

Some kids will get to play first, eat later

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 14 July 2011 19:22 -

Dudley classes to try recess before lunch.

Allowing elementary students to have their mid-day recess before eating lunch might result in better productivity in the classroom.

Dudley Elementary principal Teresa Messersmith, who also directs the school's special education program, told District 20 school board members on Monday that a few classes are going to try recess before lunch to see how it works out.

Research she did last spring shows students often eat better at lunch, drink more milk and settle into afternoon classes better if they've had recess first.

"I think if there are issues on the playground, they may not be totally resolved by the time the students get to class but they are likely to be less intense."

Messersmith said she gathered information from some principals around the region who have tried this kind of schedule and were positive about the outcome.

"We are going to try it with a few classes and see how it goes," she said.

A combination of the changes in the lunch room procedures and teacher schedules will make the recess change possible.

During their regular monthly meeting, school board members also approved a new contract with Trane Building Services of Kearney for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) services which includes pre-season inspections, software updates for the automated systems, emergency support and hourly maintenance rates.

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Trane requested a three-year contract totaling \$41,658.

Because this is a new contract with this company, superintendent Mike Teahon suggested a provision to opt out of the contract with 30 days notice prior to the one-year anniversary.

The only other bid submitted was with the current maintenance service provider, Siemens Building Technologies of Kearney.

That bid was for \$26,720 annually or \$80,160 for three years.

“That’s an amazing price difference,” said maintenance supervisor Jay Holmes. “It will be interesting to see how it works out.”

Teahon said with 100 heat pumps in the buildings, the service is essential.

He said the district has replaced 10 of the heat pumps in the past seven years and the longer the system is in place, the more units will be affected.

In other money matters, school board members also voted to keep the current pay of \$100 per day for substitute teachers with \$130 paid for long-term assignments.

The daily rate was increased from \$85 in 2007 to \$95 in 2008 and \$100 in 2009.

Teahon said the 18% increase over three years makes the district’s substitute pay comparable to area schools.

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In other business, the board:

approved 2011-12 handbooks for junior-senior high students, elementary students, faculty, coaches and non-certified employees.

learned the district collected \$23,349 in student fees for various activities and projects. The board is required to review the fees collected last year prior to setting fees for the coming school year.

adopted a resolution allowing the district to continue membership in the Nebraska Association of School Boards Medicaid Consortium. Being a member allows the district to receive reimbursement for some health-related services it provides.

voted to adopt new policies and revisions to existing policies to meet new state and federal regulations. Policies discussed include minimum age requirements for entrance to kindergarten, more stringent truancy rules, the addition of a third year of science to graduation requirements curriculum assessment procedures and concussions.

combined 15 separate special education policies into one with minor changes to comply with state audit requirements.

heard from Holmes that the remodeling project in the Community Building and cafeteria is moving along with what he called "impressive progress."

were told by Messersmith that 39 students are enrolled in the school's Jump Start program, approximately 60% of the students expected in this fall's kindergarten class.

learned from activities director Seth Ryker that Gothenburg doctor Jay Matzke will continue

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baseline testing for athletes this fall as well as offer training sessions for coaches. Ryker said Matzke's service to GHS athletes is invaluable.

reviewed a report by high school principal Randy Evans showing that 11 students fully recovered credits from classes previously failed and are back on track with their respective classes.