

Board considers conference merger

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 11 October 2012 13:44 -

Sandhills, Loup Valley would create 12-team conference

Administrators at schools in the Sandhills and Loup Valley activities conferences are in the process of working out the logistics of merging the two central Nebraska entities into one for the 2014-15 school year.

With a resolution approved during Monday night's regular monthly meeting, the Brady school board agreed to support development of the merger.

Each conference includes seven schools or cooperative activities programs, two of which are in both.

Combining the conferences would leave 12 teams, likely to be split into east and west divisions, according to Brady superintendent Bill Porter.

The Sandhills Conference includes Arthur County, Brady, Cody-Kilgore, Hyannis, Mullen, Sandhills/Thedford and Stapleton/McPherson County.

Mullen and Sandhills/Thedford are also in the Loup Valley Conference with Arcadia/Loup City, Anselmo-Merna, Ansley/Litchfield, South Loup and Twin Loup.

Porter gave the board several things to consider about the possible merger:

The 12-team conference would include larger schools and offer tougher competition.

No school will be forced to add athletic events to its schedule.

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There are no plans to require schools to compete against every school in the combined conference.

Some of the smallest schools in the Sandhills Conference may eventually combine or be unable to field teams.

The combined conference could be split into east and west divisions.

If other schools in the Sandhills Conference agree to the merger and Brady doesn't, the Eagles could be left independent or forced to join a much larger conference or one with even more travel distance.

Brady school board members agreed to consider the merger but not without any hesitation.

"I'm all for a bigger conference with better competition," said board member Matt Hatch. "I would be curious to know, though, why this was brought up. It has to be working in someone's favor and I'd like to know who will benefit financially."

Administrators from the two conferences met again Tuesday afternoon.

In other action, the school board:

voted to purchase the Discovery Education web-based science program for grades 7-12 at a one-time cost of \$4,425 for six years of online use. The fee will increase if the number of students enrolled in science classes increases.

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approved Carol Blede as a local substitute teacher.

discussed the hot lunch program and federal limitations placed on food choices and serving size. Porter said he has not fielded many complaints personally but the staff is working to address some concerns.

learned the district's annual report will be mailed to patrons this week.

considered a request to run some boys and girls junior varsity basketball games concurrently, using both gymnasiums, so visiting teams might be able to get home earlier. Since the schedule is already set for this school year, Porter said having reserve games at the same time could be a possibility for next year.