

District can't afford to add wrestling program now

Written by gothenburgtimes
Wednesday, 17 March 2010 21:47 -

Parents approach school board a third time.

There isn't enough money in Brady Public School's coffers to make everyone happy, especially parents and students who want an Eagle wrestling program.

Parents approached the school board Monday night for the third time in two years asking that wrestling be added as a high school activity option.

They got the same answer ... again.

"Our athletic programs don't come close to supporting themselves as it is," said superintendent Bill Porter. "We really can't add activities and cut back on academics. We worry about how we're going to pay the bills from month to month as it is. Adding anything right now is just not financially feasible."

A handful of parents such as Kerri Warren, who spoke during the public comment period of the meeting, are willing to work to raise funds to get the program off the ground.

"Look at Tryon," Warren said. "They are the second smallest school in the state and they added wrestling. They even sent a wrestler to state this year."

What Porter tried to express to parents, though, is that the start-up cost for adding an athletic activity isn't the only money the district has to worry about. Coach and assistant coach salaries as well as transportation costs and participation fees won't go away after a couple of years. They will only increase.

"We can't tie ourselves down for the future when we have no idea what's going to happen to the funding we're already dealing with," Porter said.

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So parents left disappointed again.

"We inherited a huge debt that we're trying to take care of," said board member Marge Spencer. "We're trying to be financially responsible."

One step the board took Monday night in that direction was to authorize D.A. Davidson Co. to watch for favorable rates that would make it profitable for the district to refinance the general obligation bonds sold for building construction in 2005.

Company representative Cody Wickham told the board that refinancing the \$4.25 million in bonds could save the district \$200,000 in interest payments with no out-of-pocket costs.

He said rates were better a couple of weeks ago than they are now so the board would be better off to wait for another downturn.

A resolution passed by the board gives D.A. Davidson the flexibility to watch the market for saving rates.

In other district business, board members:

- voted to recognize Brady Education Association as the exclusive bargaining agent for non-supervisory certified employees.
- approved extending the superintendent's contract for the 2010-11 school year with a salary of \$75,000.
- authorized a contract with Source Gas to pay 77 cents per therm for natural gas for the 2010-11 school year.
- reviewed the proposed calendar for next school year. If approved next month, school will begin on Wednesday, Aug. 18, and dismiss on Thursday, May 19, with Christmas vacation from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2. The calendar follows primarily a four-day school week with nine five-day weeks to cover the state-mandated 160 school days.
- learned Porter has begun advertising for a maintenance supervisor but not enough

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qualified candidates have submitted applications to begin the interview process.

- agreed the policy committee will need to update course requirements for graduation. A legislative bill passed last week increases the number of hours necessary in both math and science.

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