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Lackawanna Trail says goodbye to Rushefski

The Lackawanna Trail School Board used its Monday night work session to review a nationally award-winning music video and to say thanks to a parting administrator.

Connie Harris assembled around eight students at the board meeting to review the circumstances at which they and others entered a contest called 'Classroom Musical 2014' that came out over the nationally syndicated radio program, Kidd Craddick in the Morning.

"We just tried to think of what makes sense in a school day and have a little fun," senior Colin Bolthouse, who has Broadway aspirations, told the board.

Then, according to Harris, a key workhorse was another senior, Billy Lee, who with Tom Jasinski, who was not present, did technical editing of the five-track medley.

"As I understand it, they spent about 25 hours doing the technical editing, that made it all come together," soon-to-be principal Mark Murphy said.

Then, the school board got to watch the video.

The effort earned Mrs. Harris and fellow teacher Lisa Vallone \$1,500 to purchase classroom supplies.

The board loudly applauded the students' efforts, which they were told were mostly done during after-school hours.

Board president Mark Lombardi quickly noted that the board was in Act 93 discussions with the district's teachers over a new contract and would soon "return to the table."

He also reviewed the agenda for next week's public meeting which included resignations of field hockey coach Kathleen Snyder and assistant field hockey coach Gena Lengel as well as assistant boys' basketball coach Christian Sunseri.

It was noted that a new head boys' basketball coach and assistant football coach would be appointed next week, but no clues were given as to whom was being considered.

Also on the agenda was a first reading of a new policy on 'bullying/cyberbullying' which elementary center principal Tonia Stoker said was the last piece that needed to be cleared before a 'Bring Your Own Devices' mindset was implemented in the next school year.

Two new textbooks are also slated for adoption- Graphic Communication and Photography.

In his superintendent report, Matt Rakauskas, acknowledged high school principal John Rushefski, whose last official day at the helm would be Friday, after which he will be taking over as superintendent of the Old Forge School Board.

"I just wanted to say thanks for giving me the amazing opportunity in 2008 to let me be the principal here," Rushefski told the board, while gushing about the professional teaching staff and support personnel "who make the impossible possible," the supportive community and "the great kids whom I'm going to hate to leave."

Parent Cathy Strauch asked to address the board about its discipline policy, but Lombardi quashed the request, noting he had appointed a board subcommittee to look into the matter.

"I have full confidence that chairman Ned Clarke will give you a chance to air your concerns at a future meeting," Lombardi said.

Clarke did note the committee, also consisting of Phil Stark, Carol Selwood and David Thorne, had met once and might speak to concerns next Monday, if time allowed.