



## State cuts could raise local taxes

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School districts got some troubling news when House Republicans unveiled their budget proposal last week.

Superintendent Terrell Harrison filled the Colby School Board in on the new budget bill at Monday's meeting. Harrison said she and Business Manager Jo De-Young had been on conference calls on the subject all day Monday and still had trouble understanding the bill.

House Bill 2739 cuts \$172 million from the state education budget, she said. It cuts \$85.9 million from general state aid, which amounts for \$131 from base state aid per student, and another \$85.9 million from supplemental state aid. Harrison said it eliminates weightings which currently give districts more money if they have high numbers of at-risk, bilingual or other student demographics.

It takes 10 percent of a district's local option budget, the portion of a district's budget that comes from local property taxes, and renames it so it can be used to increase the base state aid per student. It allows districts to raise taxes by 5 percent for an activities fund, which can't be used for instruction, and any

school receiving less money than the state average to raise taxes to make up the difference.

Harrison said state education associations like the Kansas National Education Association are concerned because the bill contains no statewide tax increases, but instead encourages districts to raise local taxes.

Harrison said the bill could be voted on by the house sometime this week.

"I think it's time you contact your congressman and give him your opinion," said board president Janice Frahm. "I'll definitely give him mine."

The district is planning a community meeting to help people write letters to legislators at 6 p.m. next Thursday at Colby High School. Harrison said many people don't know how to write this kind of letter, so the district will have samples available and staff on hand to help.

In other business:

- The hearing on closing the Thomas County Academy will be immediately before the school board meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, April 26. Harrison said the board is required to hold a hearing to close any school building. The academy, although it is housed

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## Senate approves new shield law for journalists

By John Milburn  
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — The Kansas Senate has approved legislation protecting journalists from being forced to release their notes on unpublished information.

The bill would give journalists limited protection against being forced to identify unnamed sources or disclose information they hadn't published or broadcast.

"I think it is a bill that brings that a certain amount of sunshine and protection to the process," said Sen. David Haley, a Kansas City Democrat.

A journalist could be forced to comply with a subpoena only if a state judge ruled that the information was relevant to a case and could not be obtained in another way.

Supporters say such a law would help journalists remain independent. Critics question whether it's necessary.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Tim Owens said the

panel received testimony against the bill from the Kansas County and District Attorney Association. Owens said there could be a cost to the state courts, but it is unknown how much litigation would be filed to compel journalists to divulge information.

The Kansas Press Association has been working for years to get a protective statute passed. The issue gained a sense of immediacy this session after a Dodge City Daily Globe reporter was forced to share notes and confidential sources in a homicide case.

Reporter Claire O'Brien, who had been held in contempt after failing to appear in court, testified after her confidential source revealed his identity to prosecutors. That was after the state Supreme Court ruled against her appeal of a lower court's ruling that she must testify.

She later was fired from the Globe for undisclosed reasons.

"This is probably the best effort that has come along," Owens said.



GARY SCHUTTE

About 1,000 educators, students and their families gathered on the steps of the state Capitol March 16 for a rally against cuts to school funding. Several Colby teachers and their families drove to Topeka to march in the rally.

## Colby teachers attend Capitol rally

By Kevin Bottrell  
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Two Colby families took a day out of their spring break to drive to Topeka to march on the steps of the Capitol building in support of school funding.

Noah and Christie Slay, teachers at Berryton Elementary School, organized the event, held on Tuesday, March 16.

Gary Schutte, whose wife, Andrea, teaches language arts at Colby Middle School, said he found out about the rally through a Facebook group. The Schuttes and their three sons drove to Topeka to attend the rally. Schutte said Norm and Sherry Kinderknecht, also Colby teachers, went to the rally.

Schutte said he thought the issue was important. His sons were getting involved in activities like scholars' bowl which could get reduced or cut depending on what the legislature does during the session.

"The idea was to do something that would catch people's attention," he said.

Schutte estimated about 1,000 people showed up to the rally. Several towns closer to Topeka brought busloads of people. The group had signs with slogans like "We want what's right, not what's left," and "Budget cuts don't heal." Schutte said they marched around the Capitol building and grouped on the front steps.

Governor Mark Parkinson addressed the crowd as well as students, teachers and leg-



GARY SCHUTTE

Governor Mark Parkinson was one of the speakers at the rally, supporting his call for tax increases rather than cuts to get the state out of its budget crisis.

islators  
"It was a good experience," Schutte said. Schutte said they were encouraged to talk to their legislators, but they were in session

during the rally. Some of them did get to observe the session from the observation floors in the capitol.

## Chronic disease class offered at hospital

By Vera Sloan  
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For people who live with chronic diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, heart or lung disease or asthma and who are living with the effects of a stroke on a daily basis, will have the opportunity to interact with others who are going through the same experiences.

Citizens Medical Center is offering weekly

classes on how to live with these issues, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. April 5 through May 10 in the hospital's board meeting room at 100 E. College Drive in Colby.

The six week program was developed by Stanford University to help improve a persons health, one step at a time, by offering ways to reduce pain; deal with fatigue, frustration and isolation; ways to handle stress and relax; how to eat well, live well and use medications effectively; how to talk to your doctor about your

health, make choices about your treatment, share experiences and learn from others.

Registered and licensed dietician Cortney McCarty and registered nurse Jeanene Brown will lead the "Kansans Optimizing Health" program. Classes are free of charge, however donations are accepted.

Limited seating is available. A small meal will be served. Call McCarty or Brown at (785) 460-4849 to reserve a seat.

## Briefly

### County offices close for lunch

Because employees will be training for a yearlong conversion to new computer software, the Thomas County treasurer, clerk and road and bridge offices will close for the noon hour this week. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

### Drivers meeting Friday

Thomas County Treasurer Donita Applebury, along with treasurers from Sherman, Cheyenne and Wallace Counties will hold a meeting for heavy truck drivers at 3 p.m. (Central Time) Friday at the 4-H building at the Sherman County Fairgrounds in Goodland. The meeting is a question and answer session on having correct tags and weights for heavy trucks. For information, call Applebury at 460-4520.

### Food delivery Saturday

Prairie Land Food delivery will be at 1:30 p.m.

Saturday at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

### Series highlights Lent season

Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, will be the final speaker for the Thomas County Ministerial Association's *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* on Wednesday. Come to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. Call 462-6342 for information.

### Grant deadline Wednesday

The Thomas County Community Foundation is taking grant applications for the first quarter. Public Relations Coordinator Christina Schmid said proposals can be for any type of project, as long as it is not to benefit an individual, political activity or operating expenses. Nonprofit organizations, public

agencies and religious institutions may apply. The deadline is Wednesday. For information or applications, call (785) 460-9152.

### Childbirth classes start soon

Citizens Medical Center will hold a four-week series of childbirth education classes, from 7 to 10 p.m. beginning next Thursday at the hospital. Expectant mothers in their last trimester or who are due to deliver before August, 2010, and their labor support partners are encouraged to attend. For information, call Jeanene Brown in the hospital's education department at (785) 460-4850.

### City council meeting moved

The Tuesday, April 6, meeting of the Colby City Council has been moved to the Little Theater in the basement of the Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. as usual. For

information, call City Hall at 460-4400.

### Kindergartners to sing April 8

The Colby Grade School kindergarten will present "A Day in the County" at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 8, in the grade school auditorium. For information, call Jennifer Koel at 460-5100.

### Win a vacation at Heartland

Heartland Christian School will hold a rock-paper-scissors tournament at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 10, at the school. Buy tickets to get in the tournament, \$20 per ticket or six for \$100. First prize is a five-day, four-night trip to Mexico. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

