

**Trail graduation moved to June 10**

BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER

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Lackawanna Trail High School principal Mark Murphy announced Monday night that graduation will now take place on Thursday, June 10.

At a virtual school board meeting on Monday, Murphy said that with rain in the forecast for this week, the school is moving the ceremony to Thursday, June 10, at 6:30 p.m. from the original date of Friday, June 11. The ceremony will still be held outside at Lions Pride Stadium.

“We are going to take it on a day-by-day basis,” Murphy said. “We are going to make sure that this group of seniors has a traditional graduation ceremony. We obviously have to watch the weather though, and we will keep a close eye on it this week.”

Murphy said that if the weather does not cooperate on Thursday, the ceremony could be pushed back to Friday or Saturday. Each graduating senior will still receive five tickets to the ceremony, and tickets will be required for admission.

During public participation in Monday night’s school board meeting, Trail parent Lynn Stevenson said she had heard that school board members would not be at graduation and asked why. She said she wanted to know if it had anything to do with a petition on www.change.org.

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said that the reason board members will not be present is to create as much room on the field as possible for the graduates.

Stevenson then said “that wasn't good enough and she wanted the truth.”

David Conn, partner at Sweet, Stevens, Katz and William slaw firm and member of the Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association, who was at the meeting, said that the district is aware of the petition and has followed every legal and Pennsylvania School Board Association protocol.“

This board takes these types of accusations very seriously,” Conn said. “We have no credible evidence of any misconduct right now, this decision was strictly made for the issue of space on the field during the ceremony.

Later in the school board meeting, special education director Amie Talarico gave a presentation to the board on a proposal for an elementary emotional support program. The program would work with elementary school students who possess behavioral and emotional problems and would utilize behavioral health professionals.“

The number of special education students in our district has increased during the past couple of years, so more funding for special Ed has been needed already,”

Talarico said. “I think this would be a great thing for our students, and would provide services that currently are not available here.”Talarico said that this program would bring students back to the school district, as children who possess these types of behavioral issues attend programs in other school districts to receive the appropriate services.“

Some of those kids and parents could have up to a45-minute drive to school every day to receive proper services,” Talarico said.“Bringing them to school in their home district will do a lot of good.”

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas announced he is currently updating the district’s health and safety plan for the 2021-22 school year. He said that there will probably still be some mitigation measures in place, but he is hoping for a full return to nor mal next school year.“

Things such as deep cleaning and sanitizing will definitely still be in place,” Rakauskas said.“We are going to work with the Department of Health to see what is going to happen with things like masks, but we think that next school year is going to be a lot different than this one was.”

In other business, the board approved:

■ a Title III Memorandum with the NEIU19 Consortium for 2021-22*.*

*■* an updated contract with Pivot Athletic Training for 2021-22 to provide1,200 hours of service at a rate of $29,520.

■ the hirings of: Emily Baileys, secondary science teacher; Katie Beichler, secondary math teacher; Laura Hardiman, secondary English teacher; Danielle Dwyer, Morgan Doerner, and Courtney Gwizdz, elementary teachers; Becky Burdett, elementary music teacher, effective the beginning of 2021-22school year; John McNulty, full-time maintenance II position, effective June14; Jessica Tigue, Rachel Hain and Marena Horan, compensatory services teachers from June 14 to July 1; Rachel Hain, Marena Horan and Megyn Stevens, extended school year teachers, from July 7 to August 10.

■ the appointments of: Kelly Berry, science department chairperson; Danielle Dwyer, football cheerleading adviser; Kelly Hopkins, marching band color guard advisor; Kristen Kurpis, head softball coach; Steve Jervis Sr., Ben Simmons, Vince Kalinoski Jr., Jeff Stage, Jeff Edwards and Colin Golden, volunteer assistant football coaches; and Lauren Keyes, volunteer assistant football cheerleading coach.

■ the retirement of Marie Pawelzik, paraprofessional, effective June 30.The Trail school board will next meet on Monday, June 28, at 7:30 p.m. The Zoom link will be posted atwww.ltsb.org.