Babin chosen principal for new Ascension school

By TIM TALLEY
River parishes bureau

GONZALES — The Ascension Parish School Board Tuesday night chose Percy Babin as the first principal of the new Lake Primary School.

Babin, assistant principal at the St. Amant Elementary School, was recommended for the Lake Primary job by a committee of School Board members and Superintendent of Schools Ralph Ricardo.

Babin was chosen over two other finalists for the position, Ricardo said. He identified the other finalists as Peggy Aimee and Noel Christy.

Lake Primary is one of three schools built with funds from a $19.9 million school construction and improvement bond issue approved by voters in July 1984. The other two — both primary or elementary schools — are being built in Galvez and Donaldsonville.

 Asked to address the board, Babin said he appreciated the trust board members had placed in him through his appointment. "I'll do my best to make Lake Primary the finest school in the parish if not the state," he said.

Lake Primary, built at a cost of about $3 million, is nearing completion and will open its doors to students sometime in December, according to Ricardo.

The school's first student body will consist of about 525, he said. The students will come from a new school district carved out of districts currently served by either the Galvez or St. Amant elementary schools.

Lake Primary will have a maximum capacity of about 600 students in grades kindergarten through 5th, Ricardo said. It will be the first of the three new primary schools to open for classes. Construction is under way on the other two.

In a related matter, the board scheduled a special meeting for next Tuesday to discuss the troubled Galvez Primary School construction project.

The $3.33 million project, shut down for about six months when the original contractor walked off the job in mid-February, resumed two months ago when a new contractor took over.

The special meeting, which will coincide with the board's regular finance committee meeting, will involve a proposed agreement with the project's architect, who has left the architectural firm that designed the school, board members said.

On another matter, School Board member Billy Arcement said electronic instructional equipment at parish schools should be stored in security areas protected by burglar alarms to prevent thefts.

A video cassette recorder was stolen from the Donaldsonville Elementary School earlier this month from an area not protected by a security system. Additional equipment was stolen from another Donaldsonville-area school earlier this year.

Ricardo said a burglar alarm was not installed at Donaldsonville Elementary because the school is being replaced. Security areas are in place in other schools and one is being installed at the new Donaldsonville Elementary.

In other action, the School Board adopted a resolution asking state officials to avoid cutting funds for public education and to restore cutbacks already enacted.

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