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By LAUREN VINCENT • Daily Leader An action item of transferring surplus general funds to the capital outlay fund was added to the agenda Monday evening at the USD No. 480 board meeting. An estimated \$400,000 to \$500,000 remaining for the current school year would either need to be placed in the capital outlay fund or designated to be spent on a specific project. Repaving the high school's north parking lot was one option, originally presented at the May 10 meeting, for use of the funds.

"I am one who would normally vote 'no' on this just because it is a lot of money," said board member Cheryl Louderback. "But honestly, rather than apply a band aid, and then fixing it two or three years later when it will be \$300,000 more, probably, I think we just need to do it now."

"One reason the repavement was presented as a possible use of the funds is that the high school is probably one of the top three facilities in the community being used," said Mr. Alan Haskell, director of auxiliary services.

A second idea for use of the funds was a new field at South Middle School.

"West has never had a track, they've got a track now, that's great. I think South should have a new field," said board member Nick Hatcher. "I've not been down there on a weekly basis, but they tell me there are kids on the field every single day after school, playing, kicking, doing this, doing that. The most beautiful sight I saw last week was kids on Redskin field, on the turf, playing and warming up. If we're going to put a track in, I say we put turf down in the middle of it. If we're going to do it, let's do it right. Let's make it so that the whole community can use it, on that end of town, because I know they would."

"I would much rather, if we're going to spend it on facilities, spend it on something the kids will use," said board president Dan Diepenbrock, "like a track or mobile classrooms."

Haskell pointed out in response the majority of those who use the north parking lot are the students. The repavement of the lot would be "for the kids" as well.

"We need to get a project and decide on it," Hatcher said. "I would feel much more comfortable designating a use for this money now and getting the plan put forth – knowing what the money was going to be used for. This is what we're going to have to do in order to get some upgrades in our community; designate the money, save the money and then go do the project."

After about 20 minutes of discussion, the action item of adding surplus general funds to the capital outlay, without being specifically designated, was added to the end of the agenda. Later in the meeting the item was passed 6 to 1 with Louderback in opposition.

Preliminary state assessment reports were presented to the board by Mrs. Jill Stout, director of data and testing.

“The district, overall, increased 8.1 percent in reading and 5 percent in math from last year,” Mrs. Stout said. “So we are showing a slight increase there. We also have closed the gap as far as district scores versus the state target in reading, from what we did last year, so we are decreasing that gap a little bit more. There are two k-3 buildings that performed at a level of 100 percent. McDermott is in reading and MacArthur had it in math. So that is very positive and I think they deserve recognition for that accomplishment.

“There are four k-3 schools that did have a decrease in either reading or math scores from last year,” she continued. “But I believe it is important to keep in mind all of the changes that we implemented with Literacy First. We were told up front that the first year, when you start a big implementation like this, there is generally a dip and then the next couple years you’ll start coming right back up to be higher than what you were before.

“All of the 4th through 12th grade schools increased in reading with three of the five increasing in math,” she added.

One exemplary MacArthur student has been recognized at the state level and is now qualified for national competition. First grader Maria Hernandez won the first grade state award from Zaner-Bloser for her handwriting, receiving a plaque and medal. Hernandez’s teacher, Mrs. Oliver, received a pen set and the school was given a \$200 certificate for use at Zaner-Bloser.

Also present to receive an award for the USD 480 district were Dwight Dowd, Supervisor of Grounds and Maintenance, and Paul Mays, Custodial Supervisor, for Outstanding Environmental and Financial Resources. Because of diligent efforts to cut back on energy usage, from streamlining the janitorial staff’s time in each building to consolidating summer school, the district was saved more than \$350,000 this year and more than \$806,000 since Energy Education’s inception three years ago.

A resolution was presented by board member Ried Petty to proclaim the last day of school, May 26, as “Mr. Vernon Welch Day” in honor of his 23 years of service to the district. A unanimous vote passed the resolution followed by a round of applause in gratitude to Mr. Welch.

The retirement of Robin Oliver and resignations of Marissa Ibarra, Rita Wilkerson, Traci Goode, Marianne Mooney and Darrin Bevis were accepted by the board.

The suggested transfers of Rosa Arellano from counselor at Sunflower to counselor at Liberal High School, Amy Butler from 2nd grade to 1st grade at Southlawn, Ronda Canaday from Sp. Ed. at McKinley to Sp. Ed. at Cottonwood, Sue Lawson from Sp. Ed. at Cottonwood to Sp. Ed. at McKinley, Teresa Louderback from 5th grade to ESL at Sunflower, Annette Wilson from 4th Grade to Instructional Coach at Sunflower, Daena Rios from Title 1 at McKinley/Washington to 3rd grade at McKinley, Matthew French from 3rd grade to 2nd grade at Southlawn and Vickie Hays from Title 1 at South to 4th grade at Cottonwood were accepted.

The recommendation of employment of the following certified employees for the 2010-11 school year were accepted: Mary Larkin, 1st grade, Washington; Sylvia Villa, 1st grade, Lincoln; Noemi Rueda, 5th grade dual language, Sunflower; Indira Arredondo, 1st grade, McKinley; Michael

Ask, math, Liberal High School; Louisa Garcia, Title 1 reading, McDermott; Randi Jones, language arts, South; Nicole M. Lackas, language arts, South and Jealynne Richardson, language arts, South.

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