New staff will attend 11 teaching sessions

New teachers in the Gothenburg Public School system will now have “more arrows in their quiver.”

That’s how athletic director Seth Ryker described a new district program that will give beginning teachers more tools for more effective teaching.

At their meeting Aug. 10, District 20 board members approved stipends for “Swede Teacher Academy” that will start Sept. 2.

During the school year, new teachers will meet for 11 two-hour sessions on the first Wednesday of the month with extra sessions in September and October.

There, they will be taught by more experienced teachers in the district and learn such things as classroom management, grading procedures, communication skills, dealing with difficult situations, etc.

“I think it’s the best thing for teachers in the 14 years I’ve been here,” said high school principal Randy Evans who spearheaded the development of the program.

Teachers with less than three years of experience in the district and/or others as assigned are eligible for the academy.

Instructors will be teachers, administrators and board members who will offer skills in specific areas.

The board approved a $57.50 per session stipend for participants with a $230 bonus upon successful completion of the academy.

Those teaching the sessions will receive $57.50 for preparation and $115 for instruction per session.

The estimated cost of the stipends is $21,000.

Dudley Elementary upper grade principal Jim Widdifield said he thinks the dynamics of the program are awesome while junior high principal and curriculum director Ryan Groene said the graduates of the academy will share what they've learned with other teachers.

Superintendent Mike Teahon said he believes the academy will substantially impact teaching.

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