

Trail board to vote on consent issue
BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER Wednesday, May 4, 2022

The fate of Lackawanna Trail High School’s new consent program is now in the hands of the school board.

At a work session meeting Monday night, board president Kevin Mulhern announced members will vote on whether to let the program move forward at the May 9 board meeting.

The board voted to suspend the lesson last month so each member could review the material being taught, after some parents questioned the age appropriateness of the program.

 According to High School principal Mark Murphy, the purpose of the program is to teach students about the importance of respecting the choices and boundaries of others, to form positive and healthy relationships, what defines sexual harassment/assault and to promote understanding of what is and is not appropriate.

Parents continued to speak both in support of and against reinstating the program. Laureen Naylor of Factoryville questioned how the program is being taught and its morals.

“The innocence of our children is at stake here,” Naylor said. “When did sex education become a game? A lesson like this should be taught with morals, certainly not the way it’s being taught here. Parents need to be a part of this process.”

Some parents said the program is a valuable tool for children who might not have the best home lives and reduces the risk of sexual assault and harassment, not just in school, but later in life as well.

 “Programs like this prepare students for life outside of our Trail bubble,” Kelly Martin of Factoryville said. “I talk to my children about everything including uncomfortable topics like this, but some don’t have that same luxury. We’d be failing our kids by terminating this program.”

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas assured parents modifications have been made to the program over the last month and each board member had a chance to thoroughly review the presentation for each grade level.

“Whether the board votes to continue the program or not is their decision,” Rakauskas said. “I can assure everyone this is a professional program. We have given parents the chance to opt their child out should they not feel comfortable, and this program follows all board policies when it comes to academics and presentations.”

Board members will also vote next week on the proposed final budget in the amount of $22.2 million with tax increases of 4.57 percent for Lackawanna County residents and .05 percent for Wyoming County residents.

The millage rate for Lackawanna County property owners will rise from 174.76 mills to 182.75 mills. Wyoming County residents will see their millage rate rise from 91.69 mills to 91.74 mills.

The tax increases will bring an additional $295,000 in revenue to the district. According to business manager Keith Glynn, that money would have to be cut from the budget without the tax increases.

In other business, next week the board will vote to approve

Higher Information Group as the copy/printer vendor for a period of 60 months beginning in August at a monthly cost of $2,423.

\*The purchase of installation services for plumbing, roofing, mechanical and electrical from the cafeteria fund balance for the new High School dishwasher system in the total amount of $15,365.

\*The appointment of Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams as solicitor for the 2022-23 fiscal year; and Rajan Mulloth as the school district physician for the 2022-23 at a stipend of $10,000.

\*The continuation of services with Kelly Services for substitute teacher and support staff services for 2022-23.

\*The first reading of Policy 239-foreign exchange students; and the second readings of Policy 140.1-extracurricular participation by charter/cyber charter students, and Policy 801-public records.

The board will meet for a regular meeting on Monday, May 9, at 7:30 p.m., in the boardroom.