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Crestwood says no to sex offenders



Written by M.D. Brading
Wednesday, 14 September 2005

The intent is clear on sex offender law and Crestwood Unit 4 school policy will reflect that in the coming months. After some initial perplexity over the amended sex offender law, Unit 4 superintendent Lorraine Bailey made a recommendation to school board members Wednesday to change the school's policy to be consistent with the statute. While no action was taken, board members appeared in favor of Bailey's recommendation.

The amendment states that sex offenders can be present at the school only if summoned by school officials to attend a conference relating to their children's academic, social and special education needs.

One of the chief sponsors of the amendment State Rep. Roger Eddy (R-Hutsonville) crystalized his intent in the past saying that the purpose of the change is to stop convicted sex offenders from attending extracurricular events.

Bailey told board members that after conferring with the school attorney, state's attorney and lawmakers including Sen. Dale Righter, she feels that the board should approve a policy update to reflect the change in law.

"While the board is awaiting formally for policy recommendation from the Illinois Association of School Boards, Unit 4 board will adopt a policy that is consistent with the new state law," she explained.

"Although the law provides for a review of each situation on a case-by-case basis, it is anticipated that the procedures for that policy will provide a very strict interpretation of that law."

Bailey said the school board believes it must always put the safety of its students and Crestwood School on the forefront.

Unlike strong responses expressed by parents about the sex offender law during District 95 school board meeting Monday, Bailey's recommendation did not invoke any open discussion from board members nor did it spark any reaction from one sex offender parent who attended the board meeting.

The first reading of the updated policy regarding sex offenders will be done at the October board meeting.

Meanwhile, while policy update is in progress, Bailey confirmed that the sex offender law which went into effect July 11 still takes precedence over school policy.

"The law is in effect, and that means that we will abide strictly to it until our policy reflects the changes," she added.

In other matters, board members adopted the approved the 2005/06 budget which is estimated at \$5,760,664.

Bailey said the revenue for the school year is estimated at \$5,258,032.

"If we look at money in, money out, the district will be finishing the school year in the red," she noted. "But if we take into consideration previous balances and the estimated balance

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as of June 30 next year, we will be ending the school year in the black."

Unit 4's estimated balance at the end of next fiscal year is at \$806, 966.

"The declining revenue is partly contributed to declining EAV, increased exemptions and less federal dollars," she pointed out.

Crestwood principal Alan Zuber updated the board on enrollment saying the sixth day attendance numbers indicate that the school's enrollment is up by 19.

"We did see a large graduating class leave but we welcomed an equally large kindergarten class this year which put our enrollment number at 546," he told the board. "After taking in the sixth day attendance, our numbers are up to 565."

In other matters, the board heard from two visitors.

First City of Paris consulting engineer Bob Colvin addressed the board regarding an easement agreement involving the city sewer project.

Paris YMCA director Will Welsh also addressed the board about the before & after school care known as "Wrap Around Care" offered at the local Y.

Unit 4 currently buses students from the school to the Y. However, Welsh requested the board to consider transporting students to the Presbyterian Church where part of the program takes place.

Welsh said he has been in contact with Ball Transportation to discuss other possible transportation arrangements.

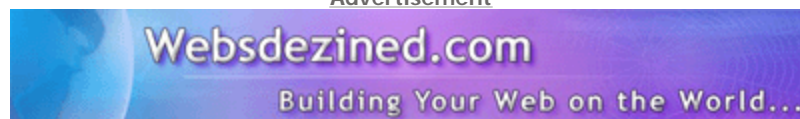
Board members will take the matter under advisement pending further information.

Board members approved routine matters including application for recognition, the updated risk management plan, Public Health Department agreement involving the Tri-County Dental clinic and an occupancy permit before going into executive session.

Following closed session, the board: – approved medical leave for Crestwood cook Vicki Funkhouser; – approved the employment of Miranda Arney as 1st grade teacher; – approved the employment of Curt Pinkston as assistant volleyball coach for 05/06 school year; – and approved the employment of Brad Weir as assistant boys basketball coach for the 05/06 school year.

Bailey said the board also discussed other matters relating to students including hearing from a sex offender parent but no action was taken in the matter.

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