

Clay County News
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Reporter: Darren Ivy

Sandy Creek discusses impending opportunities for future

Board hears public comments, questions regarding the Clay Center merger pursuit.

Sandy Creek – A crowd of more than 100 residents from the Clay Center and Sandy Creek school districts met at Sandy Creek last Tuesday night for a public forum to raise questions and discuss a possible merger between the two school districts.

The Clay Center Board of Education has already voted unanimously to pursue a merger with Sandy Creek and it was then up to the Sandy Creek board to decide at its Monday meeting in Nelson if it wanted to pursue the merger as well, which it did choose to pass.

Based on comments by the Sandy Creek Board of Education at Tuesday's meeting, almost all of the board members were in favor of discussing the merger further with Clay Center officials.

Many of the people at Tuesday's meeting brought up the school name, mascot and colors if Clay Center and Sandy Creek were to merge.

It was pointed out during the meeting that some of the Clay Center students had discussed possible school names/mascots depending on which school their board decided to go with for a merger.

It was made clear at Tuesday's meeting by most in attendance that they want to keep the potential merged school as Sandy Creek and the mascot as the Cougars.

That will be up to both school boards after Sandy Creek voted to pursue the merger talk further at a meeting on Monday in Nelson.

A generic form from the Nebraska Department of Education also fueled talk of what the new school would be called.

The first question on the form is: The new school district shall be called: TBA.

The second question on the form: The secondary school at Sandy Creek: named TBA, Grades 7-12; Mascot: TBA; School colors: TBA.

The Sandy Creek board members made it clear that this was just a generic form.

“I don’t know where this change in name talk is coming from,” said David Benton, a Sandy Creek board member.

Steven Shackelford of Clay Center was the first member to talk during the open forum and he addressed the school name and mascot issue immediately.

“I don’t see where the benefits are in changing the name,” Shackelford said. “The focus should be on education. That is dollars taken directly away from education if you do that. It’s an item you really don’t need to buy.”

“I know I am going to have to buy a new sweatshirt one way or another. Why should the other parents who have a vested interest from Sandy Creek have to buy new stuff also.”

Shackelford drew a huge round of applause after he finished.

In all, more than 10 different people spoke on the topic with some very strong in their opinions and others wanting to raise issues to think about.

Listen to many of them on the video that will be attached to the online story and stay updated on this topic online at www.claycountynewsonline.com.