

Banks school administrators tackle reasons for poor test scores

Banks School Board approved modifications to several policies, mostly to bring them into compliance with new regulations and heard positive reports from school administrators about the beginning of the school year. Superintendent evaluations were reviewed and discussion of the board's self-evaluation was postponed to the next meeting.

Board members Doug Nordholm, Gene Kelly and Willis Meeuwssen discussed comments by an unidentified board member in regard to the board's goal of attending school events. Nordholm suggested keeping a record of board visitation and attendance at events, but he dropped the suggestion after Meeuwssen objected. Superintendent Marilyn McGlasson told the board that

their involvement and presence at school events and in classrooms is greatly appreciated by the staff. Kelly agreed that visiting programs is a good way to let staff know that the board is an active part of the team.

The superintendent's evaluation was, as usual, very positive, with the only possible negative being some concern about the board's ability to discuss policy with the administration. McGlasson assured the board that she, and all of her administrators, are willing to discuss policies. She also told the board that they can request a review of any policy.

McGlasson told the board she had requested that each school administrator develop an analysis of their students' statewide test scores, accompanied by an action plan for im-

provements. Math textbooks will be purchased for all grade levels this year as part of the effort to improve math skills, according to McGlasson. Administrators agreed that it was important to note that this year's scores included both students with disabilities and students previously counted as having met the standard (by conditionally meeting the standard) who are now counted as NOT having met the standard.

Elementary Principal Marty Voge told the board that, while reading and math scores were statistically comparable to statewide averages, math scores in both third and fifth grades dropped, as did reading scores in the fifth grade. Voge told the board that a math incentive program, Spotlight on Math, would be implemented. Voge also told the board that regular and prompt attendance would be emphasized at Banks Elementary this year.

Pacific University students will work with students not meeting the standard at Banks Junior High, according to Principal Mark Everett. Reading scores have dropped over the last four years. Everett said that staff has engaged in in-service training to improve reading abil-

ities for all students. Math scores indicated a slight increase over 2002. A class for students who score below benchmark is offered to eighth graders.

As previously reported, math scores at Banks High School took a nose-dive last year. Principal Jim Foster said that at least four major issues were responsible for the decline, including changes in which students are included in the test results, delays in the purchase of textbooks because of unstable funding, an additional test component and staffing issues.

Foster said he was pleased with the response of his staff, which met over the summer to develop an action plan. Textbooks have been purchased, a new, slower-paced math course will be offered, and curriculum will be revamped to address deficient areas, Foster explained.

Following an executive session, the board ratified contracts for both certified and classified employees for the 2003-2004 school year.

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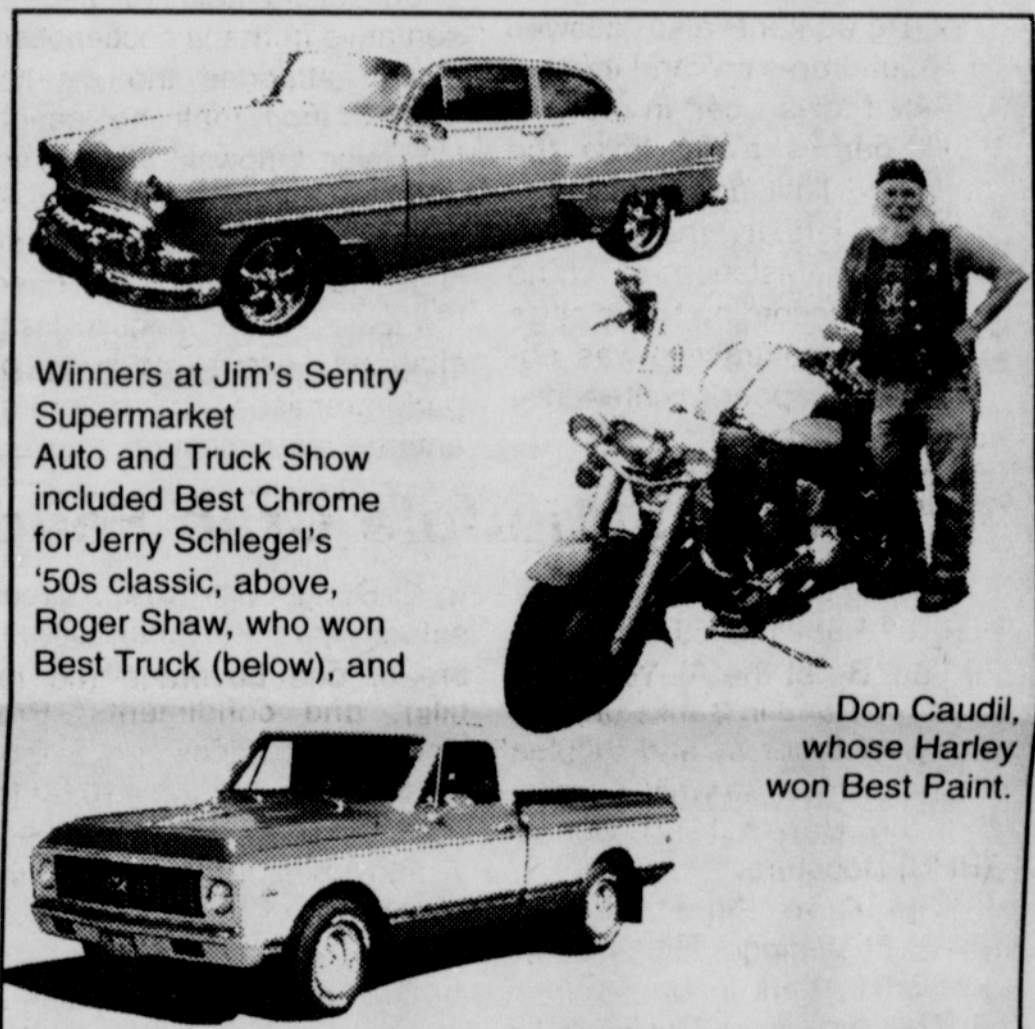
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