

DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Use of metal detectors at high school is debated

By SARAH HITE
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Two students and their parents spoke out at a school board meeting Monday against the metal detectors recently put to use in the senior high school.

Before the meeting began, the board held a moment of silence in honor of 18-year-old Dallas High School student Thomas Lynch, of Harveys Lake, who died in a car accident early Monday morning.

Board President Catherine Wega said Lynch was an Eagle Scout who had already enlisted in the U.S. military, and planned to attend basic training in Fort Benning, Ga.

"He leaves a space in everyone's heart..." said Wega.

During the meeting, parents and students discussed the metal detectors at Dallas High School, which have been in use since Feb. 6.

Principal Jeffrey Shaffer said the system is randomized - all students walk through the detection system when entering the new building, but only some are scanned.

Paul Paci, of Dallas, whose daughter attends the school, said he disagrees with the notion that all students should have to pass through the metal detector because of the "poor choices" of other students.

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Paul Paci
Father of Dallas High School student

he said.

He said students who wish to commit harm on others will find a way to get a weapon into the school regardless of metal detectors. Paci feels the detectors are a violation of students' constitutional rights.

Paci also said administrators and teachers should know who the troublemakers are, and those students should be the only ones scanned.

and we had no idea," said Wega. "We are doing the best we can."

Board member Colleen Slocum said because of incidents such as the Columbine High School shooting in which two students killed 12 students and one teacher and injured nearly two dozen others in April 1999, schools need to be prepared to keep students and faculty safe.

"This is our new normal," she said.

Paci's daughter, Amanda, said the metal detectors are time-consuming, and don't leave her enough time before class to finish her homework. She said she's unable to complete homework at home due to a part-time job.

Senior Gavin Carolan, of Dal-

las, created T-shirts in protest of the metal detectors, but said the administration had banned them on Monday. He said the T-shirts are bright orange and read "PA Department of Corrections, Dallas High School, Inmate Number 570."

Carolan researched case law and deemed the detectors and banning students' protests are both unconstitutional.

Shaffer said he saw the shirts as a disruption to the school's learning environment.

Amanda Paci also said she didn't feel safe at the school because faculty, staff and visitors are not scanned for weapons.

"According to the school, I'm

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L-L elementary sports resume

Suspension of program came after altercation between two basketball coaches.

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A mandatory meeting was held Wednesday for dozens of Lake-Lehman elementary basketball parents to discuss an altercation that occurred between two coaches last week.

Lake-Lehman Superintendent James McGovern wouldn't give specifics, but he said there was an altercation between two Ross Elementary fifth and sixth-grade boys' basketball coaches last week that escalated to a point of concern.

The administration suspended play among all elementary basketball teams until sufficient action could be taken. McGovern said the elementary basketball league is run by the district and the school-wide Parent-Teacher Organization, which gives him the power to make such decisions.

McGovern was satisfied with the league president's decision as to what action to take against the adults responsible for the altercation, but would not provide details.

McGovern said the league will also develop a parent guide, coaches' guide and a mission for the program.

He also lifted the suspension of the program, though some teams have only one game remaining in the season.

McGovern said it wasn't the first time incidents occurred on the court and said emotions ran high even when his son, now 14, played on a fifth and sixth-grade team two years ago.

"Sometimes when we have altercations, I gather my people together and we talk about it,"

"Never mistake my kindness for softness, because next time we have one of these incidents, it will be the last."

James McGovern
Lake-Lehman School District
superintendent

he said. "Maybe this is something we should do prior to each season."

He brought the parents together to discuss how their actions affect the children and to review the mission of the district's sports programs.

"If you're one of those people who think the kids aren't watching every single thing you do, you're wrong," he said.

McGovern urged parents to better understand how their actions affect students and how sports help build students' character, but the outcomes of games do not matter in the long run.

Though McGovern talked to parents pleasantly and told stories about his family throughout the meeting, he had a stern warning for parents at the end of the night.

