

# Teachers, school board reach agreement

**CONTRACT, from Page 1**

"We looked at everything," Russell said, "even cutting board expenses."

"We feel the district should show flexibility in the budget, making insurance and teacher salary a priority," Porterfield said. "Show the staff they are important."

When presenting the board counteroffer on the salary schedule, Russell said, "We do make these a priority and our top is a quality education for our students. We have given 2 to 4 percent (pay increases) over the last few years, and felt they were good raises."

"We are not willing to raise taxes on our farmers. We are willing to shift money in the budget and find ways to give what we can, but we are not going to negotiate the budget. What you have proposed far exceeds what we can handle."

After a caucus, teachers accepted the salary proposal, and asked the school board to accept a plan for re-vamping the required day of technology training to allow more flexibility.

The school board had proposed eliminating the technology day in the 2002-2003 school year and mak-

ing it an additional training day at the beginning of the school year.

Porterfield said a recent teacher survey indicated the staff would get better use of technology training hours if there was a way to have more smaller groups sharing information. In their proposal, the teachers could have groups under five teachers with prior approval of the principal.

Russell said the board did not like to put the principals in the position of deciding who might be able to teach computers to other teachers.

The board team took another short caucus and returned with another counterproposal which would allow the teachers to have smaller groups if the training was approved by both the principal and Karla Murray, the district technology coordinator. It was accepted by the teachers.

On the issue of teacher aides and class size, the board said they did not want to negotiate the item.

Porterfield asked if the teachers could look for volunteers to help in the classrooms?

"We would like to see more parents or even business people involved in the classroom," Russell said, adding that teachers certainly could look for ways to add volun-

teers and maybe change how some of the mentor programs are now being used.

The board indicated they did not want to put a safety committee in the contract, but suggested that in the fall if there are teachers who are willing to serve on such a committee the board would consider appointing one.

On a long-standing dispute over the number of professional development training hours which can be used to move a step on the salary schedule, the teachers and school board agreed to try another approach. The board will take out the maximum number and make the determining factor what is approved by the Professional Development Committee on an annual basis.

The teachers had asked for an increase in pay for unused sick leave from \$30 to \$70 per day, but the school board agreed to increase the rate to \$35.

The board may hold a special board meeting Monday to review the contract and an insurance committee recommendation. Porterfield said she thought the teachers would be able to meet and review the agreement by Wednesday or Thursday.

# Bush wants increased oil supply

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush, saying the energy crisis is the worst since the 1970s, outlined an ambitious recipe today for increasing the nation's supply, including oil and gas drilling on public land and nuclear power.

"If we fail to act, this country could face a darker future," Bush said in St. Paul, Minn., as he released a 163-page report prepared by a White House energy task force headed by Vice President Dick Cheney.

"If we fail to act, Americans will face more and more widespread blackouts ... our country will become more reliant on foreign crude oil," the president declared.

The blueprint cites a "fundamental imbalance between supply and demand" and depicts a gloomy energy picture, including high gasoline and electricity prices across much of the country, soaring natural gas prices causing havoc with farmers and the possibility of power blackouts in the West and Northeast.

"America needs an energy plan that faces up to our energy challenges and meets them," Bush said. He said his approach will use new technology to improve conservation and energy efficiency.

"Conservation does not mean doing without," he declared after touring an energy plant in St. Paul.

Cheney said he was optimistic that many of the some 100 recommendations will lead to a sound energy future. "The tasks ahead are great but achievable," Cheney said in a letter accompanying the report.

The report proposes little to address this summer's soaring gasoline prices or Western electricity shortages. And it tilts heavily toward expanding the

production and use of coal, gas, and nuclear energy.

"The president's plan makes the wrong choices for America," said House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri, calling the Bush report a "slick" document that "only gives lip service to conservation" without providing the budget "to accomplish anything."

Bush's proposed budget, sent to Congress in February, cuts energy efficiency and renewable energy programs by nearly a third with some conservation programs cut even deeper.

Initial Republican reaction was positive.

"It is a work in progress," said House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill. He said "the case has to be made" for some provisions such as drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said he hoped to have energy legislation up for a Senate vote this summer, but also acknowledged some of it "will be hotly debated."

The Bush task force report calls the country's energy shortages the worse since the 1970s oil embargoes that featured long gas lines and energy rationing. Still, today's supplies of oil and gas

— as well as electricity across most of the country — are adequate, industry experts say.

The Bush energy report includes several proposals sure to trigger sharp debate in Congress, including drilling for oil in an Arctic wildlife refuge and possibly reviving nuclear fuel reprocessing, which was abandoned in the 1970s as a nuclear proliferation threat.

The "action plan" — as White House officials have called it — will become pivotal in the writing of energy legislation in Congress later this year.

Democrats said while there are "common grounds," the president's emphasis on production as opposed to conservation and lack of short-term measures are of serious concern.

Democratic National Chairman Terry McAuliffe called the Bush plan a product of an administration "filled top to bottom with people from the oil industry."

Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, who headed the task force that produced the plan, are former Texas oil industry executives. Energy companies also were heavy contributors to the former Texas governor's presidential campaign.

# Parolees tracked by new technology

TOPEKA (AP) — From within a brick office building near a shopping mall, employees of Community Solutions Inc. track their clients' movements.

The clients are parole violators who, rather than return to prison, submit to a new kind of electronic monitoring for 30 to 90 days. Each has a tracking de-

vice strapped to his ankle and carries a small, 3.5-pound machine whose location can be pinpointed — by a satellite.

Electronic monitoring of parolees isn't new, but the use of global positioning satellite — GPS for short — is. The difference is significant: With standard electronic monitoring, a pa-

role officer knows only if a parolee is at home, not exactly where he is.

"With this, we have the ability to track them," Bob Hainline, a program consultant for the state Department of Corrections, said during a media tour Wednesday of Community Solutions' new Topeka center.

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