

By Jan Schultz The Imperial Republican

Two new programs will be part of Chase County Schools' offerings this fall after school board approval last week.

After a survey of parents the past several months, the school will participate in the federal government's breakfast program.

Also, after board members received a presentation at a March 25 retreat, they voted to add the TeamMates program started by former Husker Coach Tom Osborne and his wife Nancy.

A 9-0 vote to approve a breakfast program for 2014-15 came after some discussion on how it will operate and prices.

The menu would vary from day to day, said Supt. Brad Schoeppey, with a cold breakfast one day and hot the next. Federal guidelines will have to be met regarding the offering of grains, fruit and milk on the menu.

Cost for breakfast was estimated to be \$1.30 for all ages. Schoeppey feels with the estimates of 50 breakfasts served each day, and averaging out the costs for the cold breakfasts and more expensive hot breakfasts, that it's a program that could stay "in the black."

He said there would be minimal additional labor hours, saying it would add one hour extra to two employees each day.

Schoeppey said he wasn't certain how the addition of the breakfast program will affect the "grab and go" breakfast offerings that CCS now offers. Board member Sheila Stromberger indicated she has talked to board members from other schools that have both.

By offering the breakfast program, Schoeppey said the school's daily start and end times may have to be altered slightly.

Regarding the school lunch program, board members also discussed prices for 2014-15.

Supt. Schoeppey said it appears prices will need to be raised 10 cents across the board, which will make next year's prices \$2.35 for K-6, \$2.55 for 7-12 and \$3.45 for adults.

Schoeppey will have a report and recommendation at the May meeting.

TeamMates program

Another unanimous vote approved the TeamMates program for implementation at CCS this fall.

Plans are to start the program in the fifth grade and in each subsequent year, it will continue with that class as they advance in grades. It will be started each year thereafter in the fifth grade.

Guidance Counselor Trent Herbert and 7-12 Principal Mike Sorensen will oversee the program.

"I see the need for mentoring with our kids," Sorensen said.

He noted that CCS now pairs up some high school students with elementary students, "and that's working well."

With TeamMates, the student is paired with an adult and the goal is to have them meet together at least once a week.

Participation will require parental permission and will be offered to all students in the grade.

"What I like about it is that there are a lot of kids who may need mentoring but don't show the criteria that we think they need" to exhibit to have a mentor, board member Stromberger said.

TeamMates provides training for the adults (18 and older) interested in participating, and background checks will be done.

Getting the needed number of adults to participate as the program grows may be a challenge, Sorensen noted. The program goal is to keep the same adult with the same student throughout their time in the program, which can be through 12th grade.

“It’s a big commitment. My only concern is will we have enough ‘lasting power’ with adults in this community to do it,” he said.

On a question if it will interrupt the school day, Supt. Schoeppey said when he served as a mentor at another school, he met with his student over the lunch hour.

Sixth grade teacher Sherri Clevenger agreed there is a need for TeamMates at CCS.

“There are a lot of our kids who need to feel special,” she said.

According to their web site, the mission of the TeamMates Mentoring Program is to positively impact the world by inspiring youth to reach their full potential.

TeamMates began in 1991 with the vision of University of Nebraska Head Football Coach Tom Osborne and his wife Nancy. The program began with 22 football players who met with middle school students in the Lincoln Public Schools.

Currently there are more than 6,500 youths in 117 communities across Nebraska, Iowa and California in the TeamMates program.