"Never mistake my kindness for softness, because next time we have one of these incidents, it will be the last," he said.

John Blaski, a Ross Elementary third and fourth-grade girls' basketball coach, felt the presentation was necessary to remind parents about conduct during games.

"I've got five girls on the court, and five girls behind me, so when I'm out there, I try to be the middle man," he said. "If I'm happy, they will be happy. If I'm angry, they will be angry. I try to contain myself because they'll follow my lead."



Dallas High School students entertain Dallas Elementary School students on St. Valentine's Day as part of a coordinated program between the schools.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Chance for a Valentine night out

High school students spend time with elementary students, giving parents an opportunity to spend time alone on Valentine's Day.

By SARAH HITE
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About a dozen Dallas High School Key Club members spent their Valentine's Day in an elementary school gym chasing little tykes to give local parents a night off.

The Key Club sponsored its annual Valentine's Day babysitting program at Dallas Elementary on Tuesday.

The event suggested a donation of \$10, with all proceeds going to the Kids, K-9s and Cops program of the Fallen Officers Remembered organization, which helps provide bulletproof vests to local police

dogs.

Shannon Forrer, Key Club advisor and learning support teacher, said the club has offered the babysitting service for the last three years. She said parents must pre-register for the event, and it is only for children ages 1 through 10.

The children stayed in the gym and library at the school from 5 to 10 p.m. They watched movies, colored and played games like "Red Rover" and basketball.

"It's a very informal service," said Forrer. "Some of our kids have CPR knowledge because they're in the high school emergency response team and some are Boy Scouts."



Kristen Frederick sits with Dalton Hislop on St. Valentine's Day as part of a coordinated program between Dallas High School and Dallas Elementary School.

Forrer, with her own toddler, 2-year-old Madeline, in tow, said anyone with young children would appreciate the service.

"Being a parent, just being able to get out with your

spouse, especially in this hard economy, is priceless," she said. "...It's just so parents can get out and not worry about paying for a babysitter or finding someone to watch their kids. These things don't happen very often."

DALLAS BOROUGH

Borough plans moving forward for clean up of Toby Creek

By SARAH HITE
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Officials announced Wednesday that Dallas Borough is slowly moving forward with plans to clean up Toby Creek to address storm water issues.

Borough Manager Tracey Carr said the borough is moving forward in applying for a grant through the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to "clean up debris and sediment" within Toby Creek.

Carr said there are no specific plans yet because she wants to see if the project could be funded before property owners and engineers get involved in the details.

Depending on the funds received, Carr said the borough and property owners along the creek may have to contribute to the cost of the project. She also said all landowners involved would need to cooperate in allowing the work for the project to be successful.

Council also voted to apply for a grant from the Luzerne County Office of Community

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Development to address storm water and street infrastructure issues on Wellington Avenue.

Carr said the street has been on the paving list for a few years, but the borough has never had enough funds to complete the project. She said every three years municipalities are eligible for a Community

Development Block Grant.

She added surveys will need to be conducted and additional information gathered to see if the street is eligible for the program.

In other news, Council ...

• Approved an ordinance banning large donation boxes within the borough. At last

month's meeting, Carr said the donation boxes, typically for clothing, furniture and other physical items, have become a nuisance in the borough and have blocked public access to driveways and other areas.

• Approved a resolution to limit public comments during the meetings to a five-minute time frame. Carr said this has always been the rule at meetings, but there was never any formal resolution declaring it.

• Rehired Eric Domzalski for the part-time season position of summer recreation director at the rate of \$9 per hour.

Carr was authorized to seek applications for summer recreation program counselors.

• Authorized Carr to solicit bids for refuse container services for the 2012 Spring Cleanup program.

• Donated \$200 to the Dallas High School Lock-In program.

• Hired R.N. Finch & Sons, Inc. to furnish and install air conditioning in the front offices of the municipal building in the amount of \$2,050.

• The next Dallas Borough Council meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21 in the municipal building.