

Trail announces reduced lunch deadline

by C.J. Marshall

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Families taking advantage of free or reduced school lunches at Lackawanna Trail School District have until Oct. 12 to sign up to continue with the program during the 2016/17 school year.

Business Manager Keith Glynn informed the Lackawanna Trail School Board at its regular meeting on Monday that the grace period for families using the free or reduced lunch program is scheduled to end on Oct. 12.

Any family wishing to continue utilizing the program's benefits must submit their applications to the district by that date, he said, or they will not be able to take advantage of it for the rest of the school year.

The board unanimously approved the hiring of Lindsey Rager as a French teacher at a salary of \$47,500. Rager's salary will be pro-rated for 2016/17, reflecting the fact she started later in the school year.

The board approved faculty member Donna Biglin as a mentor for teacher Tiffany Carpenter, at a stipend of \$450.

District Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas informed the board that the first few weeks have gone smoothly, and thanked the administration and the faculty for their support.

The Nutrition Group Inc. has taken over operation of the district's cafeteria system, Rakauskas continued, and things have been going well, although there are still a few kinks to work out. Next month, Nutrition Group will begin offering its own menu items, replacing the district's menu being utilized in September.

The superintendent said students will have their own accounts with the cafeteria service, allowing them to pay for food via a pin code. This will eliminate the need for students to pay in cash. Parents will be able to access the accounts on-line, putting money and determining what their children have been purchasing.

Rakauskas also said the district is now using Kelly Service to contact substitute teachers when they are needed. The agency has a more efficient system of contacting substitutes and recording the information than the district's, he said. The administration will authorize the choice of the substitute when notified by Kelly Service.

A few months ago, Rakauskas continued, the board spoke to Bob McTiernan, executive director of Intermediate Unit 17, concerning how the district could attract more people to utilizing the IU's cyber-school system, as opposed to parents going to private contractors.

Rakauskas said he expects to have McTiernan's report on Friday, and he will be passing it on the board and the public at the board's meeting in October.

Junior/Senior High School Principal Dr. Mark Murphy reported that the school year is off to a great start.

"I had one request for air conditioning a the high school building," he said, referring to the unseasonable high temperatures recently occurring throughout the area.

Murphy also said that he'd had a request for heat in one of the building's on Monday, reflecting the fact the weather cooled down considerably over the weekend.

Murphy also informed that board that sophomore Joshua Rosengrant had recently received the Award of Excellence from The National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

Murphy presented Rosengrant with the award during the meeting, which was sent by the academy to the school district.

Murphy explained that Rosengrant was one of 7,000 students who attended the Congress for Future Medical Leaders Conference in June, sponsored by the academy. Among the speakers were Nobel Prize winners, Murphy explained, plus winner of the National Medal of Science, and instructors from Harvard and other prestigious universities.

"It was awesome," Rosengrant said. "It was like one big pep rally."

Rosengrant he is not certain about wanting to become a doctor, but is definitely thinking about a career in the medical profession. One of the most fascinating things he found at the conference was a lecture from a man with a bionic eye.

"There were a lot of things to see. I loved the nanobots," Rosengrant said.

In other business, the board:

*Voted to appoint Jody Kwiatkowski as assistant girls basketball coach, at a stipend of \$3,900.

*Voted to appoint Ashley Chuck as assistant girls volleyball coach, at a stipend of \$2,725.

*Approved the retirement of Maureen Mahoney, elementary nurse, as the conclusion of the 2016/17 school year.