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Schools' test scores beat state averages, similar districts

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Results from the Pennsylvania State School Assessment (PSSA) tests are in and both Lake-Lehman and Dallas school districts say they fare well alongside the state average. The PSSA is used by the districts to determine if and how they need to change their curriculum.

Only fifth, eighth and 11th graders are tested. Every two years

sixth graders take a writing test to determine written skills. Dallas sixth graders took the writing test this year.

Bob Rogers, pupil personnel department head, said that Lake-Lehman is happy with the results, but is always looking to improve. "We always like to improve. We never rest on one set of scores," said Rogers.

The results are taken seriously and used in curriculum planning, he said. "They don't just get set on a shelf. We are always working on

improving the curriculum. We look for trends."

Rogers said individual departments look at the breakdown of subtext scores and look for any consistencies or inconsistencies.

The test takes a total of four days to complete and is very involved, said Rogers. "It's an extensive test. There is more writing going into the tests," he said.

Michael Speziale, assistant superintendent at Dallas, said he is never completely satisfied with test scores. "I think the scores are

reflective that we are doing better than the state average. I'm pleased overall, but there is always room for improvement," he said.

Speziale said Dallas has a strategic plan to achieve success. "We repeatedly look at technology and curriculum and the district continuously looks at itself," he said. Speziale believes the dynamic staff, faculty and administration at Dallas is the reason the students are doing well.

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1996 PSSA Scores

LAKE-LEHMAN	Math	Score Band	Reading	Score Band
Lehman-Jackson	1340	1310-1370	1360	1320-1400
Lake-Noxen	1350	1290-1350	1360	1300-1350
8th grade	1260	1270-1330	1310	1290-1340
11th grade	1340	1260-1320	1440	1290-1360
DALLAS	Math	Score Band	Reading	Score Band
Westmoreland	1340	1310-1390	1420	1330-1390
Dallas	1370	1370-1410	1400	1360-1420
8th grade	1360	1330-1390	1350	1340-1370
11th grade	1340	1320-1380	1350	1290-1340

Score band shows the score range of 20 similar schools nearest to a district's score. State avg. is 1300 in all cases.

On parole, man leads police on 22-mile car chase

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - John P. Ross, 55, of Dallas led police on a 22 mile car chase Nov. 19 that started on Lower Demunds Rd. and ended when his car flipped on Flat Rock Rd. in Franklin Township.

Ross was arrested by Dallas Township patrolman Jeff Dennis after police saw him run a stop sign at the intersection of Lower Demunds Rd. and Edinger Rd. He fled the scene in his vehicle after Dennis turned on his lights and siren.

The chase lasted 18 minutes and got up to 60 mph at times. Carl Miers, Dallas Township police chief, said Ross deliberately rolled his vehicle. "His plan was to roll the car, get out and run," said Miers.

Ross was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, operating a vehicle under D.U.I. related suspension, driving while not properly licensed, reckless endangerment, fleeing and eluding police.

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POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

IT'S EGGCITING

Watched closely by Sandy McGrady, a teacher at Trucksville Nursery School, Shannon Brobst broke an egg for the first time while helping prepare pumpkin bread for the school's annual

Thanksgiving feast. Dressed as Pilgrims and Indians, the children made food that was taken home to their families. More photos on page 7.

Churches pack boxes of cheer for children

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

LEHMAN - Children in war torn and forlorn countries will have their own colorfully wrapped box of presents to open this holiday season thanks to two Back Mountain churches.

The Huntsville Christian Church and the Lehman United Methodist Church are both donating shoe boxes full of everything from crayons and paper, stuffed animals and dolls to toothpaste and a hairbrush. Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, distributes boxes to more than one million children between infancy and 14 years old in 27 countries.

Christine Szots of Dallas, is in charge of the Huntsville Christian Church's shoe box collection. The church's goal is to fill a U-Haul truck and drive it to the distribution point in Boone, North Carolina, where a group of eight people will stay and work a 12 hour shift. The church has already collected \$600 to cover shipping costs to North Carolina. Last year the church collected 32 boxes. Szots said Samaritan's Purse



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

Showing some of the donated boxes on the steps of the Huntsville Christian Church, from left, first row, Karen Kaleta, Haley Bullock, Christine Szots and Gordy Kutz; second row, Milissa Bullock and Kristine Kaleta.

goes wherever there is a need. The organization started in 1993 under the direction of Franklin Graham, who is evangelist Billy Graham's son. Operation Christmas Child helps children in hospitals, orphans, or those living in very poor conditions, said Szots. "If it wasn't for this program, the children would not get a Christmas gift. Many of them do not have families or if they do, their families have no money," she said.

Szots said a big part of the program for the church is teaching children the importance of giving. "It's a really wonderful way to teach children the true meaning of Christmas, which is giving. It's easy for them to lose sight of that," said Szots, whose twin 7-year-old boys enjoy going to the dime store to pick out little presents for

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Borough cited for recycling program

Taxes stable in '98 budget

By JESSICA MORGAN
Post Correspondent

DALLAS BOROUGH - The Dallas Borough Council was awarded a letter of commendation from the Luzerne County Commissioners for its efforts in establishing a recycling program in the Dallas Borough. Councilman Theodore Wright thinks this award is especially significant to the borough because at the time the program was initiated, Dallas was not required to have a recycling program.

"This project was started before I became a member of council," he explained. "But at that time, council had the foresight to start recycling and recycling has proven to be the right thing to have done. We have a good program here in Dallas."

In other matters, a motion was passed to approve the Dallas Borough 1998 proposed budget for \$693,428. The motion was passed with dissenting votes coming from Jay Pope and Wright. Wright suggested that council take another look at the budget prior to the final decision which needs to be done in December.

Council President Patricia Peiffer pointed out that it is the fourth year that the borough has been able to submit a budget that did not include an increase in taxes. The current Dallas Borough tax rate stands at 20 mills.

Borough Manager Milt Lutsey reported that the borough road department did an excellent job during the first snowstorm of the year. "Everything went along smoothly," he said. "Even with one man short, we were able to take care of the streets." Lutsey also reported that quite a bit of salt had to be used by the road crew in their efforts to keep the streets safe for traffic. More salt was due to arrive by the middle of

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Comments at fire key to dispute

Harveys Lake, Idetown appear to part ways

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - The rift between the J. R. Davis Fire Co. at Idetown and Harveys Lake Fire & Ambulance was widened by comments made at the scene of the Country Manor personal care home in May. But perceptions of the comments differ between members of the departments.

Harveys Lake Fire & Ambulance personnel say they were slandered by comments made by an Idetown assistant chief, and that is why the Back Mountain Firemen's Association unanimously suspended Idetown in October. But Idetown's treasurer says tapes of an interview with a television reporter at the scene don't reveal any negative remarks about the Harveys Lake company.

The two fire companies have had tense relations for 20 years. Frank Lutinski, Harveys Lake fire chief, thinks it all started when the borough lines changed and Lehman Twp. stopped having jurisdiction at the lake. He also said a lack of professionalism and unethical behavior, such as soliciting

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