

Reading program targets school goal

Written by Deb Egenberger
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DEAR designed to improve skills.

A reading program proposed for Brady students in grades 7-12 may help move the district closer to one of its school improvement goals.

All junior high and high school students have been tested for reading proficiency as the district begins the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) program on a trial basis.

DEAR gives students 20 minutes per day to do nothing but read. The time is carved out of the regular class periods, rotating through the eight class times. For instance, on Monday the students will read for 20 minutes during the first period. On Tuesday, reading is done during the second period.

Students read Accelerated Reader books which are classified according to difficulty and match their ability. Comprehension and vocabulary tests are given at the conclusion of the book.

Principal Gerald Wallace said the program is designed to help improve reading performance.

Superintendent Bill Porter asked the school board Monday night to consider the program under its curriculum and instruction committee.

"I've been involved with this program before and I want to make sure we start it properly to make it successful," Porter said.

Questions Porter raised to the board involved rewards and grades for the program. He said elementary students receive rewards for reaching their goals. He also suggested giving grades since DEAR would be required of all students.

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The board's curriculum and instruction committee will begin discussing the program this month. Two elementary teachers and two high school teachers will also be involved.

In other business, the board reviewed additional district goals.

Besides improved reading and writing performance, the district wants to expand and integrate technology use in all classrooms.

Other board goals include operating within the budget as well as paying off debt while offering a productive education.

School board committees also have individual goals. They are:

Technology and equipment—Use technology to enhance student learning, including the One-to-One initiative to put laptop computers in each student's hands.

Policy development—Update the policy book to allow for smoother operation of the school and enhance students welfare.

Personnel and community relations—Bring the school and community closer together and improve employee working relations and morale.

Activities—Find ways to allow for the Hall of Glory and enhance student participation in all activities.

Curriculum and instruction—Improve the curriculum to enhance education for upper level

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students and prepare all students for higher education.

In other action, the board:

- reorganized the board, electing officers and appointing committee members. All positions remain the same as last year with Lisa Diehl as board president, Marge Spencer as vice president, Tracey Porter in the position of secretary and Ashley Lydic serving as treasurer.

- approved three separate contracts with ESU 16 for next school year including distance learning for \$21,000, early childhood special education for \$22,515 and school-age special education services for \$100,619. The superintendent said special education costs have increased from this year because the number of children using the speech therapy and diagnostic services has increased.

- discussed unresolved building project issues. Porter said there are still a number of items from the final construction walk-through that have not been addressed.

- gave Porter the authority to pursue an auction of surplus property stored at the old home ec building downtown. Inventory will begin this week.

- learned Porter has drafted a resolution addressing option students and setting criteria for acceptance. Porter said he would like to begin advertising for option students in February, possibly offering transportation to students opting in from other districts.