

DALLAS

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school have undergone major renovations in recent years, and Wycallis Elementary was new in 1999. The high school is next, and Galicki said technology upgrades would be included in the project.

The Web pages replace the Homework Hotline, a phone system that students could call to get homework assignments. Galicki wants to make them mandatory for all teachers.

Along with daily lessons, the pages can include calendars, exam dates, project descriptions and other information.

"If a student was absent, they could keep up," Galicki said.

A survey found that most Dallas families — "in the high 90 percent" Galicki said — have home computers. Besides making it easier for students and teachers to stay in touch, the

pages could carry information for parents.

At the Jan. 10 school board work session, Galicki also outlined plans to spend state grant funds. He said that \$65,500 could be used to support lower class sizes in the elementary schools, partly by expanding transition classes between kindergarten and first grade.

There is now one such class, for students who are having difficulty making the move upward. There are 12 students, an instructor and an aide. Galicki said he has talked to administrators in other districts about the program. "They gave us great reviews."

Another \$41,642 will be directed toward tutoring, much of it provided after school by faculty members, who are paid \$20 per hour for the extra time.

DALLAS SCHOOL BOARD

Superintendent search begins

Staff report

DALLAS TWP. — Dallas School Board President Russell Bigus announced at the Jan. 10 meeting that the superintendent opening was posted in-house Jan. 4 and would be advertised in magazines and newspapers beginning Jan. 14. Former Superintendent Gilbert Griffiths retired Dec. 1, seven months before his contract expired.

Board member Maureen Matiska said she had "severe concerns" about the administration being short staffed because assistant superintendent Michael Speziale is on leave and a secretary recently left.

Matiska noted the board learned of Griffiths' retirement in October yet was only now advertising for a new person. "I feel the central administration office is falling apart and no one here cares," she said.

Bigus objected, pointing out

that the board had talked about ways to conduct a search for a new superintendent in recent months.

The board hired substitute teachers Brian Tkaczyk in English and Molly Novicki for homebound education, and named four substitutes for after-school tutoring at \$20 an hour: Ann Marie Barber, Gerald Delescavage, Keri Gustave and Regina Cannon.

The board also made one last call for residents to join a citizens advisory board that will look at the option to change the district's taxing system. Those interested must contact Business Manager Grant Palfev before the end of the month.

And the board approved "Plan Con Part J" for the middle school, the last in a complex set of paperwork required to get state money for the nearly \$17 million project.

INAUGURAL

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monies and activities. When fully manned, more than 700 people will be working within JTF-AFIC to provide military support during the 10-day inaugural period, January 15-24.

The sergeant, an information assurance supervisor with 22 years of military service, is normally assigned to the National

Guard Bureau, Arlington, Va. She is the daughter of Virginia Zeiders of Chestnut St., and the granddaughter of Virginia Graybill of Rural Route 1, both of Sunbury, Pa. Her father, Bud Duffield, resides on Lake St., Dallas. Griffin graduated in 1978 from Dallas Senior High School.

Public swimming at Dallas

Dallas School District has announced the public aquatic programs for fall and winter 2004-2005 at the district natatorium in the Dallas Middle School.

Public swimming sessions are Wednesdays and Fridays, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoons from 2 to 5 p.m.

The pool is open to the public for lap and recreational swimming during those times. No one under 18 will be admitted without a parent or guardian. Proof of residence and \$2 daily fee apply.



Shown loading Santa's sleigh are Brianne Haydt, Liz Zawatski, Jerod Koehler, Ralph Vance and Lindsey Riddell.

Misericordia students grant holiday wishes

Students, faculty and staff from College Misericordia joined together to make the holidays a whole lot brighter for 80 children and their mothers in the greater Wilkes-Barre area. For the fourth consecutive year, the Peer Advocates student group organized Wish Upon a Star, a holiday gift drive on the campus to benefit families in need.

Hundreds of new toys and items of clothing were donated by people from throughout the campus and collected by the

Peer Advocates. The items were delivered to Mercy Services for distribution to the families prior to Christmas.

