

DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Personnel split, moved and other ideas save money

By SARAH HITE
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Dallas School Board officials discussed budget cuts at a special meeting Monday, and there was one thing all nine members could agree on for the 2011-12 school year: the district must do more with less.

The board is facing an \$896,000 state funding gap brought on by Gov. Tom Corbett's proposed budget announced earlier this month.

Basic education funding has been slashed, as are programs funded by certain grants and stimulus funds, including before- and after-school tutoring,

UP NEXT

The next Dallas School Board work session meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 4 and the next regular meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 11 in the administration building.

developmental first-grade classes and other programs.

Superintendent Frank Galicki said retirements this year will mean the current district staff will need to stretch to avoid filling those positions, and a vote was conducted for one in particular.

Wycallis Elementary School Principal Kathleen McCarthy

announced at last week's meeting she would retire in July, and Assistant Superintendent and Director of Curriculum and Instruction Paul Reinert volunteered to perform the role as elementary principal in addition to his responsibilities. Galicki estimated the measure would save the district more than \$100,000.

Reinert would remain as director of curriculum and instruction but his responsibilities as assistant superintendent would be divided up among other administrators, including Galicki and Business Manager Grant Palfev.

While some board members agreed this option would save the district money while not

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hurting students, others said Reinert was already overworked and the move may negatively impact the school's operations.

Board member Karen Kyle said she would not approve of the shared position. "I just feel that if we truly value effective teaching and learning and the success we have, it's not with a shared position with director of

curriculum and instruction."

The board was split on the decision, but at the end of the meeting voted 5-4 in approval of the administrative plan. Board members Russell Bigus, Gary Mathers, Charles Preece, Catherine Wega and Bruce Goeringer voted for the measure while Richard Coslett, Dennis Gochoel Jr., Maureen Matiska and Kyle

voted against it.

Other savings strategies included moving a kindergarten teacher to another position due to low enrollment, reducing a speech therapist's salary to hourly wages, cutting individual building budgets and other ideas that brought the total proposed savings to more than \$826,000.

Additional ideas included sharing educational resources with the neighboring Lake-Lehman School District, including advanced placement and language arts teachers.

Bigus told the board the proposals were "just the tip of the

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LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board discusses budget cuts

By EILEEN GODIN
Dallas Post Correspondent

The effect of Gov. Tom Corbett's proposed state budget could impact many Lake-Lehman School District programs, said district business manager Thomas Melone.

On Monday night, Melone told the school board the proposed state budget would mean \$300,000 less in state aid for the local district.

"As it stands now, lots of programs would be affected," he said.

Last month, school board members gave preliminary approval on a \$26.5 million proposed budget for the 2011-2012 school year. The district's proposed budget had a \$1 million deficit and board members were hoping for a \$10.4 million state contribution increase this spring.

If the state budget passes, as is, Melone said he will be "evaluating expenses."

Corbett's plan would cut about \$550 million from the state's primary subsidy for public school operations and instruction, and a total of more than \$1 billion when counting his move to eliminate special grants that subsidize programs such as all-day kindergarten and reimbursements to districts for services to charter school students.

In other news...

- Girls basketball coach James Spencer was awarded the Wyoming Valley Conference Girls Varsity Coach of the Year, and Barry Horvath was honored as Wyoming Valley Girls' Basketball JV Coach of the Year.

The girls basketball team was recognized as Wyoming Valley Conference Division III champions 14-0, the District II PIAA runner-up. Team members are Karen Yamrick, Nikki Sutliff, Kaitlyn Yoniski, Marissa Moosic, Carol Mosier, Selena Adamshick, Kristen Baker, Morgan Decker, Alex Lubinski, Bethany Williams, Emily Laskowsky, Jen Konopinski, Sarah Brooks, Emily Sutton and Nicole O'Connor.

Sutliff was given a certificate for performing over 100 season assists and Adamshick received a certificate for earning 1500 points scored and 1000 rebounds.

