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Lackawanna Trail Board of Education approves elementary Life Skills class

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FACTORYVILLE — Members of the Lackawanna Trail Board of Education approved the addition of an Elementary Life Skills Class, beginning in the 2017-18 school year, during a regular meeting Feb.13.

According to Special Education Director Amie Talarico, at least four or five students will take part in the class.

“It means a lot to their families,” Talarico said. “They are very excited that their children will be able to be educated in their community with their siblings.”

According to Talarico, the Center for Independent Living, of Scranton, provided tips and resources for areas of the building that need to be upgraded in order to meet ADA compliance with these students coming back from outside placements next year.

The district currently offers a Life Skills class in the high school and Talarico previously said during a meeting Jan. 3 that adding the program to the elementary center would have many benefits.

Members of the board voted to table the approval of a High School Automotive Tech Shop for the 2017-18 school year, through a one-year lease with Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU) 19, until at least the March 13 regular meeting.

According to Lackawanna Trail Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas, executive director of NEIU 19, which currently runs a high school automotive tech shop in the Carbondale area, issued a request a month ago to determine if any school districts in the area have the facilities to host half-day sessions.

“Our two big pushes the last few months have been getting the Life Skills class and auto shop off the ground,” Rakauskas said. “The programs are important to us because special education students will be a part of them. We ran into a couple snags with the auto shop, but we’re hopeful we can get it done in March.

“We have a lot of garage space at the high school and think it would be a win-win if we could host the program. We would be keeping our students at Lackawanna Trail, they wouldn’t have to travel, and we would receive rent payments from the NEIU.”

Rakauskas added the biggest issue has to do with the measurements of the district’s garage.

“The main problem is we don’t have the height in our garage that is necessary for the programs the NEIU has in place,” he said. “We’re trying to see if there is an alternative.”

Members of the board approved a budget of \$22,217.53 for the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit #19 for the fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. According to Rakauskas, it amounts to an increase of about \$360 from last year.

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