

Trail board gets update on summer work

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The Lackawanna Trail School Board got an update Monday night on how the physical improvements across the district's school buildings went this summer, as Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas proclaimed them "safer, more energy efficient, well insulated and modern."

He did a brief PowerPoint presentation which showed the extent of changes and how some classrooms looked most of the summer and what they looked like as teachers returned.

"I deeply appreciate this investment and especially because it got done in time," he said.

He added that "Trail will benefit for generations because of these capital improvement investments."

In a nutshell, he noted, "The atmosphere is ideal."

Although Rakauskas didn't share much about security cameras installed, assistant high school principal Brian Kearney did.

He said they were clearly up and running.

"As disciplinarian in the high school, they've made my life easier," Kearney said. "Students realize there's a lot less they can get away with these days, so they really work well."

High School Principal Mark Murphy said that while there was focus on the physical plant this summer, "We clearly have an academic focus now."

He said that on Monday, Oct. 21, Phase 2 of the district's Bring Your Own Device policy would be implemented with junior high school students getting Gmail accounts.

Murphy also noted that senior night for golf would be this Wednesday, and for cross country on Sept. 28.

The homecoming football game would be Oct. 2, with a pep rally the night before and a homecoming dance the night after.

Murphy also noted the district was looking for teachers certified in chemistry and physics.

Curriculum director Tonya Stoker spoke to last school year's PSSA scores and how across the board for the state the numbers were down, because of a more rigorous test.

She said she would be giving a presentation on Trail's performance possibly in October or November at the latest.

In other business, Board president David Thorne opened the meeting by noting that the board had been in executive session on Sept. 8, going over goals and developing a performance evaluation instruments for the superintendent.

Thorne said that immediately before the Monday night meeting, the board reviewed and approved a set criteria for the goals.

He said the following areas would be covered: student growth and achievement, organizational leadership; district operations and financial management; communications and community relations; human resource management; and professionalism.

Also, on Monday, the board

*gave a first reading to a policy on student meal charging;

*approved family medical requests by Sarah Wright and Kelly Berry;

*approved two long-term substitutes- Samantha Kelly in second grade and Lauren McNamara in kindergarten;

*approved a paraprofessional appointment of Melissa Telesk;

*accepted the resignations of Brittney Vennero as long-term guidance substitute, Betty Jo Bergey as basketball cheerleading adviser; and Alice Stuffle as yearbook adviser

*appointed Dina Berrios to the basketball cheerleading post, but Rakauskas noted that after posting the yearbook adviser opening internally, it had no qualified candidates and the district would start looking externally to fill the post.

*Accepted the resignation of Kevin Mulhern as the Lackawanna Trail High School representative to the Northeast Intermediate Unit, and elected Phil Stark to fill that position.

*Added the following names to the district substitute lists: Holli Musgrove, Ryan Yagelski, Megan Horwatt, Emily Wilson, Kevin Hilsey, Brenda VanLuvanee, Dawn Shaw, Jodi Kwiatkowski, Paul Zbegner and Sean Heuer.