

Bradford School Board looks to have additional pre-kindergarten class

By **MARCIE SCHELLHAMMER**
Era Reporter

The Bradford Area School District will be adding an additional pre-kindergarten class with money from a state grant, announced Superintendent Sandra Romanowski.

"We have been awarded \$133,450 in the Pre-K Counts grant," Romanowski said, explaining the grant will continue each year. The additional program will be housed at the George G. Blaisdell Elementary School.

The announcement was made during Monday's meeting of the Bradford Area School Board.

"There is absolutely no more space left at GGB," Romanowski said with a laugh, "unless we start setting up classes in the bathrooms."

She added that notification of the grant just came in, so the district has been given additional time to implement the program.

"We're not starting this additional class when school starts," she said. "We still have to get all the materials."

Romanowski said this will make six pre-kindergarten classes, which has finally eliminated a waiting list for available positions in the classes.

"We have enough pre-K to serve all the disadvantaged students in our district," she said. "This is really a dream come true."

Romanowski announced the grant while giving her superintendent's report, which she said was "all about money."

She also explained the district received an additional \$32,713 in an accountability block grant to pay for an additional kindergarten teacher.

"That releases district funds that were paying for that position," she said.

She said the district received an additional \$78,652 in the base Title I allocation, which will support an aide in the pre-school program and provide funding to expand the Waterford Integrated Learning System to all 11 kindergarten classrooms.

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The last amount of approved funding Romanowski announced was a Project 720 grant of \$99,814 for three years, totaling \$299,442. The grant will be used for hiring a ninth grade counselor and will provide access for teachers to national trainers.

“We are also waiting to hear from the Department of Education regarding a technology grant called Classrooms of the Future which would provide \$949,540 over two years,” she said. The grant will provide wireless technology at the high school and purchase lap top computers for all core subject areas.

“We will hear by the end of this week regarding this grant,” she said. “These funding sources are examples of ways we are improving instructional programs without raising taxes, as it is possible to do that. You just have to get creative.”

Also at the meeting, the board approved hiring Anne Smith as an English teacher at Floyd C. Fretz Middle School with a salary of \$35,248; Amber Sallade as an English teacher at Fretz at a salary of \$36,748; Anita Wolfanger as a math teacher at Fretz at a salary of \$35,248; Richard Bierbower, science teacher at Fretz, at \$36,273; Brian Kelley, social studies at Fretz, at \$35,248; and LeeAnne Cuddy, elementary education teacher at GGB, at \$35,248.

In other news, board member Tim Bean asked Romanowski for a summary report of the athletic fields owned by the district. He said with the increased need for wellness programs, it seemed that the district should look at the cost of preparing the site of the former West Branch school for use as a viable field.

“We have a significant shortage of fields,” Bean said. “I would like to see with the West Branch field ... what would it take to get it ready for play?”

He said a district facilities study has already shown that the playing fields right now are being used beyond what they can handle.

“I just want to see what the costs are,” he said. “No commitments right now.”

Romanowski and Business Manager Kathy Kelly said they could get an estimate by the September board meeting.