

# The Lenoir County School Media Programs

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Lenoir County Schools

Lenoir County Schools were national finalists in the 1971 Encyclopaedia Britannica School Library Awards program and were named second place winners in 1972. This award is made to the school systems which, with due consideration for resources, show the greatest measure of growth and progress toward the goal of good library media service in the elementary schools of the system as a whole.

Change . . . Unrest . . . Busing . . .  
Change . . . Students . . . Media . . .  
Change . . . Challenges . . . Individualized  
instruction . . . A unitary school system . . .  
Team teaching . . . A retiring superintendent . . . A new superintendent of schools  
. . . Change . . . Board of Education  
changes . . . Philosophies . . . Tutoring  
. . . Change . . . Non-gradedness . . .  
A national finalist and a second place  
winner in the Encyclopaedia Britannica  
School Library Awards . . . Change . . .

Our school system along with hundreds of others across this nation has experienced great changes in recent months. Throughout these turbulent days of trying to shape public opinion favorably for our public schools, of trying to prevent a mass exodus into private schools, of seeing a new superintendent installed who was a former high school principal in our system and familiar with our media program, and of seeing three new members on the Board of Education who are committed to continued good media services in our

schools — throughout these changes there have been many links that have kept our system strong.

Perhaps one of the contributions to this success has been our continued pride in the great strides that have been made in our elementary media centers. Much publicity has come to our school system from throughout the state and the tax paying public is aware of the fine results that have been achieved by our media centers. Recognition as a national finalist in 1971 and a second place winner in 1972 has been used successfully as one way of telling the public "What's right with our schools." As a result of this recognition, evidences of internal growth are shown daily: the principal who realizes that he has the poorest organized media center in the school system and is trying to improve this situation by more guidance and supervision; the librarian who requests flexible ways that students can carry media into the home; the civic club that requests a tour of this media facility that everyone is talking favorably about; the mother who loud and vocally laments that she will not move her child to another school system, although circumstances warrant this move, because this system has better media services; and the classroom teacher and the media specialist who decry the duplication of spending and buying in the school and are instrumental in setting up an advisory committee within

the school on selection and acquisition of materials. These and many other examples each day bring home with great forcefulness how great the impact can be for better schools when the public and school personnel are aware of what good media services imply.

We do not view the library as a museum for storing materials. All instructional materials, book and non-book, are available to our learners for home use. The materials are placed out on open shelving for easy viewing and for use by teachers and students. The media center's leadership has to develop a philosophy concerning loan procedures or it could very easily become frustrated. We have had broken projector bulbs, torn art prints, broken disc recordings, tapes spliced with scotch tape—the gamut of accidents any good normal use of equipment and materials will experience—but not enough of this to warrant not allowing learners to make free use of all materials. This school year all the media centers are using white tote bags with big, red letters which say "Take Me Home." This open invitation to take media into the home is rarely turned down by teachers or students. The enthusiasm for media use in the homes has prompted a group of local businessmen to produce Educational Media Take Home Bags. The trade name is "Dem Bags" and the address is P. O. Box 132, LaGrange, North Carolina.

The selection of a small rural school in our county as one of the first ten Demon-

stration Library Projects in this state gave impetus to the need for better library facilities in our county. At this same time the County Board of Education allotted funds to insure a minimum of ten books per child in the county. In the meantime significant changes have occurred in the media centers in Lenoir County.

The greatest asset to elementary school libraries in Lenoir County has been the interest of the superintendent and other administrative staff. Their interest has had a tremendous impact on the Board of Education. The administration and Board of Education maintain that with improved media facilities better services will follow. The sincere application of the administration's belief that the media center must be truly the instructional materials center of the school has led to appropriations each year for the renovation of an elementary school library. When Lenoir County renovates, it leaves nothing to the imagination. A slanting auditorium floor was literally cut loose from the sides and raised manually to make a level floor. This old auditorium is today a truly lovely media center. Yellow paneling with sunshine yellow walls; colorful carpeting that is durable, yet inexpensive; red chairs, blue chairs, yellow chairs; a place for all media; and good lighting. This old auditorium has received a new lease on life.

During the summer of 1971, the aforementioned media center was chosen by the State Department of Public Instruction as one of two in our state for a

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media institute of four weeks duration. This center was selected because of its suitability and the influence of its environment on day to day instruction for the participants. The program employed in this center is an example of a meaningful program and today draws interested visitors almost daily from surrounding areas.

