

Press Clippings 8/24/2018

---Courier News--- 8/24/18

Adult, juvenile charged in BB gun incident that prompted a lockdown

BY JANELLE WALKER AND RAFAEL GUERRERO



Ellis Middle School was put in secure building mode Thursday after Elgin police were called about a rifle in a window at a nearby home. (Janelle Walker/Courier-News)

An adult and a juvenile were charged in connection with an incident Thursday in which a rifle-type weapon — later found to be a BB gun — was pointed out a window, prompting calls to police and a nearby school to go into secure building mode, Elgin police said.

The incident occurred at 8:40 a.m. in the 600 block of Villa Street, police said. No shots were fired, and police provided no information what occurred beyond the arrests being made.

Police also would not disclose the name, age or address of the adult charged with disorderly conduct.

Ellis Middle School was put in secure building mode, meaning no one was allowed to enter or exit, for less than an hour while police investigated, **School District U46** officials said.

---Daily Herald--- 8/24/18

OPINION: The scourge of bullying

School systems must combat such cruelty by building cultures of kindness, respect



Megan Kuntz, far left, is escorted to Canton Middle School in Streamwood by three dozen motorcyclists. *Bev Horne | Staff Photographer*

The motorcycle escort that brought 13-year-old Megan Kuntz to her first day of classes this week was symbolically powerful.

Kuntz rode on the back of one of the three-dozen motorcycles that roared up to Canton Middle School in Streamwood in an awesome show of support for the girl who was bullied so much last school year that her mother pulled her out of the final two weeks of classes. The bikers' gesture told her and anyone watching "We've got your back."

Now other students, parents, school administrators must show the same resolve to ensure Megan is never bullied again.

In fact, the start of a new school year marks a good time for school officials across the suburbs to increase their vigilance with staff members and to make it clear to students and parents that bullying is not acceptable.

"It's just a bunch of bikers getting together about something that's got to stop," said Paul Muttini, one of Megan's escorts.

Stopbullying.gov says between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 U.S. students say they have been bullied at school. Many also have been cyberbullied. Most bullying -- the most common types are verbal and social bullying -- happens in middle school.

There is growing awareness of the problem, which may lead some to believe bullying is increasing. However, while studies suggest rates of bullying may be declining, it remains a prevalent and serious problem in today's schools, according to the website.

The bullying was so bad for Megan last year that as a seventh-grader she had to eat lunch in a school office to avoid classmates who threw her food in the trash. Some students hurled anti-gay epithets at her because she was the only girl on her youth football team.

Megan's mother, Jill Kuntz, said she worked with Canton administrators last year to address the bullying and met with parents of the worst offenders but that did little to

end the harassment. Officials in Elgin Area School District U-46 stressed the district does not tolerate bullying and said they hope to continue working with Megan's family to address the situation.

Solutions to bullying are not simple. Approaches that show the most promise confront the problem from many angles and involve the entire school community -- students, families, administrators, teachers, and others -- to create a culture of respect, according to <http://www.stopbullying.gov>.

Studies also have shown adults, including parents, can help by talking to their children about bullying, modeling kindness and respect, and encouraging them to get help when they are involved in bullying or know others who need help.

Ending bullying must be on every school's to-do list this year.

---Courier News--- 8/24/18

Proposed U46 budget for 2018-19 a record \$558M, with money for buses, computers and building improvements

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

A proposed \$558 million budget for **School District U46's** 2018-19 school year earmarks \$20 million for capital projects, \$7.5 million for computer purchases and nearly \$6 million for new school buses, documents show.

The district should also be able to accrue a \$3 million surplus, meaning the budget will be balanced and should end in the black.

District financial officials outlined the spending plan on Monday night's school board meeting. It calls for \$558 million in expenditures and \$561 million in revenue, both of which are record amounts.

The year-to-year expenditure increase from \$518 million in the 2017-18 fiscal year to \$558 million in the coming year is a bigger increase than had been projected in June. The same is true for revenues, which escalate from \$509 million this year to \$561 million next year.

Financial Operations Director Dale Burnidge said the expenditure increases can be tied to a 5 percent increase in health insurance costs and the creation of 54 new positions. The new jobs include middle school counselors, assistant principals at the larger middle schools, additional behavior specialists and instructional coaches, he said.

That is in addition to \$33 million for building projects, computers and school buses.

Revenue to cover the expenses — many of which have been put off for years because of a lack of funds — is coming from a 10 percent increase in evidence-based funding from the state, Burnidge said. U46 collected an additional \$24 million in revenue in the 2017-18 school year through the evidence-based funding formula, and expects an additional \$18 million this school year, he said.

Property tax revenue is expected to remain largely flat, Burnidge said. Budget documents show U46 projecting less than a \$500,000 increase in local tax and \$2 million in local revenue; property tax revenue represents about \$300 million of the district's overall revenue. Federal funding for U46 will be flat as well, at \$38 million.

A public hearing on the proposed budget is scheduled for Sept. 10. The school board is expected to vote on the final spending plan at its Sept. 24 meeting.