- The following wrestling team members, District II champions, received certificates: Bryan Carter, junior, 145 lbs.; Nick Shelly, junior, 171 lbs.; and Martin Hary, freshman, 119lbs., who placed second at the Northeast Regional Tournament.

- The Key Club competed at the Pennsylvania District Convention and Leadership Conference and won first place in the state for its traditional scrapbook. The scrapbook will be sent to Arizona to compete internationally.

Key Club members Courtney Sult, Kristen Boyle, Alyssa Talacka, Tom Boyle and Taryn Ta-

Fundraiser will help with improvements to park

By SARAH HITE
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The Jackson Township Recreation Park has changed quite a bit during its 20-year existence, but the recreation board is sponsoring a fundraiser to guarantee at least one piece of the park will remain for years to come.

The board is holding a brick fundraiser to generate donations for maintenance of the space and future park projects, including increasing the field space for athletic organization use.

Bricks will be sold in three sizes and can be inscribed with any type of message, from family member memorials to a friendly blurb about the park to an advertisement for local businesses. Once enough bricks are ordered, the board will begin to install the bricks around the recently-built pavilion and along walking paths.

Elizabeth Leo, recreation board member and Jackson Township resident, said anyone from the Back Mountain and beyond is welcome to participate in the brick-paving project.

While the concept of a brick fundraiser is not new, Leo said the bricks purchased from Bricks 'R Us are guaranteed for life, so if there is fading or chipping on one's message over the years, bricks will be replaced at no additional cost.

"It's not just a donation, it's a permanence," said Leo, who frequents the park with her children.

The park, located behind the municipal building on Huntsville Road, is situated on about 20 acres and features a soccer field, Little League field, a quarter-mile walking path, a pavilion and playground. The recreation



Members of the Jackson Township Recreation Board recently received a grant to improve the Jackson Township Recreation Park. From left, first row, are Dan Paley, Chris Chapple, Sam and Rob Rolland and Alana and Jerry Palmalioli. Second row, Elizabeth Leo, John Sweeney, Randy Rodkey, representing the Baltimore Life Insurance Company; and Charlie Magdalinski. Absent at the time of the photo was Todd Paczewski.

area also recently had its parking lot paved last summer, which is capable of accommodating about 70 vehicles.

John Sweeney, who's been on the recreation board for more than 10 years, said the work put into the park within the last decade has been staggering. The board receives money for projects through grants and donations - it has no budget from the township.

He said much of the work is done by board members themselves, from installing the playground to cementing benches along walkways.

"A lot of the time we did the labor ourselves to save on the budget," he said.

Leo, who's been a board member for five years, said she believes the national and local economic struggles don't deter the board from looking toward the

future.

"Even in these tough economic times, people need to have an outlet, whether it's organized or individual play," she said.

Leo, who also coaches a youth soccer team, said the park is often packed on summer nights, and sports organizations book the fields in advance to get some practice time in before games.

She said lacrosse, soccer and Little League teams often use

JACKSON TOWNSHIP BRICK FUNDRAISER

Bricks will be sold in three sizes: three lines on a 4-by-8-inch brick with up to 18 characters per line for \$50, six lines on an 8-by-8-inch brick with up to 18 characters per line for \$100, custom logo on an 8-by-8-inch brick with room for three lines and up to 18 characters per line \$250. Customers have the option of buying a donor brick, which is a replica brick to have as a personal keepsake, for \$25 for the 4-by-8 size or \$50 for the 8-by-8 size, or a certificate to commemorate the purchase for \$8. For more information, call the Jackson Township municipal building at 675-8371 to leave a message for Elizabeth Leo, fundraiser coordinator. Donors can also place an order at www.bricksrus.com/order/recreationpark.

the fields, and the space can be used for practice, games and athletic camps. She added that the nearest fields available for athletic events, including the fields on Outlet Road in Lehman, are booked far in advance for games and aren't open for practice use.

