

Andrews resignation includes settlement

Written by Wauneta Breeze
Wednesday, 14 August 2013 18:32 -

By Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Wauneta Breeze

The Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools Board approved a teacher contract for Marilyn Houdek at their regular August meeting, held Monday, Aug. 12. She will join the 2013-2014 teaching staff of W-P as the agriculture/vocational technology teacher.

At their March 26, 2013, meeting the board determined that a reduction in force in the Ag/Voc Tech program was needed in order to save money for the district, moving then ag/voc tech teacher Dan Andrews to half time for the 2013/2014 school year.

At Monday night's meeting the board stated Houdek will be a full time teacher and that the ag/voc tech curriculum is in the process of being reviewed and expanded.

The board accepted a resignation agreement between Dan Andrews, the former ag/voc tech teacher and the school district. The agreement stated it was intended to provide complete settlement of questions regarding the ending of Andrews' employment with the school district.

In the agreement Andrews was awarded a \$15,000 severance benefit, which was listed to be paid on or about the August 2013 payroll. The agreement went on to state Andrews released the school district from any future claims.

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When accepting the resignation agreement, the board made note of thanking Andrews for his 35 years of service to the school district.

Other business

Revisions to the school handbook dominated much of the discussion at the August meeting. Other key outcomes of the meeting included a decision to seek bids for a new boiler at the Palisade Attendance Center.

During his superintendent's report, Randy Geier stated preliminary enrollment numbers indicate an enrollment increase of approximately 20 students.

He said the school's enrollment at this time last year was approximately 200 students. At this point enrollment at W-P schools is 220, a 10 percent increase from last year.

Palisade boiler to be replaced

Board members had a lengthy discussion of how to best proceed regarding the boiler at the Palisade Attendance Center. They stated the current boiler must be replaced before the winter months.

Their initial discussion was to hire an engineer, Jeff Tidyman, to help them determine specific specifications to ask for on bids for the boiler replacement.

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After discussion, they determined the best course of action would be to ask contractors for bids and remain open to hiring an unrelated engineer to help them review bids once they come in.

They felt this course of action would accommodate the installation of the boiler before the weather turns cold.

Handbook revisions

School board members spent the bulk of the meeting reviewing and revising the Student Handbook.

Amendments included changing the work release option (work release) program to a graded course and changing the schools' open hours to match those listed for grades 7-12. The Wauneta Attendance Center will open at 7 a.m. MT and the Palisade Attendance Center will open at 8 a.m. CT.

They also updated the current policy on electronic devices and their use in classrooms and at the school. The board wanted to provide teachers more flexibility to allow students to use their electronic devices, such as mobile phones or iPads, in the classroom when appropriate.

Board members also amended the late work grading procedures to allow teachers flexibility on how late work is dealt with in their own classrooms.

Other changes to the handbook included the addition of the USDA Federal Lunch Program Non Discrimination statement to the Lunch program policy and taking out specifically named start and end times to junior and senior high school dances.

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They also updated the lockers policy to allow students to provide their own padlocks and updated the hallways/bookbags policy.

The new handbook will also feature an updated list of media that are notified when school is closed or will start late.

Lastly, the policy concerning elementary students' use of the telephone will be updated to match current practices, which is to allow students to call home regardless of whether the call is local or long distance.

During the board's discussion concerning the student handbook Jon Anderjaska mentioned two suggestions for change during the upcoming year. First, he recommended removing algebra 1 from the curriculum for eighth graders.

Anderjaska also made the suggestion that the school board eliminate the cheerleading program at W-P next year. He said they were committed to keep the program going this year, but wants to discuss eliminating it for next year.

He said he wants to replace the cheerleading program with something that both boys and girls can participate in, such as a pep club. He also mentioned that cheerleading is not a sport recognized by the Nebraska School Activities Association.

Curriculum

The school board voted to allow graded credit for the work study program.

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It was stated that the change was needed to help the district meet Rule 10 accreditation standards, and also to help students learn more from their work experiences.

Students will be required to report back on what they learn from their work assignments to earn the credit.

Board members indicated that W-P previously offered graded credit for work study, but stopped offering credit two years ago. They cited non-compliance with the policy as being the rationale for ceasing to offer credit at that time.

They feel the changes in the way the program will be administered from here forward will justify giving graded credit.

At the suggestion of the new elementary principal, Roger Reikofski, the school board passed a motion to add a part time (.50 FTE) Title 1 instructor to the staff of the district.

Reikofski informed Geier there is funding available to pay for the position. Geier informed the board that no tax dollars would be used to pay the Title 1 teacher.

The decision to hire the part time teacher was made to help improve the learning experiences of students who qualify for Title 1.

Other discussion

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The board approved a motion to allow Jan Coone to teach a Spanish class for the North Platte High School via distance learning technology from the Wauneta Attendance Center.

Coone will be teaching the class to North Platte High School students.

The arrangement does not affect W-P classes or its schedule.

Wauneta-Palisade schools send out other distance learning classes, including a Spanish class, which is sent out to Hitchcock County schools.

The board also approved Amy Walworth as a new substitute teacher at the district. Geier informed the board that she is certified in music education but that she is willing to substitute in other subject areas as well.

During his superintendent's report, Geier also informed the board that Lyta Lanly was hired as an assistant cook at the Palisade Attendance Center. Lanly has two sons, one in kindergarten and one in second grade who will be joining the district.

The next regular meeting of the Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools board was set for Monday, Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. MT/7 p.m. CT at the Wauneta Attendance Center. The public is welcome to attend school board meetings.