

Press Clippings 3/6/2018

---Daily Herald--- 3/6/18

Bartlett Elementary parents tell U-46 board of bullying problem

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Six Bartlett Elementary School parents and former employees voiced concerns Monday night about a lack of proper supervision during recess, bullying and a culture of collective punishment at the school.

They spoke during the public comments portion of the **Elgin Area School District U-46** school board meeting urging the administration and trustees to address problems with the school's leadership and student discipline.

Parent Kip Murphy said his daughter was being bullied by a boy in her second-grade class who threatened to kick, punch and kill her and bring a gun to school to shoot her. That student also has caused school evacuations, he added.

"She has been out of school for eight days now," said Murphy, adding that he reported it to the principal and filed a police report, yet nothing has been done to remove the student in question. "We are not going to send our daughter back into this environment where she feels physically threatened until he is removed from the school. It's unreasonable. It's not right. And this is second grade."

Murphy urged action in light of heightened awareness about school safety after the recent shootings in Parkland, Florida, and Mount Pleasant, Michigan.

"This kid has shown a demonstrated capacity to be violent in the school where they evacuate the classroom, and he is still there day after day and my daughter is not," he said.

CEO Tony Sanders said the district doesn't expel but could suspend an elementary school student. He said he would follow up with Murphy.

A former school employee said there is a severe shortage of lunchtime supervisors at the school and ineffective leadership by Principal Lorelei Keltner, who was hired in 2015.

Parent Diana Gunsteen, who has a second-grader and fourth-grader at the school, said the school environment has become unwelcoming for students and parents seeking to volunteer.

"The culture has changed in our last five years there and it's not a fun place to learn anymore," she said.

Gunsteen said entire grades are punished because of a few misbehaving children. During recess, students were not allowed to run, balls and equipment were taken away, and essentially the children were told to walk and talk, she added.

"That to me doesn't sound like an elementary school. It sounds more like a jail yard to me," she said. "It's just a hard place to be."

Sanders and school board members said they were unaware of these issues and promised to take steps to address the parents' concerns.

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Larkin gets gun threat, will open today

BY RONNIE WACHTER



A social media threat Monday will not cancel classes Tuesday at Larkin High School in Elgin, officials said.

Madhu Krishnamurthy | Staff Photographer, 2015

A threat of armed violence at **Larkin High School** in Elgin appeared on Facebook and Snapchat Monday night. The school will open Tuesday, a school district official said, and police and school officials are looking into the source of the threat.

Elgin police spokeswoman Kristie Hilton said there would be a police presence at the school but could not comment further on an open investigation.

In a screenshot of the post -- in which some text is already scribbled out by a digital pen -- a message reads, "On march six I will be Shooting up Larkin high school." The circulated image does not include the poster's name.

John Heiderscheidt, **Elgin Area School District U-46** district safety coordinator, was aware of the post Monday night. He said the district is following its existing policy for investigating threats against its facilities and is working with police.

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Teen killed in Elgin single-car crash

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

A 17-year-old driver was killed in a single-vehicle crash Monday in Elgin, police said.

The crash occurred at 10:46 a.m. on the 1000 block of South Street. A preliminary investigation revealed that the vehicle was traveling east on South Street at Alfred Avenue when the driver lost control and struck a tree, police said.

The driver, a student at **Larkin High School** in Elgin, was the sole occupant and was taken to Presence St. Joseph Hospital in Elgin, where he was pronounced dead.

Kristie Hilton, Elgin police spokeswoman, said Monday night that police could not release the student's identity yet. An autopsy is scheduled for Wednesday in Kane County.

"My heart is breaking," Elgin Area School District U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. Counselors were on hand this afternoon and will continue to be while students and staff need support. When I was at the hospital we also had a social worker come to meet with family and close friends."

Anyone with information on the crash is urged to call (847) 289-2661 or text 847411, including ELGINPD at the beginning of the text.