

School board unsatisfied with construction progress

By **KASEY DOYLE** Staff Writer

MAYSVILLE -- The Mason County Board of Education unanimously approved a request by Superintendent Tim Moore to hold a \$235,546.20 payment to Monarch Construction because of unsatisfactory results of the construction of the new elementary school.

Monday night, members voted to hold payments each month until construction meets the board's expectations.

The facility is not ready at the level the construction company said it would be, Moore said.

"I want the building done right, and I want it finished before Christmas."

The contract for construction on the new school was awarded to Monarch Construction last year in the amount of \$10 million.

In March, the board discussed the possible need to hold the start of school for a couple of weeks, but in April August 1 was the target date for completion. By May, the date was pushed back to August 4 with students arriving August 10. The date has now gone from Oct. 7 to Christmas.

Board members were in agreement with Moore's request.

"I want it done right," board member Janet West said.

Moore said he expects the \$15.2 million building project to be completed and ready before Christmas break, and he will not release payments until the school district is satisfied with the construction.

The board also heard presentations by building level administrative teams from each Mason County school about home visits and building relationships with students to ensure academic success.

Teams from Straub Elementary School, Mason County Intermediate School, Mason County Middle School and Mason County High School presented plans to improve student attendance, discipline, academics and transitions. Each school focused on making home visits and personal phone calls to students to help keep lines of communication open.

Moore said it was critical for administrators, faculty and staff at each school to look beyond test scores and "develop one-on-one relationships with students."

Straub Elementary officials outlined plans to contact parents after a child has missed up to three days of classes and to provide teachers with resources to maintain contact with parents. The team also suggested making random phone calls to parents to check on improvements. The school also plans to make visits to the homes of children who have several office referrals due to discipline problems. The Straub Elementary team also said it will implement a plan to maintain consistent, regular contact with parents on academic performance.

"We've got to get parental involvement at a high level at an early age," Moore said.

Mason County Intermediate School team members also outlined similar plans to make home visits and personal phone calls to parents. The team also said arrangements will be made so absent students will receive daily assignments and homework.



A construction worker moves dirt near the front of Clark's Run Road. The board of education Monarch Construction contractor until construction is acceptable. Bri

Academics have improved, and the team suggested ways to continue improving at the academic level. The intermediate school will also continue the Jumpstart program, which has been successful, and extend it to the third-grade level.

The middle school and high school teams discussed the individual graduation plan, which is a folder students receive in sixth grade. The IGP outlines students' school activities and career goals from sixth grade to graduation. The IGP will help students develop and evaluate career goals.

The middle school also discussed activities such as ACT EXPLORE, which is a model ACT test, and Career Investigation to prepare students for high school and college.

The high school is changing the class schedule to allow 5 minutes each day for homeroom, and another 30-minute homeroom session will be added each week. The high school will also offer an ACT prep class to prepare students to take the standardized test, and to inform them of the tools they need to get scholarships.

Moore announced the Mason County school district was recognized as one of 18 school districts in Kentucky chosen as an academic outperformer by Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services.

To be named as an "outperformer," school districts had to show higher levels of student proficiency than other districts serving similar proportions of low-income students, and perform above the expected performance zone based on scores from all Kentucky schools over two years.

Moore outlined goals for the next school year, focusing on making a connection with students, improving the attendance rate and reducing discipline referrals by 50 percent by 2008.

"We're to the point ... we can't go any further unless we have that relationship building," Moore said.