

School's failings obvious in tour

By JENNIFER JUDGE
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - Junior High Principal Robert Roberts was not surprised when the Lake-Lehman school board announced that the junior high school building failed to receive accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

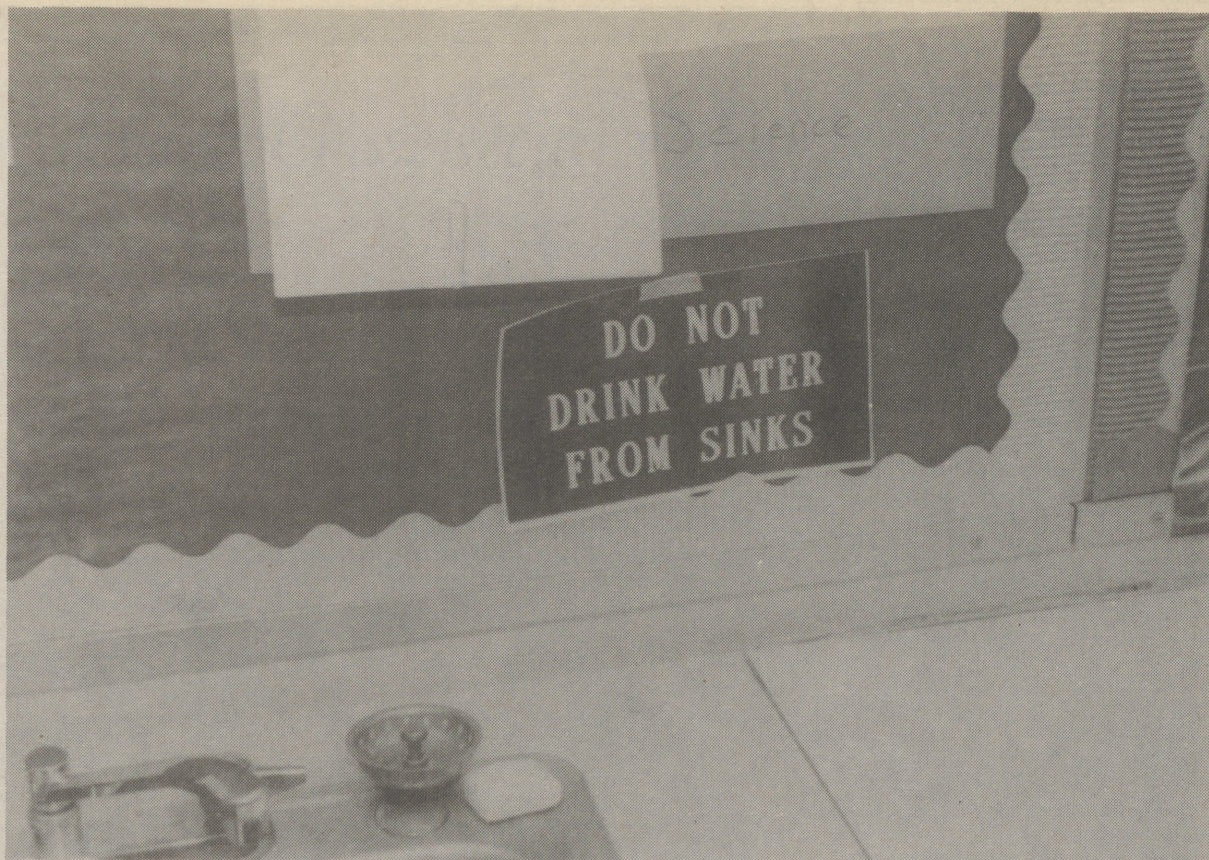
"The old building has served the district very well, but it's past its prime," Roberts said last week. The existing structure was built in 1939 and has accommodated as many as 400 students. Next year's seventh grade will prove the structure's biggest test, as the school will have to serve 50 to 70 more kids than usual.

But lack of space is one of the school's minor problems. Roberts reinforced the Middle States Association's findings in other areas during a walking tour of the building Oct. 11. The water system is being filtered to remove gasoline, but still remaining in the water are traces of lead and a gasoline additive. Near every water faucet and fountain in the school are signs reminding students to refrain from drinking the water.

The ventilation system in the building is inadequate. The filters the school was using did not filter out smaller particles but they did allow more air into the rooms. Changing filters only changed the problem. Now the air that enters the classrooms is cleaner, but there is less of it. Middle States reported levels of carbon dioxide that exceeded acceptable levels.

Roberts explained that many teachers were experiencing problems with allergies and as a result, the school district has purchased extra air filters for some of the worst rooms in the building.

The science labs in the building are science labs merely because they have faucets. They lack hot water and adequate storage areas for equipment, so expensive



Water is undrinkable at the Lake-Lehman Middle School, because of contamination of the groundwater from a nearby gas station.

POST PHOTO/JENNIFER JUDGE

apparatus is placed on open carts within the rooms.

Roberts pointed out that the problems found were with the facilities, not the education the students are receiving. In 1984, Cathy Gregory's Earth and Space Science class was recognized by the National Science Teachers as an exemplary science program.

The junior high's locker room facilities are also inadequate. Metal hooks line the walls in place of lockers, and there is only one bathroom stall in the facility. Showers are covered with mildew that janitors have been unable to remove with chemicals. Shower knobs are missing. Outside the locker room, a bare bulb lights the passageway. Roberts explained that this too is a hazard because a student could reach up and smash the bulb.

