

## HURRICANE FLOYD: THE AFTERMATH

# Schools clean up damage so kids can head back to class

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In the days after Hurricane Floyd battered the coast of Southeastern North Carolina, leaving behind inundated buildings and rising waters, school officials in the region have been assessing damage, cleaning schools and preparing to reopen.

New Hanover County schools were the victim of an estimated \$1.5 million to \$2 million in damage left by Hurricane Floyd, district spokesman Dianne Avery said. Problems ranged from leaky roofs and debris to fallen trees and flooded classrooms.

At Wrightsville Beach Elementary School, for example, 8 inches of water seeped into the building during the storm, Ms. Avery said. On Monday, volunteers were returning some supplies that had been removed from the school to keep them dry.

At Williston Middle and Gregory Elementary schools, Floyd blew out windows. And the storm tore a portion of the roof off a trailer at Laney High School, Ms. Avery said.

Carolina Beach Elementary School sustained only minor damage.

"Carolina Beach was high and dry, except for a few classrooms that had some leaks in the roof," Ms. Avery said.

And at Ogden Elementary School, a tree fell onto the building, but left it unscathed.

Schools in Brunswick County sustained slight damage, Assistant Superintendent Clarence Willie said.

A baseball dugout at South Brunswick High School was destroyed. Floyd's downpours caused some flooding at West Brunswick High School, Mr. Willie said.

"We had to dig a trench to keep the water out," he said.

## New Hanover, Pender, Columbus schools reopen today; Brunswick, Duplin still closed.

The storm also ripped a few pieces of metal off the gymnasium roof at West Brunswick High, but the damage was not considered serious, he said.

Pender County schools also had minor damage, with a few leaks and some flooding, Superintendent Marc Sosne said.

After being closed for four days, schools are set to reopen today in New Hanover, Pender and Columbus counties and Whiteville, but Brunswick and Duplin County schools will remain closed.

Students were scheduled to return to school two hours late today in Pender County. Officials planned to review that decision at 5 a.m. today.

Because the school district already has five "hurricane" days built into the calendar, the days missed through Monday will not affect student vacations, Dr. Sosne said.

"If we miss any more, I don't know what we'll do," Dr. Sosne said.

Schools in New Hanover County are scheduled to open one hour late today, but that could change with the weather forecast. School officials had planned a tentative meeting early this morning to discuss closing school if there was heavy rain overnight.

"Any problems that we've got, we can work around," Ms. Avery said, "except bad weather in the morning."

School officials are waiting for the state to decide if makeup days will be

required in Floyd's wake or if the N.C. Board of Education will waive the missed days, Ms. Avery said. As of Monday afternoon, state officials were still working on that possibility.

Brunswick County school officials said schools there would be closed today because of persistent flooding and damaged roads.

"We think it's too risky," Mr. Willie said. "There's a lot of water on the roads and a lot of washed out areas that need to be repaired."

So far, the district plans to use vacation days scheduled throughout the school year to make up for the days missed during the hurricane, he said.

In addition, Mr. Willie said, school officials were working with bus drivers and the Department of Transportation to determine when roads would be passable.

Ms. Avery said school officials in New Hanover County also have been mapping out alternate bus routes to avoid flooded roads on the way to school.

Hurricane Floyd also has taken a toll on local colleges.

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington will resume classes at 5 p.m. today.

The university will be open for a regular school day at 8 a.m. Wednesday. Residence halls on campus opened on Monday.

To make up for class time lost during hurricanes Dennis and Floyd, UNCW has canceled its fall break, which was originally scheduled for Oct. 6-7.

Chancellor James R. Leutze urged students returning to Wilmington to use caution, noting that the faculty will take into consideration extenuating circumstances and students will be allowed to make up work.

Cape Fear Community College students returned to classes on Monday.



**Stevie Senken, a fourth-grader at Wrightsville Beach Elementary, helps unload a truck of books and supplies Monday. Parents, students and teachers pitched in throughout the day to prepare the school, which was flooded by Floyd, for reopening today.**

The biggest problems brought by Hurricane Floyd were leaky roofs and wet carpeting, said college spokesman David Hardin.

After days of cleaning up flooded

buildings and downed trees, Brunswick Community College will reopen today.

College President Mike Reaves said the school's new science build-

ing suffered the most damage, with mud and water covering the first floor.

"It looked like a river ran through there," he said.

Staff photo by KEVIN BEAVENS