

## Mac County board OKs cafeteria expansion plans

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By John Ford  
Neosho Daily News  
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Anderson, Mo. -

Plans for an 11,000-square-foot expansion to McDonald County High School were approved during Thursday's session of the McDonald County R-1 School Board.

According to Randy Smith, superintendent, the project, estimated at between \$2 million and \$2.5 million, could be completed as early as the 2009-2010 school year.

"Right now, we're trying to feed four lunch lines, and have students eating as late as 1 p.m.," Smith said.

Last month, the school board agreed to hire Nabholz Construction Corp., headquartered in Conway, Ark., to oversee a proposed cafeteria expansion project at McDonald County High School. Smith said the oversight firm will work closely with the district's architects, Pellham and Phillips out of Springfield, Mo., on the project. The two will now work on bid specifications for the project.

In other business, the board heard from Dick Davis, assistant superintendent of buildings and transportation, on on-going projects at Noel School, a pre-kindergarten through second grade facility.

At the present time, Smith said, an asphalt parking lot has not been poured because of rain. Construction crews need at least four days of dry weather in order to do the work.

Meanwhile, sewer work to the new school continues. Last month, the board agreed to hire Polston Construction Inc. of Lamar to do the project, which was bid at \$207,000.

The bid comes under the price the board had expected for the project — \$250,000. This figure was based on an engineering company's estimate. However, shortly before the project initially went out for bids, district officials received a letter from the engineering firm saying it had greatly underestimated the cost of the project by \$200,000.

This was reflected in the bids of six firms. In April Davis reported to the board that initial bids were nearly double the board's expected costs, with the lowest bid coming in at \$428,000.

As reported in March, the district had a couple of options to consider in choosing which type of sewer system to put into place at the new Noel school. First, the district could choose a sand-circulating type system similar to the one in place at Rocky Comfort Elementary near Longview.

But this system, Davis told the board in March, would require on-going maintenance by district employees.

The second option, the one the board ending up choosing, is a pressurized sewer system.

In a related matter, the board agreed to grant an easement to Empire District Electric Company to install an electrical meter and service at the school site for a lift station, part of the new sewer system.

Davis also gave the board an update on school bus routes. Smith said at the present time, there are 49 routes, with 50 drivers. Last year, Smith said, the district drove more than 700,000 miles transporting students to school and for activities such as athletic events and field trips. The district also has seen a sharp increase in fuel costs over the last few years. During the 2005-06 school year, the district spent \$170,000 on fuel for buses. This past school year, that figure was \$327,000.

"We added more than \$100,000 to the fuel budget last year, and will do the same this year," Smith said.

In other business, the board:

- Heard a report from Mark Stanton, principal at McDonald County High School, and Kim Harrell, assistant principal, on the Proud Graduate program. Smith said this program recognizes McDonald County High School graduates who have gone on to succeed in a variety of fields.
- Set the district's tax levy at \$3.42, the same as last year's, including a tax levy of \$2.75 per \$100 of assessed valuation and a debt service levy of 67 cents.
- Set tuition for out-of-district students at \$7,165.86 annually.

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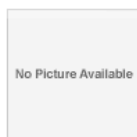
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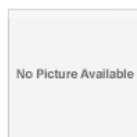
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