Evangeline Parish
ACT scores rise

Acadiana bureau

VILLE PLATTE — The Evangeline Parish School Board heard Wednesday that students had a composite score of 15.1 on the American College Test, the highest in the parish for the past five years.

That number compares to the 16.9 state average and the 18.8 national composite, Supervisor Janis Landreneau said.

She said 129 students took the ACT during the 1985-86 term.

Landreneau told board members that 79 percent of parish children who took the test had previously taken only the bare minimum of state-approved courses to graduate from high school.

“There is a high correlation between curriculum preparation and ACT scores,” she said.

Mona Guidry, a representative of the Evangeline Association of Educators, spoke about low morale caused by a lack of qualified substitute teachers. Guidry said that lack also is affecting student instruction time.

She said the board has allocated $100,000 in the general-fund budget to pay substitute teachers.

During the past 20-day reporting period, there were 244 teacher absentees in the parish school system, Guidry said. Of those, 23½ percent were filled by qualified substitute teachers, she said.

She said that, in the elementary grades, students are either shuffled to another class or the class is conducted by a parent, which is causing discipline problems.

In the higher grades, teachers with free periods usually are called on to teach the class, she said.

Superintendent of Schools Larry Broussard agreed that there is a problem with too-few substitute teachers but said he has a plan to “attack and straighten out the problem.”

Broussard said he will work with the EAE to reach a reasonable solution.

In other action, the School Board:
• Recognized Scott Fontenot of Vidrine High School and Doug Fontenot of Mamou High School, who came out second and sixth, respectively, in national 4-H competition.
• Approved using board members' convention travel funds to pay expenses for Bayou Chicot High School science teacher Bobby “Max” Hamlin. The teacher will attend the Louisiana Science Teacher Association Conference later this month.
• Approved restoring the annual payment of $2,921 to the LSU Cooperative Extension Service as part of the local 4-H agents' salaries.
• Recognized three outstanding teachers of the year — Virginia Moran, K-6; Cheryl Noel Tezeno, 7-8; and Fanny Soileau, high school.
• Approved hiring certified teacher Roland Manuel to replace Sandra Jacobs, who was hired previously but is uncertified. Manuel will replace Jacobs at James Stephens Elementary for one semester, pending the legality of the decision, which came on a 4-1 vote, with all 13 members present.
• Authorized its legal adviser to increase damages in a lawsuit against an architect responsible for the plans of the Pine Prairie Food Preservation Center built four years ago. The board agreed to increase the damages sought from $20,000 to $350,000, with new punitive damages of $5 million.