The gym is in good shape, according to Roberts, but unfortunately, it cannot be used two periods out of the day because it is used as a lunch room. The library does not contain an adequate number of books. There is little parking and no traffic control. Lanes labeled car and bus designate where vehicles will travel, but children departing buses must walk in front of cars and children departing cars must walk in front of the buses.

Ten-year-old school carpeting must be replaced, but is glued to tile and pulling it up could disturb

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Robert Roberts
Lake-Lehman Junior High principal

asbestos beneath the tile. Substandard play facilities include a chain link fence with exposed points at eye level.

Roberts said, "We're not standing on the corner beating a drum saying, 'We want a new school. We want a new school.' There are very serious problems with the school. The health, welfare, and education of these kids is at stake."

For now, the school is trying to manage the problems that exist without spending a lot of money. New filters have been placed in the ventilators. Extra air filters were purchased for certain rooms and vacuum cleaners that take smaller particles out of the rugs were also bought.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Price said that the district will consider adding one or two more modular structures to the existing building to accommodate population growth until something more permanent can be done. The school board is in the process of hiring a firm to do a feasibility study for the entire district, which will take from nine months to a year to complete and

will cost between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

According to Ray Bowersox, school board secretary, a feasibility study includes a demographic study, a study of the existing facilities and curriculum, and an analysis of the district's educational needs. Bowersox also pointed out that the Ross Elementary School may soon have trouble accommodating its students because developments in that area are creating a population growth. Part of a feasibility study includes talking to planning committees to see what homes and developments are being planned.

If the feasibility study finds that a new building must be built, the district will still need to seek approval from the Department of Education. Price said that state reimbursement for school building projects has been decreasing over time and that the district would "have to move on this now." The remaining cost of a new facility would be made up with taxpayers' money.

"Typically, it takes five years to build a new facility," Bowersox said.

"The health, welfare, and education of these kids is at stake."

Robert Roberts
Lake-Lehman Junior High principal

Book shortage a surprise, superintendent says

By JENNIFER JUDGE
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - Parents of sixth graders voiced concerns about the junior high, which failed to meet Middle States Association standards at the Oct. 15 meeting of the Lake-Lehman School Board.

Donna Kaminski told the board that the unusually large sixth grade class has experienced textbook shortages throughout their school careers. School Superintendent Dr. William Price said, "This is the first we've known about it," and assured the group that the board would look into the matter.

Nancy Edkins, who has a child in the middle school and one about to enter, commended the teachers for handling textbook shortages well in the past. "I don't think the kids miss out on anything," she said. Later in the week, Edkins said, "It doesn't make a lot of sense to buy extra books for this class that won't be used by future classes."

Edkins believes that once again, teachers will have to come up with creative solutions. "They've done a good job before. My expectation for the future is that they will continue to do a good job."

During the regular meeting, Barney Dobinick, father of a sixth grader, also expressed concern about the large incoming population and the conditions of the school. Dobinick said, "As it stands now, we will not have enough books for some of the classes." He also questioned the air quality of the school.

Architect Doug Trumbower explained that conditions at the school are "uncomfortable, but not hazardous." The district has purchased additional ventilators for rooms with the highest concentrations of carbon dioxide.

Kaminski said the elementary schools will be sending about 80 students each to the school, as opposed to the usual 60. She said, "This class has been large since kindergarten. It's no surprise to them." She also said that an informal group of concerned parents will go to look at the junior high.

The board voted to seek proposals for a facilities feasibility study. Dr. Price told parents the

"As it stands now, we will not have enough books for some of the classes."

Barney Dobinick
Middle School parent

district will accommodate the large incoming population of seventh graders by setting up modular units next to the existing structure.

Trumbower said that boiler maintenance contracts that were awarded in September have not been signed by Penn State Mechanical because the final contract listed work that was supposed to be done in August. He also reported that replacement burners for the boilers that are needed in general maintenance were still on order. The board will offer Penn State Mechanical a new contract that will allow them to complete work that was to be done in August '96 in August '97.

Stanley Mazur, supervisor of building and grounds, informed the board that there have been problems with the middle school's boiler system since June. Mazur said, "We're still utilizing the system, but one pipe in particular needs to be repaired and possibly other things." The work will be done by Penn State Mechanical once a contract is signed.

Bids were awarded for spring sports materials and supplies at \$3,300 less than what was spent last year.

The board voted unanimously to enter into the West Side Vo-Tech purchasing consortium. The initial cost to the district will be \$2,834, but the yearly fee will decrease as more schools and municipalities enter into the consortium. Price told the board that districts have saved as much as \$15,000 to \$20,000 in the past through purchasing consortiums.

A list of teacher substitutes was accepted. A certification and copyright policy was also approved for the district.

The board announced that the Sept. 28 auction of used furnishings held at Lehman Jackson Elementary earned the district \$1,920.50.

HL Demos plan Halloween dance

The Harveys Lake Democratic party will have a Halloween Dance October 26, at the Castle Inn, Route 415, Dallas, 8 p.m. to midnight. Music will be by Strange Brew.

Costumes are optional, but plaques will be awarded for the best costumes. The cost will be \$15 per person, which includes beverage and buffet.

Tickets are available from members of the Democratic Party or may be purchased at the door or by calling 639-1994. Everyone is welcome.

Sweet Valley Auxiliary selling flavorings

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Sweet Valley Fire Company are selling flavorings for \$2 a bottle. Also available for sale are stainless steel peelers and paring knives. For more information, call Joy Wickard at 477-5323.

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