

North Harrison board hears concerns about Character in Education program

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 15 July 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 15 July 2009 12:07

The Character in Education program at North Harrison High School recently came into question when a number of tickets for the prize drawing were found having been taken out of it. Interim Supt. Randy Barrett was notified, and they were returned to the drum containing the rest of the tickets. Angela Beaver shared her concerns at Thursday's meeting of the North Harrison Board of School Trustees about the present state of the program, since the tickets were discovered.

Several parents have had concerns about the program, from whether or not it will continue, to whether or not the tickets have been distributed fairly to the students in the first place.

Tickets are given for such things as being on the honor roll, not being absent or tardy, as well as other positive behaviors. The tickets then go into a drum in the high school office. A number of prizes are donated by merchants in the community, with the biggest prize of all a new Ford Focus auto donated by Heritage Ford in Corydon, Indiana.

"I'm here tonight because I want to know how (this issue) will be addressed," Beaver said. "Students have expressed concerns that it isn't run fairly. It could be a wonderful program. (The students) don't believe they have a chance to win."

Beaver said she had a daughter who attended North Harrison High School recently that expressed just those concerns. Beaver expressed her hope that the administration will take steps that it doesn't happen again.

One possible remedy for the security of the tickets is to have two locks on the drum that holds the tickets, with North Harrison High School principal Kelly Simpson having possession of the key to one of them, with an undisclosed member of the public holding the other one.

Beaver said that she thinks that the community should be given an explanation, and that the kids involved in the program should be apologized to as well. She wishes that the kids in school now would be treated with more "gray", instead of just in black and white, with the tendency for the kids to be treated as being, in her words, "inherently bad".

North Harrison interim Supt. Randy Barrett tried to reassure both Beaver and any other concerned parents.

"We are working on revamping the program," Barrett said. "We've talked about putting two locks on it. It will be taken care of."

School board secretary Jerry Renneker asked Beaver to clarify whether her main concern was with the Character in Education program in general, or with the way the prizes were distributed.

Beaver answered, "Mainly with the way the prizes were distributed." She added that the perception of unfairness was the main problem.

Renneker said that it was important to remember that good behavior was expected in school, and not necessarily something that needed rewards all of the time.

Beaver said that the behavior to be rewarded should be "over and above" what is normally expected.

In an unrelated matter, the board adopted policies regarding transfer students and the use of cell phones and other electronics communications devices.

The transfer policy concerns students transferring into the school district while living in a different school district.

Students must provide their own transportation, under no circumstances will a student be admitted for athletic reasons, and the superintendent or a designee will make the final decision on whether or not an individual will be admitted. The complete policy can be seen at the corporation office in Ramsey.

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The policy regarding cell phones and other communications devices forbids the use of all cell phones and other electronic devices during normal school hours. If they are in use after regular school hours, that is not forbidden.

The board reorganized at the beginning of the meeting. The board president for 2009-10 is Gary Byrne, and the vice-president is Michael Beyerle. The secretary is Jerry Renneker.

The board also purchased the house fronting West Whiskey Run Road which sits next to the baseball diamond, for \$117,000. The funds will come from the Capital Projects Fund, as well as other possible funds, according to Supt. Randy Barrett.

In other business, the board:

- Appointed the following people to the following positions: Sharon Hanen, Corporation Treasurer; Judy Jeffries, Assistant Treasurer; Kathy Chinn, Extra Curricular Treasurer. The vote was 4-0 in favor, with board member Bobby Chinn abstaining, since Kathy Chinn is his wife.
- Accept the resignation (retirement) of middle school band director Jim Stuppy, effective at the end of the 2009-10 school year.
- Accept the resignation (retirement) of high school band director Gary Crisp, effective at the end of the 2009-10 school year.
- Accepted the resignation of Jeff Purichia as teacher and coach at the high school, effective June 29, 2009.
- Divide the boys' summer basketball salary three ways: Hal Pearson-\$2,292 (as per teacher master contract), Kelly Simpson-\$1,500, Greg Walters-\$792.
- Hire Kim Voyles as an assistant cheer coach at the high school. Norma Bary as a corporation bus driver on Route 50 effective with the coming school year.
- Approved Gordon Food Service as the primary provider of food to the corporation lunch rooms. B&B Food Distributors will provide Chicago Uno Pizza. This is for 2009-10.
- Approved Prairie Farms/Holland as the provider of dairy products for the 2009-10 school year.
- Approved Interstate Bakeries/Butternut as the provider of bread products for 2009-10.
- Approved textbook rentals and fees as recommended for 2009-10.
- Approved a contract with Indiana Utilities for a natural gas pipeline and meter for Morgan Elementary. It will cost \$200,000, and will be installed by the start of the 2010-11 school year.
- Approved the first reading of a new policy for fuel use.
- Gave permission to the administration to advertise the 2010 budgets, tax rates, Bus Replacement Plan, and the Capital Projects Plan.
- Gave permission to the North Harrison Middle School Music Program to apply for a grant from the Harrison County Community Foundation (HCCF) for a 16 station Yamaha Piano Lab. The total for the project is \$24,000. Matching funds of \$12,000 will be provided by the school corporation.
- Gave permission for Morgan Elementary to apply for a grant from the HCCF for a multimedia presentation system at the school. The total for the project is \$11,916. The school corporation will have to pay a portion of it at \$5,958.
- Gave permission to Morgan Elementary to apply for a grant from the HCCF for Leveled Reading Books to enhance their reading program. The total of the project is \$41,045.38. The school will have to pay a portion of \$20,522.69. Join St. Mary of the Knobs to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in style! Their 4th Annual Reverse Raffle is set for Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m. Only 100 tickets sold in increments of \$100, \$50, and \$25. Total cash prizes of \$5,500 – even

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losers have a second chance to win!