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Lackawanna Trail School District officials to explore ways to bring cyber students back to classrooms

By Ben Freda

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FACTORYVILLE — Bob McTiernan, executive director of Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU) 19 proposed the district hold a data-gathering event to find out why students are choosing cyber charter school over public school during the May 9 school board meeting.

“What we’re hoping to determine is to ask in a very candid setting why those students have made the choice that they have made,” he told the Lackawanna Trail School Board members. “What we’d like to do is contact families, hold an event with your permission, and collect data, and then analyze that.”

McTiernan said the information could help develop a plan to return the students to the public schools and find ways to create models that might serve them better.

High school principal Dr. Mark Murphy said current cyber school students prefer attending classes at the Lackawanna Trail campus but aren’t satisfied with the school’s services.

“One of the things I’m interested in is creating a model that serves their interests, their needs, and their desires,” he said.

McTiernan said the study could help determine plans for students to experience both online and in-person styles of learning.

“One of the things we would put out there as a possibility is looking at hybrid models that would be flexible. We think we can help you implement those,” he said.

Board member Dr. Michael Mould asked McTiernan how will he motivate the students to attend the event.

“I think it’s going to be a challenge for us to get them (students) to come to the table and give us the data you’re looking for,” he said.

McTiernan said he agrees.

“We’re pitching this as an opportunity to help develop a model for education here that they can be a part of,” he said.

In other business:

- Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas mentioned that the work session, scheduled for June 6, has been canceled, but will have a voting meeting on June 13. The regular board meeting will be held on June 27.
- Murphy announced the following events: a choral concert May 18, a band concert May 19, and a junior high jazz band concert May 25.
- The board approved the 2016-17 proposed final budget in the amount of \$20,399,197.
- The board appointed Sarah DeBree, as part-time confidential administrative assistant to the superintendent, effective July 1.
- Appointed Mould as Lackawanna Trail school board treasurer for the 2016-17 school year with a stipend of \$600.