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Lackawanna Trail Board of Education approves changes to school calendar

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FACTORYVILLE — Members of the Lackawanna Trail Board of Education approved an amendment to the 2016-2017 school calendar during a regular meeting April 10. The amendment includes June 12-16 as make-up days and reschedules graduation to June 13.

According to Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas, the district is trying to recoup funds for extra costs incurred due to overtime worked by employees and fuel costs as a result of Winter Storm Stella.

“In talking to Gene Dziak, the Wyoming County EMA director, there are venues to explore and there is still a possibility to receive some reimbursement,” he said.

Rakauskas announced there are two positions posted on the district website, which expire on April 28.

“We’re seeking applicants for a dean of students position at the high school,” he said. “This is not an additional administrative position, it’s a faculty position that would handle student discipline, general management services and teaching as many as three classes in their area of certification.”

The new position would ease the burden on high school principal Mark Murphy.

“We’ve had two administrators at the high school for decades,” Rakauskas said. “Last year, when we didn’t replace Mr. Kearney as assistant principal, (principal) Murphy has done a great job as the lone administrator. After studying it for a nearly a year, we thought it would be better if he had a little bit more time to spend on academics.”

The district is also seeking a school nurse for either the elementary center or high school.

Members of the board approved the agreement between Lackawanna Trail School District and Wyoming County Juvenile Court for contracted services for the 2017-2018 school year at a cost of \$13,500.

“We have a probation officer from Wyoming County who works three days a week for the district,” Rakauskas said. “She teaches the kids about what could happen should they break the law or have excessive trancies. As a probation officer, she carries a weapon and has the ability to be a security guard, as well.”

Members of the board approved the academic calendar for the 2017-2018 school year, which is available for review on the district’s website.

Members of the board voted to renew the district’s contract with Nutrition Group, Inc. for the 2017-18 school year.

“I think they’ve been very consistent not only with the quality and variety of the food they serve, but they also survey the students on new food items. There is a lot of involvement with the students. It’s been a learning year for them and they’ve done really well. We have a series of one-year contract renewals and we’re excited to move forward.”

In other business, members of the board approved additional motions, including:

- The appointment of Melissa Flynn as an outsourced independent contractor for social work services for the 2017-2018 school year at a salary of \$36,000.
- The appointment of John G. Audi of Sweet, Stevens, Katz, Williams as school solicitor, effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, with no increase in rates.
- The resignation of Katie Lane as a high school social studies teacher, effective immediately. Lane also served as the marching band and drama director.
- The contact with Pivot for athletic training (\$22.50 per hour), physical therapy (\$100 per hour), occupational therapy (\$100 per hour) and speech pathology services (\$90 per hour) for the 2017-18 school year.
- The contract of Sarah DeBree from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2021, pay in line with the LTESPA secretary position.
- The retirement of Colleen Ronchi, bookkeeper, at the end of September 2017.
- The retirement of special education math teacher Wendy Cathrall at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year.
- The appointment of Troy Thurston as a private driver for Lackawanna Trail School District for the remainder of the 2016-17 school year.
- The resignation of Laura Evans as an assistant cross country coach, effective immediately. Evans was later approved as the junior high field hockey coach for the 2017-18 school year at a stipend of \$3,550, per the LTEA contract.
- The appointment of Jean Kerr, Sarah VanFleet and Michelle Herron as volunteer band assistants for the 2017-18 school year.