

Dist. 20 looks at after-school program

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 18 July 2014 13:36 -



Solutions shared about elementary traffic congestion

Safety and education are the goals of an after-school program proposed to the District 20 school board at a noon meeting Monday.

No action was taken as board members will discuss the topic more at length during a retreat Monday.

Superintendent Dr. Mike Teahon said he wanted to bring the proposal to the public for input.

Tammy Gustafson of Gothenburg addressed the board, noting that many kids don't have a place to go after school until their parent or parents arrive home from work.

"Children are most vulnerable after school," Gustafson said, noting that kids are susceptible to behaviors involving alcohol and other drugs, sex and other things during that time.

Program would serve K-6

The target audience for an after-school program would be kindergarten through sixth grade who would be helped with homework, receive a snack and participate in other activities.

Teahon said they would want structure, not chaos, and the plan could be a community effort with help from volunteers in addition to some paid staff.

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About 30% of elementary and secondary students are at or below the poverty rate.

Teahon added that Cozad and Lexington schools have after-school programs.

Board members also listened to Anthony Dirks, vice president of Benesch, share results of a preliminary traffic study around Dudley Elementary and Gothenburg Junior/Senior High School.

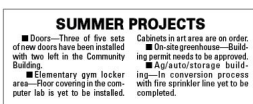
The board hired the firm to do a traffic engineering study of the area, particularly Avenue G on the west side of the elementary which is the most congested.

Safety a concern

School officials have been concerned about safety when dropping off and picking up children for years.

Last year, a Safe Routes to School committee was formed to seek ways to get students to and from school safely.

Members applied for a grant which wasn't received.



Dirks shared ideas to eliminate congestion such as one-way streets, flashing traffic lights, unloading and loading children in the north elementary parking lot, eliminating diagonal parking on the west side of Dudley for a drop-off, pick-up area, raised ramps across streets for students to walk across and more.

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Board members will review the draft at their retreat.

Raise for substitute teachers

Long-term substitute teachers will receive \$10 more during the next teaching year.

The board increased pay from \$140 to \$150 per day for long-term subs after 10 consecutive days in the same teaching assignment.

The salary for regular substitutes remains the same at \$100 per day.

Teahon compared salaries with other schools in the Southwest Conference.

After two separate public hearings at which no one spoke, the board reconvened and passed policies dealing with student fees and parent involvement in schools.

The action is required by state law each year.

Additional policy action

More policy approvals followed that dealt with bullying, attendance, tobacco, student discipline, bidding construction projects, safe pupil transportation and concussions.

Teahon noted that banning electronic cigarettes and discipline procedures involving them were

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part of the policy changes.

Policies introduced for consideration but not moved forward by the policy committee involved high school credit for middle schoolers and student participation in athletic contests between schools.

Teahon said the committee felt there was no need for credit for high school courses for middle schoolers because the district does not have an early graduation policy.

He noted that a policy already exists for student participation in athletic contests.

Special ed at capacity

Board members also passed a capacity resolution on option enrollment which determines the maximum number of option enrollment applications the district will accept.

Option enrollment is when students receive approval to attend classes in a district other than the one in which they live.

As enrollment of the district continues to creep up, Teahon said the board may have to consider a cap in the future. He noted that special education programs in both the elementary and high school are full due to staffing and student enrollment in them.

In other business, the board:

acknowledged that the district received accreditation from the Nebraska Department of Education for 2014-15.

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approved handbooks for students, staff and coaches, employment agreements, evaluation instruments for para educators, administrators and data analysis and professional development manuals.

tabled an interlocal agreement with the city and Gothenburg Memorial Hospital for a technology outreach director.

heard a report about the TeamMates mentoring program and learned that a new coordinator is needed with Amanda Rossell resigning. New space for an office in the school is also needed. Teahon said he would work with TeamMates in finding space.

Rossell reported that the program has 45 matches of adults and students and that more students are waiting for an adult mentor.

learned that Jump Start, a preschool kindergarten program that started Monday, has 53 enrollees.

were informed that both detentions and suspensions were up during the 2013-14 school year compared to the past two years.

were told that 11 students passed in English or American history classes to recover school credit during summer school.

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