



HEADS UP

EUFULA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“EXPECT THE BEST”

Volume 4, Issue 1, October 2003

New Classroom Annex Complete

Looking forward to the new year and the benefits and opportunities the new facility brings, teachers & staff members welcomed students and parents to the district's new classroom annex. The August 17th Open House allowed visitors a chance to walk through the newly renovated high school to the new classroom annex through the wide passageway that connects the two buildings. Once inside, visitors were welcomed into spacious corridors with well lighted classrooms, a state of the art science lab, immaculate restroom facilities, an elevator, and rows and rows of maroon student lockers. “We are proud of the new facility and the improvements made to our high school site over the summer months,” said Steve Butcher, principal.” For the first time in school history, all of our core curriculum classes will be held in one self enclosed building. Students will no longer have to be exposed to weather conditions going to and from classes and to and from the cafeteria.



This, alone, will make the school day run more smoothly and reduce the number of classroom disruptions.” He added that this is the second year in a row that the Eufaula High School student population has increased to over 400 students. He attributes this increase in student attendance to our community's interest in school improvement.

It is a well known fact that our district had some of the worst school buildings in the area. With the communities decision to pass the 2000 bond issue, a serious effort to improve our school plant and to create a more student centered atmosphere began. “This new structure provides an enhanced learning opportunity for our students.” said

Superintendent Bill Wilson.

“We know the academic preparation that our students are making today will determine their respective futures. Knowing this, it is our obligation to give them every opportunity to succeed at becoming

contributing, productive adults. Our students must be able to compete with students from neighboring school districts for scholarships, college admission, and job opportunities. This new environment will provide that opportunity and will give our faculty a competitive edge in preparing our students academically for the world in which they face.”

There have been a number of studies made about the effects of school facilities on learning, and the lifelong impact made on students by their learning environment. Even without formal studies, parents and teachers know from their own experiences how facilities can enhance or detract from productive learning. Noisy air conditioners in the warm months, drafty windows in the winter, poor lighting, poor air quality, and crowded surroundings are just a few of the distractions that cause high anxiety and stress that leads to low student and teacher morale.

We cannot confine our students to the way we were taught, for they have been born of another time and into a different world that expects and requires so much more of them.

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Security System

Board President, Diane Dawson, understands that every possible step must be taken to ensure the safety of our student body. The new security system in place at the high school is a fundamental tool in helping accomplish that goal.

SCHOOL EVALUATES VIABILITY OF VO-TECH

The school board has commissioned a panel of local business leaders to examine the value of the Kiamichi Vo-Tech in terms of the number of students attending the Vo-Tech school in McAlester and the number of businesses receiving training from the school in McAlester.

Vicky Hamm, the McIntosh County Assessor, informed the panel that the Vo-Tech School in McAlester received over \$300,000 in local taxes last year. Steve Butcher, Eufaula High School Principal, reported to the committee that currently ten (10) students are attending classes in McAlester. With an enrollment of ten students, Eufaula is paying far too much.

In comparison, Eufaula Public Schools spends roughly \$6,000,000 for 1200 full-time students or \$5,000 per student. This is a much better buy for the tax payer than \$300,000 for ten half day students. In defense of the Vo-Tech, they also provide adult training and small business classes. Therefore, a committee of business leaders has been asked to evaluate the value of the Vo-Tech in terms of economic development.

Ten years ago the voters of the Eufaula School district agreed to annex to Kiamichi Vo-Tech and pay an annual tax assessment in support of the Vo-Tech. This committee, nor the school board, has the power to overturn what the voters decided in that 1993 decision. What the board and the committee of business leaders are considering is whether the voters should be asked to vote again on providing vocational classes at the Vo-Tech in McAlester and the taxes that are annually assessed by that vote.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

With the opening of the new high school annex, the planned construction of the 2000-01 bond election has been finalized. We have completed over \$5,000,000 of new buildings that include a high school building and an elementary school with a cost of only \$1,250,000 for the tax payers. These improvements have been badly needed, and at just over one million dollars, proved to be a very good buy for the taxpayers of this district.

Now, the school district focuses on the construction of a new middle school. As promised, the next construction plans are to include the construction of a middle school west of Eufaula adjoining the new elementary facility. These plans have been hurt by the sluggish economy. With interests rates at all-time lows and budgetary shortfalls at every turn, the schools' ability to build has been delayed. The school board has approximately one third the funds necessary to complete the middle school, therefore a delay in the project should be expected.

As the new school year begins, the discussion of the middle school project was compounded by the identification of other improvement needs. A list of badly needed projects were identified that included:

- * Additional Elementary School Classrooms
- * New Uniforms and Instruments for the Marching Band;
- * Renovations at the Football Stadium to include a ladies restroom facility and updated dressing facilities;
- * Relocate the Baseball Field and Add Lights for Night Games;
- * Build a Softball Field for the Ladies Softball Team;
- * Build a New Gymnasium for the high school large enough to accommodate the number of fans that want to attend Ironhead Basketball Games.

It is difficult to think about tomorrow when we have so many needs that have accumulated over thirty-five years of construction inactivity. The new high school annex and new elementary school represent the first construction projects for Eufaula Schools since 1963, when the original high school building was built. The school district must begin planning and focusing on the future.

We must realize that Eufaula School District is growing and it is not waiting for a convenient time to build. We must begin planning construction for future class sizes and not the needs of yesterday. The elementary school has adequate classrooms to serve the student population that was enrolled in 1999-2000. We know the elementary population has increased significantly since 2000, even though we deny student transfers each year. With each transfer that is denied, a hardship is placed on a family, many of whom work in Eufaula. We need to be more compassionate concerning the needs of these families and prepare to build more classrooms to accommodate the children moving into our district and to those who wish to transfer to Eufaula Schools.

Currently, we should build an additional six classrooms for the new elementary school to accommodate the new students that will be coming when a four year old program and with all day kindergarten classes are initiated. An all day kindergarten program is not currently in place because we do not have the classroom space that would be needed by that decision.

The following proposals outline different directions the school district could take:

Proposal # 1: Continue with the 2000 view and build the middle school without any consideration for the changes occurring in the student population. That proposal will leave us with many unaddressed needs in 2006.

Proposal # 2: Continue with the middle school plans and institute a new bond proposal to address the other needs of the district as previously mentioned. This proposal has an additional cost to the taxpayer, but the improvements could begin immediately.

Proposal # 3: Replace the cost of the Vo-Tech in McAlester with a bond election for the school needs of Eufaula. This would allow the school district to grow with new or renovated facilities at no additional cost to the taxpayer. The downside to this proposal is the time delay in initiating construction while the school district maneuvers through the legal de-annexation of the Kiamichi Vo-Tech district.

New Faculty



**B.J.
DRAKE**
Elementary



**RACHAEL
CALAVAN**
MS/HS
Athletics



**PAULA
GAILBRAITH**
Elementary



**JARED
EFURD**
MS Math
FB Coach



**JUSTIN
GAINES**
HS
English



**KARI
MONTGOMERY**
MS
Special Ed



**VICKY
CALDWELL**
Elementary



**TANDI
EFURD**
MS
Math



**Michael
Phillips**
HS
Science



**BRENDA
EDWARDS**
HS
Special Ed



**SONYA
MOORE**
Psychometrist



**EMILY
SCOTT**
HS
SCIENCE

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