

Trail updates health guidelines
BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Lackawanna Trail School District is finally joining other local school districts in amending its COVID-19 quarantine guidelines.

On Monday, superintendent Matthew Rakauskas presented changes to the district’s health and safety plan which changes the district’s procedure on students and staff deemed as close contacts. Parents will now have the option to opt their student into a contact tracing program.

If a parent chooses to opt their child into the program, they will still be identified as a close contact. If a parent chooses not to opt their student in, contact tracing will be eliminated for the student.

“We know some districts have eliminated contact tracing completely, but we still want to give parents the option to know if their child came in close contact with someone who tested positive,” Rakauskas said. “Families might have someone who is sick at home, and that information could be valuable to them.”

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will continue to have to isolate for five days or until they show no more symptoms, Rakauskas said. Masks will continue to be optional inside school buildings. The district’s current COVID-19 dashboard displays three positive cases, the lowest since the beginning of the school year. The board will vote on the changes to the health and safety plan at Monday’s regular meeting.

The board received a presentation from Murphy, Dougherty & Co. on the district’s 2020-21 audit. The audit showed $22.7 million in revenue for the district and an increase in fund balances from the previous audit of $1.8 million.

Trail’s revenue exceeded its budget by $1.7 million, but that was mainly due to pandemic related funds the district received.

“We are in great financial shape under the circumstances,” business manager Keith Glynn said. “This was another clean audit for the district, which will go a long way as we start the process of drafting the 2022-23 budget. Costs of everything are rising right now, and we are going to have to account for that.”

Some more steps were taken in the planning process of the new student wellness center. Next week, the board will vote to approve a service agreement with Ashburn Advisors LLC for the execution of the business plan for the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant at a cost of $34,000.

It will also vote to approve a cost of $105,320 to be allotted for architecture and engineering services. That cost will be funded through an assigned fund balance.

 We’re beginning to get this project up and running,” Glynn said. “It’s going to be a lengthy process that’s not going to happen overnight, but these are necessary steps.”

Superintendent Rakauskas said he expects construction on the wellness center could begin in the summer.

Next week, the board will vote to approve:

■ A mini-bid contract with Pennsylvania PEPPM for switches to ePlus at a rate of $11,478; enclosures/racks to Dauphin DataCom at a rate of $1,385; and for wireless access points to ePlus at a rate of $12,122.

■ A contract with Nutrition Group Inc. for the 2022-23 school year.

■ A revised teacher induction manual.

■ The appointments of: Shannon Kuchak to acting director of special education from April to October (to temporarily fill in for Amie Talarico who will be on family medical leave). Kuchak will return to her principal of student management position at the end of the temporary appointment; and

■ The appointment of Lindsay Howell, as volunteer softball coach. Lackawanna Trail School Board next meets March 14, at 7:30 p.m. The Zoom link will be posted at www.ltsd.org.