

BAND MEMBERS played to the Indian football fans as the game began Friday evening. The crowd has been on hand to support the Indians as they play football on Greene Field. Photo by The Herald staff member Doug Sloper

# Saint Francis schools report slight student body increase

By Karen Krien  
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Kansas schools reported their official enrollment on Friday, Sept. 20. St. Francis schools were able to report four more students than last year's official report.

Rob Schiltz, superintendent, said while there are four more students, kindergartners count as part-time students or as one-half student and are funded as such. There is an exception as those kindergartners with special help are counted as a whole student.

It takes two kindergartners to equal one for the state aide. Nevertheless, the school still came out ahead by one-half student.

The actual head count is 297 students enrolled in the schools, which equates to 283.5 Full Time

Equivalent students. Last year, on Sept. 20, there were 286 students, which was less than the year before.

There are 27 kindergartners this year which is one of the larger kindergartners for several years. Last year's kindergarten enrollment was 20 students.

This year's seniors number 17, but last year's senior class had 27. High school enrollment has nine less students than last year's (93-84). The junior high has 12 more students (41-53) and the grade school has only one more student (159-160). The largest class is the sophomore class with 34 students.

Interesting to note, there are 29 more boys than girls in the St. Francis schools. The fresh-

man class, while it is small, has 11 boys and five girls. The fifth grade class has 18 boys and only six girls.

New this year is junior-senior high principal, David Morrow. Mr. Schiltz moved his office to the grade school where he is the elementary principal as well as the superintendent of schools.

It has been a change, Mr. Schiltz said, but there is nothing better than little kids. They brighten my day! It is nothing unusual, he said, to have a kindergartner say, "Hi, Mr. Schiltz," and the rest of them chime in.

In Cheylin, the neighboring school in the county, the official enrollment was 125 students which included four part-time kindergartners. The number was

up four students from last year. The state funds schools \$3,838 for each full-time equivalent student. This is the same amount as last year.

Each year, when the legislature meets, there is always the chance that the next year that figure will drop, which sets superintendents and school boards scrambling to meet budget needs.

At the last St. Francis School Board meeting, Mr. Schiltz had talked to Ward Cassidy, 120th District Representative, who predicted the legislators will be "hammering" education this year.

Our goal at USD 297, said Mr. Schiltz, is to provide the best education possible for each of our students.



MADISON SIEGFRIED sits down to begin her first day of kindergarten. Photo by The Herald staff member Karen Krien

## Insight

Learn from the Land

By John Schlageck  
Kansas Farm Bureau

The farm has always been a fertile field for producing crops, but it is also an environment rich with learning experiences.

For generations, children who grow up and work with their parents on the family farm have learned valuable skills. While they are learning to sow seeds, cultivate weeds and harvest grains, flowers and vegetables, they are also growing knowledge. Lessons learned on the farm include math, social studies and vocabulary, leadership, not to mention cooperation and responsibility.

All those skills acquired in a simple field of soil and vegetation?

Absolutely. Tucked away in those vast acres of grass, trees and crops there's a living outdoor classroom teeming with lessons on life. Children who learn to till the soil come to understand such basics as distance, depth and height. They learn that the plants that bear our food come from places all over the world - rice from the Far East, wheat from Russia.

They see stems, leaves, seeds, flowers and bulbs in their hands, instead of in a book - an enduring way to plant words in their

vocabulary. While growing up on a land whipped by the wind, warmed by the sun and cooled by the stars, youngsters learn to respect their environment. They learn that by caring for this fertile land it will in turn care for them.

Such a valuable learning experience can provide children with the tools likely to influence family and friends to respect the land as well or at least raise their level of awareness. Youngsters also learn that hope is not wishful thinking of harvest success. Rather, hope is the action of planning and planting seeds. There will be those years when harvest may not occur, but the seeds of hope must be planted if there is even the thought of next year's bounty.

Learning outside can also be fun. If you don't think so, ask children who've been on a field trip. They appreciate the opportunity to spend a day in a natural classroom where they can trade fluorescent lighting and four walls for blue sky and white clouds overhead.

When given the opportunity to grow grains, flowers and vegetables, youngsters chart the progress of the plant. They invest in the outcome and that means har-

vesting their hard work, care and investment.

While encouraging students to consider growing and caring for a small plot with wheat, roasting ears or assorted vegetables, be sure to equip them with youth-sized tools. Remember they are still youngsters and do not possess the strength, knowledge and wisdom of an adult.

Suggest themes for young gardeners. Try a garden theme that appeals to a child's literal sense, such as an alphabet garden with plants that begin with the letters A to Z.

They could also plant a pizza garden and grow tomatoes, peppers and onions. They could visit a dairy farm to learn about the fundamentals of caring for cows that produce the milk that results in cheese on the pizza. Or maybe a visit to a cattle ranch to experience beef cattle that ultimately

winds up as hamburger on a pizza.

Direct the children and instill in them that caring for a crop can be an adventure. Have them add excitement to the garden with decorations including scarecrows, painted stumps and tiles and child-sized benches.


Encourage them to dig in the soil for earthworms. Tell them to pick the flowers - when they're mature.

Above all, make certain the learning experience is enjoyable. Encourage them to keep a daily journal about each day's activity.

Take pictures of the learning journey in the field and add them to the journal. Yes, there can be an abundance of lessons to be harvested in the soil. Take the opportunity to provide such an experience for a child you know.

Please join us on Oct 5, 2013 for  
Ron and Dot Hill's  
25th wedding anniversary  
and  
Dot's 80th birthday celebration!  
We will be celebrating at the Holiday Inn Express  
in Goodland, KS. from  
1:30 to 4 p.m. MT!

**Support Aly!**  
Pizza Hut will donate a % of all sales on Saturday, Sept. 28, to help cover Aly Schlepp's expenses to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. 5 p.m. to closing.  
Special - 2 medium-2 topping pizza plus a single order of bread sticks - \$20



Join us for a  
**BABY SHOWER**  
in honor of  
**Meghan Kinen & The Triplets**  
Saturday, Sept. 28  
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