

**Trail reassigns $2M for future projects**BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER November 10, 2021

Lackawanna Trail School District assigned $2 million of fund balance for future capital projects.

At a virtual school board meeting on Monday night, Trail business manager Keith Glynn announced the fund balance from the general budget and advised the board to reassign that money for future capital projects.

“There are multiple projects that the board will be looking at in the next five years, such as a new HVAC system in the high school and new floors in the elementary school,” Glynn said. “Reassigning this money for capital projects will give us a good financial starting point when these come up in the future.”

Glynn said the fund balance is not uncommon and is a good thing for the school district. He said it will save the district from having to take out bonds for future projects. The bonds could garner high interest rates over time, which would cause the district to spend more money.

The board also approved the funding of the change orders for the flooring project in both buildings, which was completed before the start of the school year. The amounts were $45,882.32 for asbestos abatement and $63,648.26 for moisture mitigation.

Glynn said these change orders do not affect the $278,000 that was originally budgeted for the project.

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said for the first time all school year, Trail did not report any COVID-19 cases over a five-day period from Nov. 1 to Nov. 5. The district has only reported one positive case in the past two weeks.

“I’m very proud of where we’re at,” Rakauskas said. “This proves our mitigation efforts have been successful. I know it hasn’t been easy, but we need to keep up what we’ve been doing.”

This news came as Gov. Tom Wolf announced that the mask mandate in schools will expire Jan. 17, 2022. On this day any masking and COVID-19 mitigation orders will be in the hands of individual school districts.

Rakauskas said the board will revisit the health and safety plan over the next couple of months before making any concrete plans.

In their principals reports, Elementary principal Brian Kearney announced parent teacher conferences will take place Thursday, Nov. 11 from 5 to 8 p.m., and Friday, Nov. 12 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The conferences will take place virtually, but parents can request an in-person conference by calling 570-945-5153.

High School principal Mark Murphy announced registration for Advanced Placement tests is currently underway. Any student who is currently enrolled in an AP course and intends to take the test is asked to go to the school’s guidance office to register.

In other business, the board approved the following items

-the adoption of the following school policies addressing meetings, athletic facilities advertising, naming rights and public participation in board meetings.

-the appointments of Marena Horan, elementary special education teacher; Megyn Stevens, high school special education teacher; Erin Merkel, elementary special education teacher mentor; Dina Berrios, high school special education teacher mentor; Elissa Loubet, 2022 spring musical choreographer; Jillian Rojek, 2022 spring musical musical director; and Chaz Ross, volunteer wrestling coach for the 2021-22 season.

-the retirements of Katie Gaggiano, paraprofessional, effective Dec. 23; and Dawn Zawicki, paraprofessional, effective Dec. 6.

The Lackawanna Trail School Board will next meet for its reorganization meeting on Monday, Dec. 6. The zoom link will be posted at www.ltsd.org.