

Wetmore school to close

(KMZA)--The Wetmore Academic Center will close at the end of the current school year.

The Prairie Hills USD 113 Board of Education approved a resolution Monday evening to close the school on a 5-2 vote. Board members Anissa Bloom and Phillip Buessing cast the dissenting votes.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Wetmore patron Analyssa Noe asked the board to give them another year so they can determine a plan for the Wetmore school and have time to manage the transition of school closure.

For the past several months, the board has been engaged in open discussions to explore the sustainability of the school.

“There is nothing enjoyable or easy about this decision,” said board president Leslie Scoby.

According to a release from Superintendent Todd Evans, the board's decision was based on extensive study and reflection on the following factors:

- Declining enrollment at the Wetmore Academic Center**
- Difficulties of distributing resources to all three campuses in a fair and equitable way**
- Challenges to the community of a school closure**

The board began to explore these factors in detail last fall. Most recently on February 4, Wetmore families and community members had an opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives with the board in a public hearing.

Mrs. Scoby said, “We wrestled for months with the factors and competing values involved in a decision like this, and at no point did we take this decision lightly. What it ultimately came down to was responsible budget management and our duty to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars in the years to come.”

Monday night an announcement was made that the USD 113 Board of Education will not be implementing a Reduction in Force as a result of the closure. All impacted licensed and classified employees will be offered continued employment with USD 113.

In addition, the Board extended a window of time for employees wishing to retire who qualify for district retirement benefits. The window is available from Feb. 15 to Feb. 24, 2023.

When asked, the release says no Board of Education members were against the idea of the transfer of land from the southern portion of the district.

A committee, consisting of board members Anissa Bloom, Stan Keim and Kent Saylor, along with Superintendent Todd Evans was created to work and advise the board about the transition issues as a result of the building closure. The board of education will continue to develop and discuss plans for the 2023-24 school year to meet the needs of district students.

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