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PTR gift worth $53,000; spring school installation will rely on volunteers

The timing was a little early, but the Northern Ozaukee School Board has accepted the gift of two playgrounds from the Parent Teacher Resource group.

Luckily for the parents group, they don't have to worry about wrapping the gift or fitting it under a tree.

PTR President Monica Gahan told school officials that the organization intends to purchase playground equipment for the elementary and middle schools.

The estimated value of the two projects — which will feature a variety of climbing apparatuses and slides — is $53,000, including equipment and installation.

"This is something we have been working on since the summer of 2011, when we decided to start putting aside funds to eventually replace at least one of the play sets," Gahan said.

Eventually, the group targeted both play areas. School officials estimate the current playground equipment is more than 20 years.

The group began working with playground consultants Miller & Associates of Sauk Prairie to design two clusters of play equipment.

The company recommended using colorful, durable equipment made by BCI Burke Co. of Fond du Lac.

According to the plan presented to the district, the large play structure intended for the elementary school will cost $23,000.

Another $23,000 structure is eyed for the middle school. Some stand-alone equipment designed to augment the larger structures is expected to cost another $4,200.

The balance of the cost will come from site preparation work, including concrete to anchor the equipment.

Although the equipment would be purchased from the vendor, Gahan said the project will be a

“community build” relying heavily on volunteers under the direction of the consulting company.

Delivery of the equipment is not expected until spring, but the PTR wanted to place an order now to avoid 2013 price increases.

Because payment will not be expected until 30 days after shipment, the bill will not be due until the end of the school year.

Supt. Blake Peuse said that timing will allow the district to help with the funding, because school-related expenses should be largely accounted for by then.

With that in mind, the School Board approved allocating $10,000 toward the project, an possibly another $7,000.

The PTR will continue to seeking funding for the equipment, so the district may be asked to pay even less.

District administrators said the new equipment will help build upper body strength for the climbing children.

Three bids were reviewed for the project, but PTR and district officials were convinced the Burke equipment would be worth the added cost.

Buildings and Grounds Supt. Roger Sinnen said similar play equipment from the same company has been used in Sheboygan for years and shows virtually no wear.

With the green light from the School Board, Gahan said the PTR is anxious to tackle the project.

“This is very exciting, as we can really show our work to everyone,” she said.

Since reorganizing in 2009, the PTR has become a primary benefactor for the district.

The group has funded “teacher wish requests” of about $10,000 each year. Last year, it purchased 20 Apple iPads for use by students at Ozaukee Elementary School.

The PTR also sponsors the Fall Fest, family movie night, Santa’s workshop and Fun Fair.

The parents group raises money from its annual dinner and auction, as well as from ongoing kringel and snack sales.

THE PLAYGROUND AREAS at Ozaukee Elementary School (left) and Ozaukee Middle School are about to get a major upgrade, thanks to a donation from the Northern Ozaukee Parent Teacher Resource group. The value of the playground equipment is expected to top $50,000.

Installation, which will rely on volunteer labor, is expected to be done in spring.

Renderings by Miller & Associates