"If you come here in the summer on a Tuesday night, it's packed," she said. "I had to have my kids run drills one night in a little 12-foot spot. It's very heavily used during the week in the summer and even in the fall."

One rule keeps the park use open to everyone - no organized athletic teams can use the space on Sundays. Leo says this gives residents a chance to utilize the entire park.

"I can just come here with my kids and run the track while they play on the playground," she said. "It's great."

BACK MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Agreement requires sharing of zoning information

By SARAH HITE
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UP NEXT

The next meeting of the Back Mountain Community Partnership will be held at 3 p.m. April 21 in the Sandy & Marlene Insalaco Hall at Misericordia University.

The Back Mountain Community Partnership reviewed a draft agreement that would require each involved municipality to provide written notice concerning major zoning issues affecting the entire Back Mountain region.

The document, called a regional impact notice agreement, was prepared by Solicitor Jeffrey Malak who said the agreement may be the first of its kind in the state. He had to look elsewhere in the country, such as in Massachusetts, to find research about this type of agreement.

The agreement would require Dallas Borough and Dallas, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman townships to provide written notice of major zoning or land development applications to member municipalities at least 14 days prior to a public hearing on the issue.

Franklin Township, also a member of the partnership, was not included on the draft because the municipality had not yet confirmed its participation in the

agreement.

The document states a regional impact could be defined as effects on air or water pollution, school enrollment, solid waste disposal, demand for water supply or wastewater treatment, street deterioration or traffic safety. It could include any activity that could potentially affect a municipality and surrounding areas, including commercial or industrial developments.

Partnership Chairman James Reino Jr., of Kingston Township, proposed the idea at the group's last meeting in February. He said the notion came to him as Kingston Township officials prepared a draft gas and oil ordinance and natural gas industry issues began to develop in Dallas Township.

He was surprised to hear from Malak that the agreement may

be the first in the commonwealth, but he believes the unique spirit of the partnership influences new ideas.

"Others are so tied up in politics and who owns what," he said. "That's not what this organization is about. We're a fraternal, cooperative think tank, and it's worked really well."

The partnership will continue discussions about the drafted document at its April meeting.

Kingston Township Manager Kathleen Sebastian said the cost of a shared radar speed-detecting trailer may increase from its price set last year.

The company from which five of the municipalities had agreed to purchase the trailer recently lost its contract with the state cooperative purchasing program, but may re-establish one within the coming weeks.

Sebastian said the cost of the trailer, to be shared among Dallas Borough and Dallas, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman townships, may have increased by about \$1,500 due to inflation. Franklin Township opted not to enter into the purchase agreement last year.

"Working together is a please and a thank you. It started as a please at one in the morning, and ended as a thank you at about five in the afternoon."

John J. Wilkes Jr.
Representing Jackson Township

Municipalities may need to vote again on the matter as the contract only obligated \$1,300 from each municipality's budget for the purchase.

Partnership Vice Chairman John Wilkes Jr., of Jackson Township, told members the Back Mountain Regional Emergency Management Agency between Dallas Borough and Jackson and Lehman townships was unofficially enacted during the inclement weather earlier this month.

Heavy rains caused waters in the Huntsville Dam in Jackson Township to rise seven inches in two hours, and Wilkes said he and the other appointed officials in the Back Mountain EMA were called at 1:30 a.m. on March 11.

"Working together is a please and a thank you," he said. "It started as a please at one in the morning, and ended as a thank

you at about five in the afternoon."

He expressed his gratitude to the other municipalities involved in the flood management over the weekend.

"This is how we have to work together," he said.

In other matters...

- The partnership announced it will sponsor a food drive at each member municipal building in support of the Back Mountain Food Pantry from April 11 through 15.

- Sebastian announced National Incident Management System training for all elected officials and municipal employees has been rescheduled for March 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Kingston Township municipal building at no cost. The training is a requirement for all public officials and employees.