

LT Board passes 2019-20 calendar proposal

Brooke Williams / Published: April 10, 2019

The Lackawanna Trail School Board approved Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas' 2019-20 academic calendar proposal at Monday's meeting.

Last week, Rakauskas proposed a calendar, which begins Aug. 29 and could extend into June with some graduation options.

Based on feedback, he revised the calendar to make Jan. 20 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day) a full school day rather than a makeup snow day. The calendar also lists May 29 as the last day of school, as well as the first option for graduation.

The other two options for graduation are June 5 and any time between June 8 and 30.

The calendar will be made available on ltsd.org for the public to view.

School board members voted 8-1 to appoint Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams (John G. Audi) as the school solicitor with no increase in rates, effective July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Board member Joseph Strauch voted against Audi, saying the board should search for other legal counsel.

The board approved resolutions supporting Senate Bill 34 and House Bill 526.

Rakauskas said these bills propose that if a school has a viable cyber option, such as Trail having a new contract with VLN Partners, students in the district can still decide to take their education elsewhere.

However, they would have to pay their own tuition, thus alleviating the financial burden on schools.

Principal of School Management Rebekah King said at a recent VLN summit, she learned that VLN will begin its marketing campaign for Trail next month.

Treasurer Michael Mould told the board he recently met with someone from Rep. Karen Boback's office to express concerns. He spoke of how Pennsylvania is one of five states in the U.S. that is most reliant on public funding for education, and how schools struggle because of pension costs, charter costs and state mandates.

While the representative from her office was unable to make definitive comments, Mould said she promised to pass the information on to Boback.

The board approved contracts for the 2019-20 school year with Pivot for athletic training at \$22.50 per hour, physical therapy at \$100 per hour, occupational therapy at \$100 per hour and speech pathology services, which is for the extended school year only, at \$90 per hour.

An agreement between the district and the Dalton Borough Police Department was also approved. The district will continue to employ school resource officers at \$38 per hour for the 2019-20 school year.

The board voted in favor of a contract with Nutrition Group Inc. for the 2019-20 school year, as well as the Lackawanna Trail School District Comprehensive Plan for 2019-22.

The board approved 2019-20 course description guides for the high school and elementary center.

Board members also approved Erin Merkel's amended request for child rearing leave, as well as King's unpaid retroactive medical leave.

The board acknowledged Mary DeNault's retirement; Jamie Schirg's resignation from her position of fifth/sixth grade learning support paraprofessional; and Adam Johnson's resignation as junior high wrestling coach.

The board moved to appoint Lauren Hales for a long-term substitute position in special education.

Mason Stiver was approved as assistant marching band director at a stipend of \$3,550, and Steve Beckish was approved as a volunteer assistant golf coach.