

Banks School Board told students liked going to Camp Westwind

Three sixth-grade students from Banks Elementary School attended the Banks District School Board of Directors' meeting on Monday, December 10, to tell the board about their Camp Westwind experience. Carly Elwood described the campers' activities, which included studying and exploring the forest, beach and estuary habitats. Elwood said the food was surprisingly good, her favorite thing was the night hike and the worst thing was saying good-bye. Shane Spiering spoke about human impact on the environment, especially water and air pollution. He said the students learned about ways that humans can have less of an impact and explained the 4 R's: Reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse. Stephan Bradley said students learned about adaptations that plants and animals have to help them in their environments. He also talked about symbiotic relationships. Sixth-grade teacher Shannon Dotson also addressed the board and thanked them for budgeting money for outdoor school that reduced the cost paid by families by about \$50 per student.

Student Services Director Elaine Fox and Title I teacher Karen Fox talked to the board about the state monitoring of their Title IA Site plan. Elaine reported that they received two commendations for their plan, one for how often students are assessed and one for commu-

nication with families. She said that the Title I program brings a grant of about \$200,000 to the district. The district qualifies for this grant on the basis of the number of students receiving free or reduced lunches, but the program serves all students who need additional help learning to read. Karen described how the students are identified and assessed and stressed that all teaching methods are scientifically proven.

During their work session, the board discussed the proposal submitted last month by the Banks Youth Soccer Association to make soccer a varsity sport for the high school starting next school year. The board consensus was in favor of having soccer, but several issues were raised. Some of the board felt that it would be more appropriate to have soccer school-supported team instead of self-funded. Kathy Edison pointed out that self-funded teams rely heavily on parental support and a loss of that support can mean the demise of the sport. However, the district already has five self-funded sports, some of which, including cheer and cross-country, used to be funded by the district. The board questioned how to prioritize funding for all the different sports in the district. Will Moore would also like to see how the monies for athletics are split up among the different sports and what the actual costs are to players and to the

district.

Simon Levear, the district business manager, talked to the board about implementing an excise tax. He explained that this is the first new source of funding available to school districts in many years. It would be a tax on new construction added to the cost of a building permit and collected by the county. The tax is meant to help offset the costs associated with development. It would not be enough to fund new schools for additional students, but it would help. Levear pointed out that, right now, there is very little building in the school district but it is important to get the tax in place before any more major development takes place. The board did not make a final decision about the tax but directed Levear to look into the options and what other area districts are doing.

Pete Edison, co-chair of the facilities planning committee, reported that the committee is still in line to make their final report to the board at the January 14 school board meeting. He said the committee is also working towards developing the

steering committee that will run the next part of the process.

The consent agenda included the following personnel changes:

Resignations were accepted for:

- Tad Hansen, instructional assistant, effective 1/7/08
- Lori Malcom, playground supervisor, effective 12/7/07

• Loretta Smith, ESOL teacher, effective end of 07-08 school year

One year contracts were approved for:

- Adam Normand, secondary math teacher; and
- Heidi Underhill, instructional assistant II.

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