As they've done in past years, the Peer Advocates collected a list of names and ages of children in need throughout the Wyoming Valley. The Peer Advocates then asked members of the campus community to "adopt" a child or a mother and donate new toys and clothing items for them. The items were collected at the Banks Student Center on the College

Misericordia campus, where members of the Peer Advocates got them ready for delivery to Mercy Services.

The Peer Advocates are a group of upper class students who mentor first year students and provide outreach and programs for all students at College Misericordia. Mercy Services is sponsored by the Religious Sisters of Mercy and provides educational support services, mentoring and social programs for low-income children and their families.

VANS

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compares to an average of \$3,384 paid in the Dallas School District, according to figures supplied by Dallas Business Manager Grant Palfev.

Last year, Lake-Lehman paid 13 contractors a total of \$574,880 for car and van costs. Costs are expected to total \$715,000 this school year to transport 71 students.

School board president James Mahon charged last week that some contractors were given the jobs as "political candy." In a letter to the Times Leader, he pointed to one contractor that will receive \$100,000 more in payments this year. The additional routes, he charges, were handed out by former business manager Kathleen Williams.

"Even though the board was never informed which contractor was being awarded additional routes, we must take responsibility due to the fact that a district employee" made the appointments, Mahon writes.

According to records provided by the district, contractor Al Scovich was paid \$117,483 last year and is estimated to receive \$230,000 this school year. He has seven vans and transports 29 children.

Dobrowolski was paid \$192,144 last year, for trans-

"There's no reason for three vans to be at Wilkes-Barre Vo-Tech."

Sandy Dobrowolski
Lake-Lehman van contractor

porting 26 children. She estimates she will receive \$157,000 this year, carrying 14 children.

Dobrowolski says some of the increase in costs is due to poor scheduling by Robert Zack, the district's transportation coordinator. Last year, she said, after Zack was hired for the job, "We kept adding car after car after car."

Zack said Thursday that duplication is created when students start or end classes at different times. And he is wary of too much dependence on large contractors. "If the service is unsatisfactory, you're stuck with one," he said.

The present five-year contract with special transport van drivers expires August 14. Under its terms, contractors were paid at 90¢ per mile the first year, with an increase of .875¢ each year. They are now paid \$1.25 per mile, regardless of how many students are carried.

"We will be looking at new contracts," said district Business Manager Richard

PROPERTY TRANSFERS

The following property transfers were recorded recently at the Luzerne County Courthouse:

John Lyback and spouse to Terry Ogle, Maple Wood, Dallas Township, \$104,000.

Paul Siegel Company to Andrew J. Sordoni, Dallas Township, \$259,000.

Michael Cook and spouse to Neal J. Gallagher, Dallas Township, \$156,000.

Gelso & Smith partner to Joseph Nocito and spouse, Windsor Farms, Kingston Township, \$57,900.

Smith & Gelso partners to Sanjeev Garg and others, Windsor Farm, Kingston Township, \$76,000.

Kingston Township winter parking ordinance reminder

Kingston Township Winter parking ordinance is effective through March 31, 2005. Under this ordinance, residents are prohibited from parking vehicles on streets between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily. Vehicles also are not permitted to be parked on streets during snowstorms, or for eight hours after the end of the storm. The ordinance is designed to keep streets open and clear so that snow removal measures can be effectively undertaken by the Public Works Department. Anyone with questions about the ordinance may call 696-1175.

will be paid \$30,744; Charlotte Redmond will be paid \$16,871 for the use of one van.

Together, they transport 105 students. Compensation is by contracted amount and 50¢ per mile is added for each extra student during the year.

Crestwood School District Superintendent Richard Duffy said his district pays \$477,309 to transport 52 special-needs children in vans. The district hires independent contractors and pays an average of \$9,179 per student.

Dobrowolski said at Lake-Lehman, the contractors are given lists of students and where they are going. The contractor then submits routes and mileage, using the per-mile rate to compute the cost.

"The best route may not always be the shortest route," she said, when weather conditions and other factors are taken into account.

If a new student who lives along an existing route is added during the year, the contractor is not paid extra to carry them, she said.

Bombick said one way the district tries to save is by paying parents 37¢ per mile to transport their own children to and from school.

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