Mrs. Carol Simmons, Southwood School librarian, had these comments on ideas that have changed the course of the curriculum and the total concept of library services at Southwood.

We began this past year to employ a system which we had used experimentally for two years in summer school. For circulation a child comes individually from his classroom at any time during the day. He just picks up a small wooden library pass from the chalkrail in his room (each class has 2) as he completes a classroom activity or seatwork and comes to the library for a short period. He is learning responsibility by this as he must go quickly to the library and make his selection and return in time for the next activity. He must judge when the appropriate times are for him. The others in the room serve as good monitors as there is someone to remind them if the stay is too long as there is always someone else waiting to go. For general circulation only two can come at any one time from each classroom. Six or eight can come for reading, study, reference, using A-V materials, special projects without the teacher. Teachers bring their classes in for class instruction of library skills, programs, speakers such as policeman on drugs, band from Woodington Junior High, library week play or just for storytelling and reading in the story amphitheater in the corner of the library.

The children are responsible for their own check-out. They sign their card, stamp the date checked out (as we have no specific date due—just use promptly and return.) Then they place their card in the box with their teacher's name on the shelf beside where they place the materials which they return to the library.

A-V materials are checked out the last thirty minutes of each day as well as the encyclopedia, tapes, filmstrips or whatever.

We keep science specimens and other items of interest in the library and children are beginning to bring things in on their own.

We now have several specimens caught by our own school people—including an octopus and a small shark in jars of solution.

We have had a couple of live specimens on display such as a crayfish which students bring in. We have a thirty gallon aquarium (built by one of our former teachers) with mollies and guppies. This past year we developed an interest in cactus due to an A-V unit kit prepared by a fourth grade teacher on deserts and when a member of the staff took a trip to Arizona she brought back cactus seed. We used them to start a desert terrarium. This has been quite interesting to watch. It also is interesting to watch the children—some of whom will come by every few days to count how many seeds have sprouted!

We have two glass showcases which are used for student work in the entry to the library. This year we made special display of three students work which had won contests (county or area.) These recognitions were laminated and presented to the child at the end of school. For example, one sixth grader wrote a play for a dental health contest, winning second place in the county. We typed the play placing it, the child's picture, a ribbon on a large piece of railroad board in the shape of a tooth. We did this to inspire other students to participate in contests and to develop interests in creative activities.

One teacher from each grade level and one from the special areas plus the librarian and learning lab coordinator form the library selection committee to purchase new library materials. This key teacher discusses at grade level and gets requests from the others. The requests are compiled and ordered by the librarian. This procedure has been followed for the past five years.

This past year we assembled all science equipment in the school and have set up science experiment trays for student or teacher checkout. These are housed in the library for use in the library or elsewhere. We are setting up a science lab table in the library. This project isn't completed yet as much equipment has to be replaced.

We have used the VTR to video tape special TV programs such as the president's trip to China and our own guest speakers such as the Jewish rabbi to discuss the Arab-Jewish situation, our own productions such as the George Washington program the first grade presented and the Woodington Band Concert.

This past year much interest was shown by teachers in production of A-V materials to meet their specific needs. This was evidenced by the number of our school staff—twenty—to participate in our production workshop taught by principals, Vaughn Fowler and Willard Rouse. We purchased a Kodak Visualmaker for making slides and a camera

for making filmstrips. With this equipment we can take pictures from any source or our own in proper sequence to produce a filmstrip. This came in near the close of school and we have two or three specific projects in mind involving our own students. This should be a very interesting and helpful teaching tool.

This past year we used a totally new inventory checkout system for A-V equipment and a similar system has been adopted for County ESEA material. For this we used a large loose leaf accounting book. We used a page for each type equipment such as filmstrip projector, 16mm projector, screens, globes, wall maps, easels, aquariums, abacus, flannel boards, etc. Some of these are assigned to the teacher for the year or long periods of time.

The book is used as checkout for the others. This one thing has helped tremendously by cutting down on searching through inventory cards and checkout cards. I am also able in a moment's notice to tell someone exactly where each item is located.

Mrs. Ruth Rouse, librarian at LaGrange Elementary School, developed a system of coding and labeling books by color and number. This color coding method enables even the first graders to shelve books successfully. Volunteer help expedited the implementation of this shelving method. Mrs. Rouse says that cooperative teachers like non-scheduled classes and that more valid use has been made of all media this past year than ever before. A variety of class projects and individual projects was constantly being carried on in the media center with transparency and tape production for classroom use leading the list of the many types of media being produced. The swastika carrels, designed and color-coordinated by Mrs. Rouse, are highly recommended by her for individual work with students.

