

Trail approves MOU with teachers

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Published: March 15, 2017

The Lackawanna Trail School Board voted Monday to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lackawanna Trail Education Association, allowing teachers who take early retirement on or before April 1 to obtain a raise despite a pay freeze in effect throughout the district.

The board voted 6-1 with member Joseph Ross voting 'no' on the raise, retroactive to when the pay freeze was put into effect last year.

District Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas explained that two teachers have applied for early retirement, and more could do so before April 1.

Asked why he voted no, Ross explained that he does not support the idea of changing the contract before it expires. The contract with the teachers is scheduled to expire in 2021.

The board also voted to table until next month a proposed MOU with the Support Professionals Association, with Ross again casting the lone 'no' vote.

President Philip Stark later explained the board has some questions about the proposal that need to be answered before it can take action on the matter.

The board approved the adoption of Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy 249. The policy covers and defines what is considered bullying and cyberbullying within the district, and what course of action will be taken against individuals who engage in it.

Rakauskas said that copies of the policy will be prominently displayed through the district's buildings, as well as on its website.

The superintendent reported that-because of the pending snow storm-school would be canceled on Tuesday, and the last day for students to attend school will now be June 7. Graduation day for Lackawanna Trail is still June 9, he said.

Member Joseph Strauch suggested the district look into the possibility of establishing policies regarding the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other items on school property. He pointed out that the district has no guidelines or restrictions on the use of 'vaping,' which has become popular over the past few years in which participants inhale certain legal substances. Strauch also said that although the district has policies prohibiting the use of alcohol on school property by students, there are some areas concerning adults he feels needs to be addressed. He said there is nothing place which says an adult can't bring a flask filled with an alcoholic beverage to a sporting event and drink it.

In other business, the board:

*Approved the retirement of Anthony Dalasio, a high school social studies teacher, at the conclusion of the 2016-17 term. Rakauskas said that the district thanks Dalasio for his 29 years of service to Trail, and he will definitely be missed.

*Approved the resignation of Katie Lane as Dramatics Director. In accepting her resignation, board member Joe Strauch noted that Lane has brought an "incredible level of professionalism" to the department, and she will be missed.

*Approved the hiring of Nancy Brown as the Dramatics Director, at a stipend of \$1,900.

*Approved Marisa Rakauskas as a paraprofessional substitute, with all clearances on file. The superintendent pointed out before the vote was taken that Marisa Rakauskas is his wife.

*Approved the following coaches: Kevin Rude, Benjamin Simmons and Lori Swanchak, as volunteer assistant track coaches and Bradley Higgins as volunteer baseball coach.

*Approved Robert Houser and Heidi Houser as volunteer band assistants.