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KND board reviews state bullying policy

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BRETHREN — School districts across the state have been gearing up for changes they might need to make in their policy concerning bullying.

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder signed new legislation in place early in December (Public Act 241) that revises the school code to mandate school districts to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying. This week, the Kaleva Norman Dickson Board of Education took a look at its own policy, and how it compared to the new state law.

"There are nine areas that are addressed under the legislation, and we already have seven of them in our handbook," said KND superintendent Mike Matesich.

The first area that they have to update is a procedure must be in place to notify the parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying, and the student(s) accused of bullying the victim. The second component that isn't in their policy is a procedure for documenting incidents of bullying and a procedure that requires annual reporting of it and the discipline utilized by the school district if such bullying is verified.

Matesich said they need to get policy in place that will cover those areas where they are lacking.

The superintendent gave an update on a vacancy they have filled in the focus room at the school. Bob VanGorder served as focus room coordinator, and he submitted his resignation to the board. It was accepted on a 7-0 vote.

"We hired Keith Shearer to fill that position, and we will be posting it," said Matesich.

Other action saw the board review a letter that was sent to Tom Johnson acknowledging and thanking him for his efforts in writing two recent revenue shar-



MATESICH

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ing board grants. The grants were for the renovation of the Brethren baseball field and the repairs to the KND track.

Board members also took action to approve a resolution to KND's Section 125 Plan that will allow for the set-up of board and employee contributions to HSA accounts for the Kaleva Norman Dickson Education Support Personnel Association (ESPA) members who are eligible for health insurance. The union agreed to change their health insurance benefit plan to include a Health Savings Account for eligible participants. The language approved by the board amends the existing Section 125 Plan to allow for the creation and upkeep of these HSAs.

Matesich also treated the board to two very informative presentations. The first of those was to watch a video of the November Michigan State Board of Education meeting where Brethren High School was honored as one of the 20 schools who are beating the odds.

"They ran to separate studies of schools Beating the Odds using different method-

ologies, said Matesich.

The superintendent said schools were rated on performing above their predicted levels based on these factors:

- Percent economically disadvantaged
- Percent students with disabilities;
- Percent English language learners;
- Percent minority.

A second study was then run for schools performing above a comparison group of the most demographically similar schools in the state.

Both studies were looked at and schools that appeared in both of them were considered as Beating the Odds schools. Brethren High School was the only high school in the state to earn that honor.

The second presentation given to the board was the "Winds of Change" PowerPoint, which was originally given by Manistee Intermediate School District Superintendent Scott Crosby. The presentation looked at the future of education in Manistee County, and the factors that are contributing to those trends.