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Lake-Lehman High improves attendance by 63% under stricter policy

By SARA J. LUNDBERG
Managing Editor

Attendance at Lake-Lehman High School has changed dramatically since the implementation of a tough new attendance policy at the beginning of this school year, officials there say. The attendance policy set strict limits on the amount of unauthorized absences a student can have, and still gain credit for the course.

For a full year course of 180 days a student is allowed 16 unauthorized absences; for a 90 day or one semester class a student is allowed 8 unauthorized absences. Students who do not comply with the attendance policy will be faced with repeating required courses, and possibly delaying their graduation if they miss more than the allotted amount of unauthorized time.

Robert Roberts, the vice principal of Lake-Lehman High School, said that percentage comparisons for the

first two months of the new school year indicate a significant improvement in attendance. The absentee rate on any given day at Lake-Lehman in October of 1987 was 13%. For October of this school year the absentee rate on any given day had dropped to 8%. Comparisons for the month of September in 1987 and 1988 show similar results.

"The new attendance policy has turned attendance around dramatically. I think everyone in the administration realized if we didn't do something about the high rate of absences we would be in trouble," said Roberts.

Students interviewed had different views about the attendance policy. Denise Davis, who is the senior class president at Lake-Lehman, said the student body was 'in an uproar' after first learning of the change, but lately people are starting to adapt to the new requirements.

"Students thought it was unfair
See LAKE-LEHMAN, pg 3



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Dallas Borough workers Don Schaffer and Dan Parsons were hanging Christmas decorations around town a few days ago, sprucing things up

in preparation for the holiday. Co-worker Don Chamberlain was down below in a bucket loader guiding their way (Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Dallas says communication is key to its policy's success

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

In November, 1983, Dallas School District approved the enforcement of a compulsory attendance policy in accordance with the school laws of Pennsylvania and the regulations of the Department of Education.

The policy requires that every child between the compulsory school ages of eight years and 17 attend a state-approved day school program. The Dallas District's attendance policy delegates authority to notifying parents or guardians of their failure to comply with the policy to the student's principal.

The policy applies to children of all school age but in past years, most illegal absences occurred within the senior high school curriculum. Since the policy was put into effect, it has proven to be successful in decreasing the percentages of absenteeism in the district, according to Frank Galicki, principal of the senior high school.

"The percentage of absentees in senior high has decreased greatly. I give credit to the policy which has been in effect for the past five years," Galicki said.

Joan Makowski, home and school visitor for the district, said that overall absenteeism in the high school averaged about seven percent and in the elementary and junior high buildings about five percent.

"This includes both excused and unexcused absentees. We don't break them down by excused and unexcused and I doubt if other districts do," Makowski said.

Makowski credits the low absentee percentage to the fact that calls are made daily to the homes of students who are absent.

"These calls and the fact that we hold conferences with parents of students with excessive absenteeism seems to be the key to our success," Makowski explained.

"The parents realize that we are concerned with their students academic achievement when we take the time to confer with them. The administrator, guidance counselor and myself usually discuss all problems with the parents.

"We continually aim at reducing the percentage of absentees even if it is only by one percent annually," Makowski concluded.

General provisions of the policy require that after written notice of three days unexcused absence from school, an official "first notice" of unexcused absences notifies parents that any further illegal absences constitute a summary violation under the Public School Code.

If a student is illegally absent again, the parent will be charged before a magistrate for violation of the compulsory attendance law.

"The percentage of absentees in senior high has decreased dramatically."

Frank Galicki
Dallas Senior High School principal

Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, pre-arranged doctor and dentist appointments and authorized school activities. Unexcused absences include absence from school without parents consent for reasons other than those considered excusable, leaving school during school hours without permission and truancy.

A student who has been absent must complete the work missed and a truant student must complete work missed and make up the time he or she was truant. In the case of continued non-attendance and when all other counseling fails, a hearing will be held with the student and parents and referrals made to proper legal authorities until satisfactory arrangements are made for the student's fulfillment of attendance requirements.

If mental or physical disability prevents a student from attending school, a qualified practitioner must certify the student cannot attend school.

Excessive unexcused absences on the part of students 17 or older require that parents or guardians be notified to appear before the principal and others he deems appropriate to seek a solution to the attendance problem. Continued willfull, unexcused absences constitute a violation of school rules and may result in a student not being promoted, not graduating or losing the right to attend school.

Compulsory attendance applies to all students with the exception of those excused for homebound instruction, mental or physical disability, attendance at a state approved non-public school, or regular employment of children in compliance with child labor laws.

Other regulations in the policy include: No school or grade may be dismissed before the regular hour for dismissal except with the approval of the school superintendent; no student shall be permitted to leave school during the school hours unless upon the personal request of the parent or guardian or when participating in a school sponsored program with written permission of parent or guardian.

See DALLAS, pg 3

Citizens' Council plans election of officers

Back Mountain residents are being urged to attend the third public meeting of the proposed Back Mountain Citizens' Council, December 5, at 7:00 p.m., at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus Science Center auditorium.

The group plans to take official form at the meeting with the adoption of by-laws and the election of a 15 member board of directors and officers. The proposed slate of officers is: President, Nancy Eckert;

Vice-President, Will Conyngham; Secretary-Treasurer, Susan Davis.

Karen Miller, secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, will be guest speaker. Miller is a former municipal official and is very interested in activities taking place locally as a result of citizen participation, according to Nancy Eckert.

Secretary Miller is responsible for the administration of over 20 state and federal programs providing fi-

Excerpts of proposed by-laws on page 5

financial and technical help to local governments and community organizations.

She is also responsible for management of six bureaus; Community Planning, House and Development, Human Resources, Local Gov-

ernment Services, Management Services and Recreation & Conservation; and five regional offices. She serves as chairman of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and secretary of the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority.

At the time of Ms. Miller's appointment to Governor Casey's cabinet, she was serving her second term as mayor of Reading, where
See CITIZENS', pg 2

DAMA plans rate increase of \$37 yearly

By SARA J. LUNDBERG
Managing Editor

Customers of DAMA (Dallas Area Municipal Authority) can expect a rate increase for the new year. Rates are going up from the current rate of \$151 per year to \$188 per year starting January 1, 1989. DAMA provides service to the Dallas Township, Dallas Borough, Kingston Township areas, and includes the Lehman Township Municipal Authority and the Harveys Lake Municipal Authority as customers.

The new rates are necessary because of a government mandated treatment plant improvement, according to Thomas Bagley, who is the manager of DAMA.

DAMA is required to update the existing treatment plant which is
See DAMA, pg 3



We're Number 1

Jubilant Dallas Mountaineers were met by hundreds of fans on their arrival from Danville to the high school Saturday after winning the Eastern Conference Class II championship. The players lost no time in indicating that they were No. 1. Above, they surround Coach Ted Jackson and Jerry Ogurkis who hold the championship trophy. From left are Barry Miller, Joe Piskorik, Jackson, Shawn Ruth, Sam Jayne (partially hidden), Ogurkis, and Barry Miller (33, hidden). Story on page 11. (Lynn Sheehan Photo)

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