well as with those who would typically take Algebra as IA and IB.

■ Our middle schools chose to target the writing process last year. Three of our schools brought in a retired English/Language Arts specialist to work weekly with students for several months before the state writing test in March 2001.

■ **Reidsville Middle School** implemented Lightspan, a computerized remedial reading program. The program targeted 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students reading below grade level. The format of the program is a computerized game in which the student answers reading questions and gets to move on to higher levels in the game. Students involved in Lightspan showed greater growth on the End-of-Grade tests than students not involved.

■ **Steve Hall**, principal of Rockingham County Middle School, was named "Principal of the Year" for 2000-2001 in Rockingham County Schools.

Rockingham County's four high schools are continuing to serve as a bridge for students looking to move on to college and careers following their pre-K through 12 education.

A major change in the graduation requirements of our four high schools is that students must complete one of four major courses of study: Career Prep, College/Tech Prep, College/University Prep, or Occupational Prep.

We are awaiting the development of a new Exit Exam that will become a graduation requirement for this year's freshman class. Based on the application of knowledge and problem solving in the areas of science, social studies, math and English, students should begin to see elements of this exam show up in their course work this year.

This year, Morehead and Reidsville High School will participate in the Southern Regional Education Board's High Schools That Work school reform initiative. Both schools hosted representatives from the board in December. The visitors observed in classrooms, talked with staff, students, and parents and provided suggestions on how to better serve the needs of students.

High Schools

Highlights...

■ The school system received a two-year, \$114,000 Tech Prep grant to install and use video conferencing in the business departments at the four high schools. Rockingham Community College also received grant funds.

The grant, which provided \$57,000 in funds each year, allowed the school system to purchase video conferencing equipment as well as update electronics at the four high schools. It was written by **Kay Rogers**, director of secondary and vocational education.

■ High school math teachers developed a new course, *Introductory Statistics*, that is being taught for the first time in 2001-02. The course was designed by high school math teachers to address the needs of the humanities college bound student.

■ Rising 9th graders toured Rockingham Community College during their 8th grade year as part of the school system's ongoing career development efforts. Students have the opportunity to see first-hand the programs available to them when they graduate from high school.

Early Childhood/Exceptional Children/School-Age Child Care

Early Childhood Centers

Parent support for very young children is offered through the school system's Early Childhood Centers.

The purpose is to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for children which emphasizes self-esteem and enhanced language development through structured play.

The Early Childhood Centers opened last year on the campus of Reidsville High School and the extended campus of Dillard Primary School in Madison.

Both centers provide child care for children 6 weeks to 5 years. Both centers are open year round and follow the public school calendar for holidays.

Preschool Disabilities Program

The Preschool Disabilities Program provides early intervention for children ages 3 through 5 identified with developmental delays or at risk for difficulty in school.

Services are provided in preschool classes at Bethany, South End, Lawsonville, Williamsburg, Lincoln, Wentworth, Draper, Leaksville-Spray, Douglass, Stoneville, and Dillard.

To be considered for this program, each child is given a free screening assessment to examine their development in the use of language, reasoning ability, and motor skills.

Children demonstrating the greatest need are given first priority in placement.

Students with Disabilities

All students in Rockingham County Schools who have identified disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education.

About 13.5 percent of our students are identified as having special needs.

Services are based on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) which are developed jointly by parents and staff at least annually. The plans outline needed services as well as any accommodations and/or modifications required in the regular class and for testing.

However, all students are expected to progress in the general curriculum and all students must be included in any state testing used for student or

Highlights...

■ **Andy Thacker**, principal at Morehead High School, was appointed to represent District 5 on the state Exceptional Children's Committee by the State Board of Education.

■ **Susan Peele**, coordinator of preschool/ school-age child care, honored with the 2000 District Services Award from the NC Division for Early Childhood as professional who coordinates and organizes projects that provide early childhood services to children and their families.

■ Teacher **Ronda Ryan** copresented a session at the TEACCH winter institute on utilizing assistants effectively. Ryan also was named "ARC Teacher of the Year" for Rockingham County.

■ **Rhonda Brown**, Rockingham County's EC Teacher of the Year, also was recognized by DPI.

■ **Ann Brady**, director of Exceptional Children Programs, was appointed to state task force to examine learning-eligibility issues.

■ Training for drivers and monitors of special education buses was held. Sessions also were held for general and special education staff at the start of the 2000-2001 school year. David Mills of the state Department of Public Instruction presented to staff on "Caring and Belonging: The Foundation for Student and Teacher Achievement."

■ A computerized IEP and paperwork

program to assist special education teachers and therapists with their paperwork responsibilities.

■ The Community Forum on Young Children, which featured parents, educators, agencies, and providers, was held in March 2001.

■ Rockingham County Schools was chosen as the model math site through North Carolina's State Improvement Grant. This program, locally directed by **Daphne Wall**, focuses on improving North Carolina's system of education for exceptional children. It will span five years and will allow our system to develop a Best Practice Center for teaching mathematics through the Algebraic Thinking system.

■ A High Standards/Inclusive Practices program has been launched at Rockingham County Middle School. Through a cooperative agreement between RCMS and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the program will look at inclusive practices and high standards. The task force focused on regular education and special education teams and appropriate strategies for successful inclusion settings at the middle school level.

■ **Sherry Gick**, **Donna Johnson**, **Rita Gorham** and **Daphne Wall** trained on best practices in reading. Model reading programs have been implemented.

school accountability purposes.

The school system has a model inclusion program and provides observation sites and training for schools throughout North Carolina. Rather than mainstreaming, where students are placed back into general education classes without support, inclusion involves the addition of special education and related services to the general program whereby students with and without disabilities benefit from the resultant team of teachers.

In addition, RCS has community based instructional services for specific high school students with disabilities where they can learn job skills directly in community sites and work towards a High School Certificate or a High School Diploma through the Occupational Course of Study.

If parents suspect that their child may have a disability, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns

with the child's teacher. They may also request consideration for referral for evaluation from their principal or counselor or they may call the special education department at central office.

For preschool students, parents with concerns should call the special education preschool department at central office directly.

School-Age Child Care

School-age child care is offered through certified programs that provide a safe learning environment for students from 6:30 a.m. until school opens and from 2 to 6 p.m. at Bethany, Wentworth, Lincoln, Monroeton, Stoneville, New Vision, and Dillard.

All day care is available on teacher workdays and during the summer months. Through a special contract with the YMCAs, a similar service is available to students attending schools in the Reidsville and Eden communities.

Also...

The Curriculum and Instruction Department, under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent **Jean Steverson**, received a two-year, \$200,000 "Bridging the Gap" grant. The funds — \$100,000 each year — will be used to provide professional development and add Accelerated Reader programs, Lightspan and various other remedial programs at school sites.