



SCHOOLBOARD MEMBERS, John Knodel and Derrick Tice, check out the new computer lab at the grade school. Herald photos by Karen Krien

School board members discuss the lack of money

By Karen Krien
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 Money, or lack of money, seemed to be a main concern of the St. Francis School Board of Education and administration when they met on Thursday in the new board room at the high school. Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance premiums would be increasing in November. The board and administration talked about a salary increase for teachers and other staff members. However, the decisions on both increases were tabled until another meeting.

Rob Schiltz, superintendent, said the information he had received from Blue Cross Blue Shield indicated that the school's policy will increase around 25 percent.

The school is in a "group" which requires 75 percent of the staff to participate. At the time, teachers and other full-time employees are eligible for the insurance.

Currently the school pays \$235 a month toward a single plan and \$470 toward other types including family plans. For the past few years, the school has paid an additional \$30 a month on a single plan and \$60 on the other types of plans on top of what they had paid the previous year. It should be noted that not all teachers and staff take the school's insurance.

Last year, the school paid a total of \$107,160 on employee's insurance plans. This year, if the board agrees, they will pay an additional \$13,680. The superintendent pointed out there will probably be another single insurance policy which will add \$3,180.

Mr. Schiltz said if the board agrees to the proposed increase including the new policy, it will cost the school \$16,800 more or a total of \$123,960. The board will think about and probably make a decision at the next month's meeting.

Raises
 With all of the uncertainty of the state's funding to schools, Mr. Schiltz was cautious about offering salary increases to the teachers and staff. He said last year, the school had received cuts and this year's funding had already been cut. It is hard to say, Mr. Schiltz said, if they will cut financing again in the middle of the year.

He talked about raising the \$32,000 base pay which would cause an increase to all teachers' salaries but would also help when recruiting new teachers. Using an average of 2.39 percent to increase teachers, the same formula would be used to raise non-certified personnel.

In year's past, the board has given bonuses at the end of the year if there was money left in the general fund. However, last year, there was no money. It was ques-

Transportation policy reviewed at meeting

By Karen Krien
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 The Student Transportation policy was reviewed when the St. Francis Board of Education met Thursday evening. Rob Schiltz, superintendent, said there have been a few problems concerning bus pickups and drop offs for students. There have been requests to transport students who live inside the city limits to their homes or to daycares in the afternoon, he said.

The school's student transportation policy states that the board will furnish bus transportation for students living 2.5 miles or more from school. Parents of students who live less than that distance from the school may request that their students be placed on the bus route but they must live outside the city limits and the bus comes by their home, not lengthening the present route.

After reviewing the policy, the board agreed that this was a policy that should be followed. Mr. Schiltz said he will enforce the policy.

weed killer that is applied in the early spring and again six weeks later. Mr. Schiltz said he would also check into the product.

Resignations/new employees
 The board received a letter from Kent Kechter, resigning as the junior high basketball coach. Mr. Kechter had coached basketball in the St. Francis school for 36 years. It's time for a change, Mr. Kechter said, and, thanks for the opportunity to coach. The board briefly discussed a replacement but decided to table it for a later meeting.

Superintendent's report
 Mr. Schiltz said the administration had given contracts to three new paraprofessionals: Molly Bartles, elementary school special education, working mostly in the kindergarten; Tina Schmid, elementary school Title I; and Leisha Hilt, high school special education. Also hired on non-contractual basis as special education paras were Deb Hilt and Melissa Workman.

Superintendent's report
 The superintendent reported that the grade school playground has many sand burrs and stickers. He had talked to several people about applications to get rid of them but, most required watering the weed killer in before it would work. It was suggested that sprinklers like those at the golf course be installed. This way, they could help control the sticker problem as well as keeping the grass in better condition. The board said to check on prices and what would be needed.

Bonnie Zwegardt, board member, also had a suggestion for a

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In other business:
 • Two out-of-district students were approved to attend St. Francis schools: Jelyn Carman, Haigler; and Erick Estrada, Cheylin/Bird City. Tuition will be waived.

• Superintendent Schiltz said the school enrollment was down 10 students again this year. He said most other schools are also reporting a decline in students. The official enrollment with numbers sent to the state is Sept. 21.

• Several board members indicated they plan to attend the Kansas Association of School Boards meeting in Brewster on Oct. 7.

• Capt. Scott Jenkins, former student, had sent the school a flag which had flown over Iraq. See related article.

• Principal Scott Carmichael said the league schools may allow junior and senior high league tournaments to be held the same day with the junior high starting in the morning and the high school in the afternoon. He said he was in favor of combining the tournaments.

Next meeting
 The next board of education meeting is set for 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 8, in the board room at the high school.



NEW FILTERS installed at the grade school. Mr. Schiltz shows board members Sherry Weeks and Bonnie Zwegardt the filters that help circulate the air. The purifier is shown at the top of the photo.

Bats in the school still a concern

Bats were once again talked about at the St. Francis Board of Education meeting on Thursday. Dr. Mary Beth Miller, board president, wanted to know more.

Superintendent Rob Schiltz said more bats had been found. The ceiling in the fifth grade room had been removed, blocks had been painted, enzyme-type bombs had been set off and rodent repellent had been put down. New fans with filters to

circulate the air 40 times a minute had been installed. When the board members toured the room, it appeared to be clean with no smell.

"We have nothing to hide," Mr. Schiltz said. "We will be glad to show and talk to people about it."

Dr. Miller asked about the curtain in the gym — was that attracting the bats? Should we get rid of it? she asked.

Mr. Schiltz said the bats just

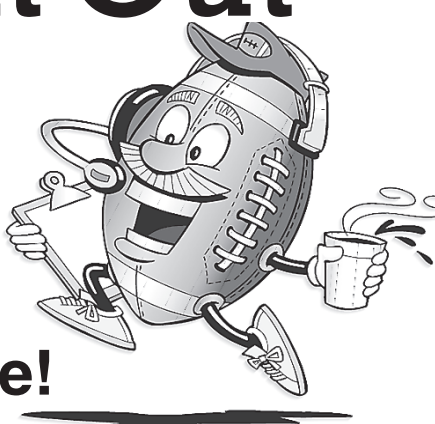
needed to be kept out — you just don't get rid of bats!

He said he had conferred with several people and he will have some work done on the gutters, replacing some areas with metal flashing. Bats, he said, can't climb up metal.

In the meantime, they will continue to work on the problem, hoping to get it solved as quickly as possible.

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