

School Calendar

Colby Public Schools

Kirk Nielsen, superintendent, 460-5000

Brian Kraus, high school principal, 460-5300

Robb Ross, middle school principal, 460-5200

Terrel Harrison, grade school principal, 460-5100

Sunday, May 16 - Colby High School Baccalaureate at 1:30 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Graduation at 3 p.m. at the Community Building.

Monday, May 17 - Orange Day. Middle school art show in the Colby Middle School art room at 5 p.m. Middle school spring band concert at 6 p.m. Board of education meeting at 7 p.m. at the Administration Building.

Tuesday, May 18 - Black Day. Second grade picnic at Fike Park. High school spring band and jazz concert at 7:30 p.m. at Colby High School auditorium.

Wednesday, May 19 - Orange and Black Day. Third grade to McCarty Dairy in Rexford. Middle school KIC trip 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 20 - Orange Day, final exams. Annual report deadline for FFA. Middle school incentive AR party from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Colby Bowl.

Friday, May 21 - Black Day, final exams. End of fourth quarter and second semester. Last day of school for students. Middle school U.G.L.Y. Day at 8:30 a.m. School dismissed at 1:30 p.m. Staff check-out.

Breakfast, Monday - gooey roll, apple juice, cereal and milk choice. Tuesday - waffle styx with syrup, grape juice, milk and cereal choice. Wednesday through Friday - cook's choice, orange juice, milk and cereal choice.

Lunch, Monday - spaghetti beef, bread sticks, veggies, fruit, dessert, milk. Tuesday - End of year BBQ at middle school; taco boat with lettuce and tomato, refried beans, veggies, fruit, dessert, milk. Wednesday and Thursday - Cook's choice. Friday - Pizza Hut at middle and high schools; ham sandwich at grade school.

Triplains School

David J. Spencer, Superintendent

Monday, April 17 - Teacher workday.

Governor 'fairly confident' schools will be open in fall, keeping options open

By **JOHN MILBURN**

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP)—Gov. Kathleen Sebelius says classes will be in session this fall when the new school year begins, despite a judge's order to close the state's schools at the end of next month.

"We're fairly confident the Supreme Court will allow schools to remain open as it reviews this complicated and extraordinary case," Sebelius said Thursday.

At issue is a final order issued Tuesday by Shawnee County Dis-

trict Judge Terry Bullock, who ordered schools closed effective July 1 until legislators fix what he has ruled are constitutional flaws in the state's school finance system.

The state filed an emergency motion seeking a stay of Bullock's order, which would prevent schools from closing. The Kansas Supreme Court will rule on the motion within two weeks.

The earlier preliminary ruling from Bullock, which held the finance system unconstitutional, has already been appealed to the Kan-

sas Supreme Court and expected to be argued the week of Aug. 30.

Sebelius said she and legislators will have plenty of work to do once the justices complete their work.

"At some point in the coming year, our state's highest court will provide us with guidance about what our constitution requires us to do for our school children of our state," Sebelius said. "Then we will have another opportunity to meet our responsibilities to them."

The governor said she still is considering a special session of the

Legislature to fix school finance.

"Part of it is timing," Sebelius said.

Sebelius said one possibility would be for legislative committees to begin their work on a new system late in 2004 before the full Legislature returns in January 2005 for its 90-day session.

Also Thursday, attorneys for the state and the State Board of Education received an extension for filing written arguments with the Supreme Court in the original appeal, which was filed in March. Similar documents will be due later from Alan Rupe, attorney for the Salina and Dodge City school districts, which sued the state in 1999.

Bullock's Tuesday decision came three days after legislators adjourned the 2004 session without acting on his December order to fix the school finance system.

Bullock said in that preliminary ruling the system for distributing \$2.77 billion in state aid is unconstitutional partly because of how it distributes money to programs for poor and minority students. He also found the existing level of funding to be inadequate because the Kansas Constitution requires "suitable provision" for funding schools.

Bullock wanted legislators to change the system during their 2004 session, setting a deadline of July 1 to make his order final. Legislators responded by passing a law allowing the state to immediately appeal the preliminary order to the Kansas Supreme Court.

"I think there's little doubt the Legislature's failure to act on a school finance plan will mean there's pain felt around the state," said Sebelius, adding that school districts will be forced to cut programs, staff and services.

Clinton speech planned next week

LAWRENCE (AP) — Tickets for a speech by former President Bill Clinton at the University of Kansas next week were gone in about 20 minutes, leaving most of the nearly 3,000 people waiting in line for them disappointed and some angry.

Clinton will speak May 21, giving the first lecture in a new series named for former Kansas Sen. Bob Dole, the Republican he beat in the 1996 presidential election.

Only about 700 tickets for the event at the university's Lied Center, which seats about 1,900, were available for distribution to the gen-

eral public Wednesday. They were free for those who came to the Lied Center, limited to two per person, with a \$3 service charge for people who called on the phone for them.

About 1,200 tickets were reserved for donors, staff and volunteers of the university's Dole Institute for Politics, state legislators, the governor's office and cabinet officials, university officials, student leaders and news media. The first several rows are set aside for students in the political science and history honors programs.

"Clinton asked that we do it that

way," said Richard Konzem, associate director of the Dole Institute. "He wants students in front. But we'd already planned on doing that, so that wasn't a change."

After the tickets were gone Wednesday, Konzem was confronted by some of the people who didn't get them, some wondering why the event wasn't moved to Allen Fieldhouse, the Kansas basketball arena that seats about 16,300.

Konzem said officials from the university and the Dole Institute decided against it due to security and acoustics.

Family and friends gather to bury soldier killed in Iraq

TOPEKA (AP)—On a gray day with chilly prairie winds blowing, Army Pvt. Jeremy Drexler was buried by those who knew and loved him as a young man who cared about his friends and family and died serving his country.

Drexler, 23, was killed May 2 when his vehicle in a convoy was hit

by a makeshift bomb. He was buried Thursday with military honors and was the 10th Kansan in uniform to be killed in the Iraq war.

His brothers, Marine Lance Cpl. Tim Drexler and Navy Seaman Kenny Drexler, were among the six pallbearers who carried their brother's casket from the hearse to

the grave for the military funeral. The parents, Karl and Deborah Drexler, sat a few feet from the flag-draped coffin.

Drexler was buried next to Army Spc. Kyle G. Thomas, 23, who was killed in Iraq on Sept. 25—the first Topeka resident to die in the war. Drexler, who went to a different

high school than Thomas, joined the Army in November 2003 and was at Fort Hood, Texas, before leaving for Iraq in January.

Throughout the service, the parents and brothers sat together near the casket, looking forward as the Rev. Tommy Scott of the non-denominational Protestant Commu-

nity Church sought to comfort them with prayer and words.

"He just loved helping people. He had a good sense of humor and loved hanging out with his friends. He was just a generous young man," Scott said.

"The reality is he gave his life for us."

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