

Christmann adds perks in new contract

By **Paul Lane**

Updated: May 27, 2011, 8:09 AM

A reworked contract between the Grand Island School District and Superintendent Robert Christmann will offer a couple of additional perks but contains no salary increase, retroactive or otherwise.

The contract, which was approved by the board earlier this month, offers the superintendent an additional five days of paid vacation, bringing the total number to 25. It also calls for him to be paid for any unused sick leave that has accrued as of his retirement and altered his post-retirement health insurance.

One thing the deal does not do, however, is offer a retroactive pay increase. That means that Christmann, who started with the district in February 2007 with a \$150,000 salary, has only received one raise during his tenure with Grand Island. His salary has been frozen since the 2009-10 academic year and won't increase in 2011-12.

"Going three years with no salary increase is something I don't think any of my colleagues has done," he said.

While Christmann's salary does not increase, the way he receives money has been tweaked. His initial contract with the district called for a \$2,400 annual stipend for travel expenses in addition to his base salary. He opted a few years ago to roll that stipend into his annual salary so that additional checks didn't have to be cut, but he and the board decided to return to the original method of distribution for the duration of the contract's term.

Work on the contract had been going on since late last year, according to School Board President Richard Little Jr. Christmann's lobbying on the district's behalf to Albany legislators was cited as a key reason for ensuring that the superintendent remains in Grand Island.

"We really appreciate his efforts and commitments to this district," Little said. "His ability and interactions at the state level have brought a good deal back to this district."

Christmann's original contract was good until June 30, 2015. The length of the deal was not altered, but both sides retain the right to consider an extension. Christmann's contract will be up for board review again in June, at which time trustees might opt to extend the deal.