Schools clean up damage so kids can head back to class

By STACEY HIRSH and SHERRY JONES

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 Bosne 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. Bosne said.

"If we miss any more, I don't know what we'll do," Dr. Bosne 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. "We had to dig a trench to keep the water out," he said.

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 is 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 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 whether 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, 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.

College President Mike Reeves said the school's new science building suffered the most damage, with mud and water entering the first floor.

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