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Lackawanna Trail School District to utilize Kelly Services for substitutes

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by Elizabeth Baumeister

FACTORYVILLE — Members of the Lackawanna Trail School Board voted, 7-0, Aug. 8 to approve the appointment of Kelly Services for substitute teaching calling services for the 2016-17 school year.

According to Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas, all substitutes currently utilized by Lackawanna Trail need to register through Kelly Services to continue working for the district.

“We’re looking to make this process more efficient as well as save some money,” he said. “The vast majority of local districts use (Kelly Services) and it’s time for us to get in the game.”

According to Lackawanna Trail Business Manager Keith Glynn, the change could potentially net the district savings and will increase the number of substitutes available on a daily basis.

“The prices pretty much break even for what we spend now between paying the substitutes, taxes and retirement contributions,” Glynn said. “It’s about \$10 more per sub (with Kelly Services), but there is savings in a software package we’re getting that will help us manage the substitutes. A big problem we’re having now is filling all the classrooms with a full-day substitute and we’re having to pay teachers (in the district) to cover different periods. Our substitute pool is dwindling and this gives us access a quality substitute pool for the district.”

Members of the board voted, 7-0, to approve the resignation of high school French teacher Denise Hall, effective immediately.

“We’re actively seeking candidates for the teaching position,” Rakauskas said. “We have one or two right now and we’d like a bigger pool of candidates. We could start the year with a substitute and whomever is hired at the September meeting can take over from there.”

Members of the board voted, 7-0, to approve the appointment of Tiffany Carpenter as a special education teacher at a salary of \$47,500, which is Step 1 with a bachelor’s degree at a frozen rate from last year.

Members of the board voted, 7-0, to approve the recommended bus contractors’ rate at the state formula for the 2016-17 school year.

“We will pay each approved contracted driver in the district based on the age of their bus, miles driven with students and their growth from year to year,” Glynn said. “It’s the way to maximize the district’s reimbursement and provides the least amount of cost back to the taxpayers.”

Members of the board voted, 7-0, to approve the recommended car and van drivers rate at \$1.42 per mile as per the state formula for the 2016-17 school year. The cost is a 0.7 percent increase from last year. Members of the board also voted, 7-0, to approve the list of bus contractors and drivers.

Nutrition Group, a full-service food and facilities management company, was selected to serve as the district’s Food Service Management Company for the 2016-17 school year during a meeting in April.

“We felt it was time to look to outsource the management system, try to increase lunch participation and save some money,” Rakauskas said.

Barb Cwikla, of Nutrition Group, attended the meeting to discuss the company’s plans for the district.

“We’ll be starting Oct. 1 with a new menu,” she said. “We’ll be using Lackawanna Trail’s menu for the month of September and then you’re going to see a lot of new events. We’re going to try to make excitement.”

Glynn added the school is transitioning to an online student payment system for the cafeteria.

“School Cafe is a new service being offered,” he said. “It’s an online portal for parents to put money into their student’s account for a one-time fee of \$1.95 by using each student’s ID.

Members of the board voted, 7-0, to approve the agreement between the Lackawanna Trail School District and Wyoming County Juvenile Court for contracted services for the 2016-17 school year at a cost of \$12,500, the same amount as last year.

A student orientation for seventh graders or anyone new to the district will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 17 in the high school auditorium.

Members of the Lackawanna Trail School District will hold a work session meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 6 at the elementary center.