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Retirements, resignations accepted at Trail

BY BEN FREDA, Abington Journal Correspondent

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FACTORYVILLE - At the Lackawanna Trail School Board meeting April 10, Maxwell Blake, whose children attend the Lackawanna Trail Elementary Center, told the board that their school district has one of the lowest standards of the state test scores. He said the district ranks at 22 percent, while neighboring districts in Tunkhannock and the Abington Heights ranks at 52 and 87 percent, respectively.

"If you care about education, this board should do something about that because it's pathetic," he said.

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said, "We educate every student who comes through the door. We're very proud of our students who go to Ivy League college, go to two and four- year colleges, who make it through graduation, or may have struggled or benefited from our programs. It's a great district."

He added that Trail is concerned with statistics and academics. "We're always looking to improve," he said. Blake said his research came from the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) test scores. He said that most students ranged in the 67-70 percent range.

One of the board members said the board receive a district report card and a high school report card, which are provided by the state. She said none of the data Blake mentioned was reported in either.

Board President Ned Clarke asked Blake to meet with the board another time and discuss openly with the superintendent and the curriculum director. Blake agreed.

In other business, retirement and resignation were announced and approved effective the last day of the 2011-12 school year, with notes of thanks made to all. Retirees include Barbara Osmun, a 5th-grade learning support teacher at the Elementary Center; Diane Smith, a 4th-grade learning support teacher at the Elementary Center; Mary C. Stuble, an elementary art teacher at Trail Elementary; Anna Mae Belles, a teacher's assistant at the high school.

"Congratulations to Anna Mae," said Rakauskas. "She's one of the longest current employees of the school, and she will be missed."

Dr. Mark Lombardi motioned that Karen Rigard's letter of resignation as school board director from Region #1, be accepted with regret and thanks effective April 30. The board agreed.

Rakauskas thanked Rigard for her service. "From an administrator's point of view, I certainly wish you a great time after you leave the board. We really appreciated everything you've done here especially your angle as an educator." .

Rigard's husband Rick Rigard, who was present at the meeting, said, "I know how much she (Karen) enjoyed serving on the board and serving the school district of Lackawanna Trail and how much she loves and supports the school district. She always said it's the best kept secret in Northeastern Pennsylvania."

Board member Judith Johnson made a motion to appoint Frank Tylutki as interim school board director, effective May 1, 2012. The board agreed.

"I received a letter from Mr. Tylutki considering him to be added to the board in Mrs. Rigard's resignation," said Clarke. "That will be effective May 1 and he will serve until the general election in November."