

**Winter storm socks county**BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE Press Examiner 2/3/2021

Lackawanna Trail Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas addressed the topic of virtual snow days at a Trail School Board virtual work session on Monday night.

Instead of traditional snow days like in the past, Trail pivoted to virtual instruction days on Monday and Tuesday because of the snowstorm that hit the area.

On these virtual instructional days, students log into class using their Chromebook computers to complete their lessons for the day.

Factoryville resident Joe Strauch said that he had seen on social media that some parents were unhappy about traditional snow days being taken away in favor of virtual instruction. Rakauskas said that although he knows the students miss snow days, that this is better for their education.

“We missed so much quality education time in March, April and May last year during the shutdown,” Rakauskas said. “We are trying to get in as many days as we can without having to extend the school year. I believe that these virtual days are good for the students’ education.

The school board members agreed with Rakauskas that virtual days will benefit the district in the long run. “Not having to use excess snow days will help us with not having to go deep into the month of June,” Board President Kevin Mulhern said. “I know the kids would much rather be stuck in the house now than in June when the weather is nice.”

At next week’s regular meeting, the board will be voting to approve the first reading of some of some policies, most of which have to do with district curriculum and academic standards.

Rakauskas also said that the district wants to take a look at Trail’s mission statement and shared values. He shared that he intended to form a steering committee to work on this.

The committee would consist of board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The mission statement of the district has not been adjusted in a couple of years and Rakauskas said that having representatives from every group in the district will benefit future students.

Also at next Monday’s board meeting, the board will vote to:
■ Assign the $1,861,628 fund balance for the following purposes: $1,206,825 for future capital projects; $404,803 for future technology costs; and $250,000 for textbook and curriculum costs.
■ Establish a school district federal funds bank account effective Feb. 8 to hold any federal funds received in advance.
■ Approve an e-rate funded network cabling project to add 50 Cat6 cables district wide at a maximum cost of $10,000.
■ Approve the retirement MOU for Patrice Gray at the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year.
■ Approve Tim Ronchi as a volunteer assistant track coach for the 2020-21 school year.

Board members David Bianchi, Joe Ross and David Thorne were absent from the work session.

The Lackawanna Trail School Board will have its next regular meeting on Monday, Feb. 8, at 7:30 p.m.