Pilot program for parish set

By Steve Bandy

Acadia is one of four parishes across the state selected to receive funding for a pilot program to better prepare pre-school children to enter the school system.

Superintendent Bobby Stringer announced during the Tuesday night, Sept. 5 school board meeting that he had been notified by State Superintendent Wilmer Cody that Acadia will receive approximately $67,000 for the program, which is aimed at improving “parenting skills” in what Stringer identified as the “high risk” families with children from birth through age four.

The Acadia superintendent explained that the program will be aimed primarily at the single or low income parents, focusing on helping the parents develop language skills with and for the children.

Stringer went on to say that the program will be centralized in the Crowley-Rayne-Church Point areas and will employ two educators from this area who will undergo intensive training prior to its implementation. The parents taking part in the program will actually attend classes to learn what steps they should take to better prepare their children to enter kindergarten, according to Stringer.

The superintendent added that he is very excited about this program and feels that “it will greatly enhance the educational process in the lower grades.”

In other business, the board reversed a previous decision to close a gymnasium at Crowley Junior High School and voted Tuesday to go ahead with repairs to the facility.

The gym, one of two at the building which used to be the high school, was to be vacated because of the high cost of repairs to the flooring, roof, windows and walls. However, Stringer told the board Tuesday that the executive committee had decided that the gym was needed and recommended that the board go ahead with repairs, which will include new flooring, calking, replacement and/or enclosure of windows and the waterproofing of the exterior walls, is $123,000.

Stringer explained that the work would be sufficient to make the gym useful for physical education and activities.

“We don't hold any athletic events in this facility,” he explained. “All we want to do is to make it useful to the students at the school for their PE classes and other activities.”

The board had earlier this year voted to “rope off” the gym and only seal the windows to hopefully prevent further damage to the interior.

The board also approved the creation of a new position on the Central Office staff, that of Technology Supervisor.

The new position was created at the request of board president John D. Sittig, who explained, “We've been spending a lot of money on technology and I feel it is important that the whole parish be in-step with what is going on in this field elsewhere. We need to have one person in charge of the whole thing.”

Stringer concurred.

“As we move into the technology age, it becomes increasingly difficult to in-service (train) our staff on new concepts because we don't have any other person assigned to this task”, he stated.

He went on to say that, by creating and filling this position, the new supervisor would be charged with keeping abreast of technological advances and making the faculties and staff aware of these developments.

“This is a golden opportunity to really move forward with our technology,” he concluded.

Sales tax figures for the month of August reflected a decrease of $13,728, or 6.13 percent, when compared to the same month last year. The fiscal year-to-date figures showed a decrease of $36,314, or 7.48 percent.

However, Stringer told the board not to despair.

“Those figures, while bad, are not as bad as last month when, we had a decrease of 8.64 percent,” he said. “This just might be an indication that things are getting a little better and I’d like for us to view it that way.”

In other action, the board designated Assistant Superintendent Francis N. Mouille as Affirmative Action Officer for the board to deal with federally-funded projects and approved a four percent pay raise for custodians, cafeteria workers and secretaries.