



Photo by Dannie Oliveaux

When students at Emerald Hills Elementary School arrived for the first day of class, they found stacks of school supplies.

Program helps Emerald Hills Elementary provide supplies

By DANNIE OLIVEAUX
The Courier-Herald

Students at Emerald Hills Elementary School were surprised when they arrived for their first day of school Sept. 8.

Desks in each classroom, kindergarten through fifth grade, had paper, crayons, glue sticks and other school supplies waiting for them when they reached their home classroom.

Principal Chuck Eychaner said his school staff had looked at the budget issue facing the school district in the spring.

"One of the things we were determined not to do, if possible, was to burden families with additional costs," Eychaner said. "When we looked at our list of school supplies, we realized we needed to come together to be more

consistent.

Each family was asked to donate \$20 and the school staff supplied most of the supplies, with the exception of a backpack, Eychaner noted.

He said part of what the school emphasizes is trying to do as much as everyone can — not only as a team at grade levels, but as a team at school.

Eychaner said they were able to purchase supplies like paper, notebooks, glue sticks, scissors, pencils, crayons and colored markers at bulk-rate prices.

"As much as we can have common expectations, it simplifies it for our parents," Eychaner said. "For \$20 it's a pretty good deal."

Eychaner believes educators have an obligation to students.

"The law says we must provide a free and

appropriate education," said Eychaner. "We're trying to take that pretty seriously."

According to Communications Director Ann Cook, the average cost saving for the district's elementary and middle schools was 35 percent compared to 2008-09 costs.

Emerald Hills had the most savings with 80 percent, followed by McAlder Elementary with 76 percent.

The largest increase among the 11 schools was 16 percent for supplies for third-graders at Maple Lawn Elementary.

Sumner Middle School had a 7 and 9 percent increase, respectively, in the cost for supplies for seventh- and eighth-grade students.

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