

Trail SRO provides board update

Brooke Williams / Published: March 6, 2019

The Lackawanna Trail School Board heard from Dalton Borough police officer Tyler Hinkley Monday night about recent trainings relevant to his school resource officer position.

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said Trail introduced full-time SRO at the elementary center and high school for the first time this year, although there has been security in the schools before in different ways.

Rakauskas said Hinkley has been a great asset to the district.

“Our hope is always that his presence, his proactive nature and the things he does have to react to keep the building safe,” he said. “Here we are in March, and things are going really well.”

Hinkley told board members that everything has gone smoothly in the past few months.

He attended a week-long crisis intervention team training in December, which involved learning techniques to de-escalate situations. The focus was on mental health related incidents, but it can be used in various situations, he said.

“Since then I could think of numerous times that I’ve used it at the high school,” he said.

In January, he went to a meeting in the Wyoming County District Attorney’s office about the Safe2Say program being incorporated into area schools and also participated in training sessions for Trail students. Hinkley noted that there were four hits with Safe2Say on the first day, one of which was legitimate and being investigated. The others were for minor issues, and Hinkley said he believes the system is beneficial for students.

“It’s another form of communication between the students and the school,” he said.

Board member Debby Naylor said she has talked to students who said they feel safer with a school resource officer in the building.

At next week’s meeting, the board plans to vote on an E-Rate wireless access point upgrade for the elementary center.

Business manager Keith Glynn said committing to this would mean putting \$40,727.40 in next year’s budget, but 60 percent of that would be offset by revenue.

“The access points in this building are adequate, but are not optimal for the size of it,” he said. “By upgrading this network, we have all the access points that are here available to take up to the high school, which is in need of additional wireless access points, and also we can age out some old pieces of equipment.”

The board is also expected to approve the 2017-18 single audit prepared by Murphy Dougherty & Co., which the company is still putting finishing touches on, according to Glynn.

Glynn also recommended that the board authorize the business office to advertise a financial services request for a start date of July 1, 2019.

Next week, the board will also make a decision on a contract between the district and VLN, a cyber charter group. The board heard from Jamie Marshall of VLN at its last work session.

Rakauskas said that while Trail aims to keep students in the brick and mortar, those who choose online learning will have a superior academic experience that’s less expensive for the district through VLN.

If approved, students would be able to enroll in VLN as soon as this September, Rakauskas said.

Second readings of the following school policies will be up for a vote: nondiscrimination in employment practices; discipline of students with disabilities; behavior support; screening/evaluations for students with disabilities; enrollment of students; admission of students; confidential communications of students; student records; suspension/expulsion; school wellness; food services; and acceptable use of internet, computers and network resources.

The board plans to vote on approving an English department chair at a stipend of \$2,470; an equipment manager at a stipend of \$2,600; and a head golf coach at a stipend of \$3,460. All positions would begin in the 2019-20 school year.

Board members originally planned to approve an assistant marching band director at a stipend of \$3,550, but pushed this vote to the April meeting.

The board will also vote to approve Charlie Cobb, Mark June and Jeffery Edwards as volunteer assistant baseball coaches for the 2018-19 school year.

The Trail School Board is scheduled to next meet on Monday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m.