

Transfers

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care before and after school, the physical safety and emotional health of their children and financial difficulties resulting from work and child care issues. A petition citing these issues and more was circulated for four days in the district and received 100 signatures.

"The basis of our whole argument is that we were not notified with adequate time to be able to prepare our kids and adapt our work schedule for a 50 minute later start (than the high school) and along with doing that, we have to pick up the bill for day care that is not even set up at this point," said Ron Swingle, parent of a 9-year-old

daughter who will be transferred to Ross after attending Lehman-Jackson Elementary School since kindergarten.

Lehman-Jackson and Lake-Noxen elementary schools will be starting at 8:20 a.m. with a half hour later starting time at Ross of 9:05 a.m., creating difficulties for many parents in regards to jobs, work schedules and the safety and emotional well-being of their children.

"I have a 9-year-old who will be at the school at 7:30 a.m., not start school until 9:05 a.m., finish school and not be picked up until 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.," said Rich Swanson. "I don't find



Lake-Lehman parents Ron Swingle, Chris Marshall and Melissa Stuart discuss their concerns about their children while waiting for the board to return. Despite their pleas and a petition with 100 signatures, the board decided to uphold its prior decision on dual busing and the transferring of elementary school students to other schools.

"Sometimes we sell our kids a little bit short. I think these kids are going to adjust real quick."

Charles Boytin
School Board President

it to be conducive to her education that she is sitting at school for three extra hours every day."

Swanson said he found the decision deceitful and unfair. Many parents worried about the physical safety of children who would be home alone before and after school for extended periods.

"There are many uncertainties and you're disrupting the lives of parents and children," added his wife, Lisa Swanson. "This is not well thought out, not well planned. I don't think the board has a handle on the dynamics nor the logistics of this situation."

Superintendent Robert O. Roberts and Principal Dave McLaughlin-Smith said Romper Room was contacted for before and after-school care and should be available. McLaughlin-Smith said financial assistance should be available also.

Board members listened to parents, grandparents and other residents for more than an hour before taking a recess to discuss the issue. The board came back and, by consensus, affirmed its prior decision.

Roberts made the announcement, adding, "I will add also that the board through consensus will be eliminating the process of professional courtesy. Those students who are employees of Lake-Lehman school district will be treated exactly as students of the citizenry."

Previously, the children of teachers and other support personnel were allowed to attend the school at which their parent was employed. Roberts said the only exceptions would be for documented valid medical reasons and special education. Children in the gifted



POST PHOTO/ELIZABETH ANDERSON

"Children are a gift," said Lisa Swanson to board president Charles Boytin. "You guard them with your life." Swanson's 10-year-old son is one of 43 students being transferred from Lehman-Jackson Elementary School to Ross.

program will be attending Lehman-Jackson Elementary School, as Ross has no gifted program at this time.

"I've been on this board for two and a half years and I have never made a decision without the kids' best interest at heart," said Board President Charles Boytin. "I apologize if I did not make everyone's evening, but unfortunately this is not an easy job and I have to make tough decisions. I'm supporting Mr. Roberts and the administration."

Boytin called attention to the excellence of the newly renovated Ross building which now has its own gym, cafeteria, music room, art room, com-

puter room and library. "It's as good as it is going to get in this district as of right now. The most up-to-date facility we have, bar none."

"I have to agree with Mr. Boytin," said Patricia Herrick. "My concern really is my children's education." She shared the more positive attitude she is using with her fifth grader. "We've tried to put the best spin on it by showing him the building, that everything has been renovated and looks really very nice."

"Sometimes we sell our kids a little bit short," added Boytin. "I think these kids are going to adjust real quick."

Seniors

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DeCesaris. Last year, her team made it to the state competition. They lost, but think this year may be the year they will make it to the title game.

"It is our high school dream to wear a gold medal around our necks," said DeCesaris of herself and her teammates. They do not want anything to get in the way of their championship.

DeCesaris and her friends are also worried about advanced placement classes in the event of a strike. She is concerned they will not be able to cover enough material for the pre-scheduled tests if the school year starts late and too much instruction time is lost.

Athletes are not the only students anxious for a settlement of the teachers' contract. Senior Angelo Georgetti said he feels a strike would affect everyone and everything from applying for college to military recruitment at the school. His concerns include

getting copies of SATs and transcripts for college applications if the school is closed. He said while he feels colleges would be understanding about a strike beyond the students' control, it would not look good written across every application.

"Being a senior this year, I don't want to have a troublesome or quarrelsome or very difficult year. I just want it to run along smoothly because it's almost like the pinnacle is right here of what we've worked for this far," said Georgetti. "This is when we should be treated the best. This is our year to shine."

Georgetti added he feels a responsibility to speak up for his fellow students. "I'm just thinking about this, not only for myself, but for the others, for students who are not as vocal as myself."

Late last spring, the LLEA, in an effort to put a bit of pressure on the negotiations, voted to ex-

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Angelo Georgetti
Lake-Lehman senior

clude all extracurricular activity and work only their contracted school day. It is unknown whether the teachers will continue to stick with this strategy when school starts in the fall.

"I know that some of the seniors last year were disappointed because on class trips and stuff, the teachers could not go because of contracts and the union, so parents had to fill in,"

said Georgetti. "It was just not the same type of atmosphere."

It would seem it is impossible to separate one part of the Lake-Lehman "family" from another. The teachers are involved in so many aspects of the students' lives from academics to sports to extracurricular activities. Many of the high school students hold John Comitz and his deep involvement with National History

Day as an example.

"That all plays a huge role," said Georgetti of the teachers' involvement. "I'm sure the school board realizes that, but it just doesn't seem like things are getting worked out."

At nearly every school board meeting high school students make entreaties to the board to please settle the contract. The board's replies are becoming predictable. It is clear the students are tired of talk and want to see concrete evidence of a resolution.

"Every time Mr. Boytin and the school board get together they say, 'Cooler heads will prevail,'" said Georgetti. "When a

senior, on our entire class's behalf, gets up and poses a question they always say, 'Things are getting done. Cooler heads will prevail.' That happened when I went to the school board meeting, June 18. I know he gave the same response in July. I'm wondering if in August if someone speaks, if he will give them the same response."

What the students are asking for seems simple enough. DeCesaris summed it up well at a recent school board meeting. "We're not asking much," she said. "Please reach a compromise in the teachers' contract negotiations."

Car Show to benefit SPCA

Bob Roper and Mike Rusonis, members of the Lake-Lehman Senior class, will be holding a car show from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. August 3 as part of their senior project at the Luzerne County Fairgrounds on Route 118 in Lehman. All proceeds will go to the SPCA. For more information contact Bob at 477-3218 or Mike at 477-3453.

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