Mrs. Ophelia Frink, librarian at Frink Junior High School, transferred the total school production area into the media center. Students were welcomed and encouraged to make transparencies, to do picture lifting, to duplicate, to laminate, to record, etc. An A-V club was organized to assist in the production area and to help operate the machines in the classrooms.

Teachers and students were instructed in the use of the equipment.

Each school has had a certified, full-time librarian and library aide. These aides have become well-trained by in-service workshops and on-the-job training. The instructors for the workshops are our own qualified personnel who know best the needs of our county. All aides and more than sixty per cent of all teachers have received this audiovisual training which includes production and the proper utilization of media. The library aides were employed by federal funds. This year library aides are not allowable under ESEA-1. This is a blow to the library program, but already volunteer help is being solicited for the media centers. Because many of our centers have had outstanding volunteer help in the past, there is every reason to believe that this will continue in some of our schools.

Each year more school personnel enroll in workshops in the production and utilization of media to enrich instructional programs, and because there is a demand from the school personnel for this training it is provided on a system level or on an individual school level. These workshops are adding a new dimension to the media programs in the schools. The many visitors that come to this system to view the centers in action see examples of a program within a rural area where a large portion of the students come from a meager environment, since more than fifty per cent of the students in our school system are educationally deprived as defined by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Each media center has an extensive collection of framed art prints purchased to meet curriculum needs and to give personal pleasure and enjoyment to the students. The student can select the print he likes, use it in the classroom, and take it home for further enjoyment with his family. The print is put in a tote bag that is locally made and the child takes it home on the bus.

The centers and most classrooms are



equipped for viewing and listening. The media centers are using flexible scheduling for most classes which encourages independent study and the use of media facilities and discourages the lock-step grade trip to the media center every Tuesday at 10:00 A.M. regardless of the need. No one is too young to operate the equipment as long as he has the desire. Small group listening and viewing with recordings, filmstrips, books, the 16mm projector used in the classroom by teachers and students, the overhead projector, tape recorder, 8 mm console with its single concept teaching advantage which is so easy for youngsters to use and so valuable in instruction, the language master, and carousel — all can be valuable aids to instruction when properly used. At the close of the school day, the student is allowed to take previewer and instructional materials home for further use if needed.

All of the media housed in the media centers in the schools are cataloged in the unified media card catalog. Whatever the needs of the learner — a filmstrip, a book, a globe, a disc recording, a tape, an art print, or a study print — all can be found in the media center in the unified media card catalog.

In our school communities we see involvement and interest in school libraries. The media centers are thrown open to clubs and organizations for use. We have seen art clubs come into the school for one of their meetings and use the art materials that the library provided. These women had a wonderful time and went away to tell others. When the Rotary Club held a meeting in another library, the librarian featured for them the North Carolina materials on display in the media center. The firemen met in the library and saw the materials on safety. Book Clubs, as well as PTA groups, have met in the media centers. Principals and librarians report with great satisfaction that these organizations were astonished and delighted that their communities could boast of so many fine materials to be used only for the asking.

Many civic groups, such as the Ruritan

Club, Jaycees, and the Business and Professional Men's Club have given generously to the library budget or have purchased equipment for centers. The schools and civic groups purchased a sixty-dollar banner to be placed across our main thoroughfare proclaiming National Library Week. This was the first time that our town had used a National Library Week banner and there was much notice made by the news media.

We are not an affluent county. Our funds are limited. We do not have a large library program, but its organization can accommodate expansion and growth. We have not had an extensive building program. We have utilized existing buildings. We have tried to make wise selection of materials and equipment to meet our local needs and by doing so we believe that they have been better utilized. After all, utilization of well-chosen materials is the key to a successful media program.

Our schools have become a complete unitary school system. We are working and will continue to work in such a manner that all students will receive the type of media services that should be provided for them. A continual evaluation of materials, a continual objective of achieving the *Standards* as a minimum for our students, a continual up-dating of personnel through in-service training, and a continual awareness of helping to make our administration, schools and communities demand excellent library services — these goals are major and will be given our support.

This school year, new media facilities at the two senior high schools have been opened for use. These media centers have been planned carefully to implement the program that we endorse here in Lenoir County and they work with the additional thrust of having this elementary media program as a stimulus. The school media specialist and two para-professionals who work with her know the groundwork in our elementary media program and carry on with the same philosophy that was begun in these elementary media centers. We are proud.