

School board votes to cut programs again

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 13 April 2012 14:01 -

The uncertainty of state aid for next year has board members in the Brady school district taking precautionary measures ... again.

School board members voted during their regular monthly meeting Monday night to cut one course from each of four programs to save enough money on salaries to make the 2012-13 budget balance.

The four teachers in music, physical education, industrial arts and family and consumer science will provide one less course each if the cuts stand.

The art program will also be reduced by one course offering but it was not included in the voting Monday because art teacher Kelley Dachtler has resigned and a contract for her replacement would reflect the cuts if necessary.

Superintendent Bill Porter said no one wants to decrease what the school offers to students but cutting back on programs is the only way he sees to make the budget work should state aid disbursements be smaller than last year.

"It's just a nasty little thing we have to do," Porter said. "The state tells me we'll have our state aid certification by the end of the week but we really can't wait for that. We have to be prepared ahead of time to let them know by the April 15 deadline if their programs are going to be cut."

If the state aid is certified at what Porter predicts, the cuts will be nullified.

The same situation happened last spring.

The board voted last year to cut the same programs for the same reasons but when state aid was certified, the programs were all reinstated to their previous level.

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Board member Matt Hatch argued against any prospective cuts in the music program, saying time devoted to elementary music shows in the awards earned by high school students.

“Cutting music will affect our performing arts and I hate to see that happen,” he said.

Hatch cast the lone dissenting vote against reducing the music program by one class.

Porter said hopefully he will know by the end of the week if the cuts will actually be necessary.

In other business, board members had a lengthy discussion about student fund raising and the board policy addressing such activities.

Porter told the board that school organizations and even non-school groups have been conducting fund raisers on school grounds without prior approval by the administration.

“We have people raising money all the time and they don’t ask, they just do it,” Porter said.

The board discussed summer activities to raise money for athletic camps, non-school related activities and outside organizations, including events designed to help families in need.

None of those are specifically addressed in the board policy, which principal Bruce Hird said is so vague that it leaves more questions than it answers.

The board’s policy committee agreed to review the rules and hopefully have a revision before student and activity handbooks are published for the fall.

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In other business, the school board:

heard that the Talon Power Booster Club approved more than \$5,100 for six financial requests from staff members for academic and athletic activities as well as funding half the cost to replace uniforms for two athletic teams. The board voted to purchase new boys basketball and girls volleyball uniforms.

reviewed plans for window replacement throughout the old portion of the building and learned CG Architects of North Platte had to ask a second time for bids on the project. Bids are expected to be available next month with work to be done over the summer.

discussed adding incoming kindergartners to the summer school program or offering separate instruction for them prior to the beginning of school.

reviewed proposals for replacing the riding lawn mower. Three price quotes between \$3,000 and \$4,000 were presented but no action was taken.

authorized hiring three college or high school students for approximately 160 hours each, at minimum wage, to help with summer maintenance projects.

passed, on first reading, policies regarding non-resident students and student concussion or brain damage. The policies will be reviewed again next month.

accepted Kelley Dachtler's resignation as art teacher effective the end of the school year and Cindy Kuklis's resignation as media specialist and English teacher effective March 31.

approved a contract with Tiffany Widdifield of Gothenburg as technology coordinator and computer teacher. She has nine years of teaching experience and will replace Robbi

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McKenney.

adopted the 2012-13 school calendar. School begins on Thursday, Aug. 16 and dismisses on Friday, May 17, with winter break from noon on Dec. 21 through Jan. 2.

discussed briefly the 15 applications from graduating seniors and alumni for Darrell Johnson scholarships awarded through the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation. The board will meet again in public session at 6:30 p.m. Thursday to decide on the distribution of \$6,000 in scholarship funds.