Anti-bullying initiatives pursued at Trail

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At the Lackawanna Trail school board meeting Oct. 14, high school principal Dr. Mark Murphy, in his secondary education report, said that October is National Anti-bullying Month. He announced two initiatives for anti-bullying.

First, he passed around an incident reporting form, which will allow students an opportunity to let the high school's counselors, administration, or nurses, know about any bullying incident. He said that although teachers are stationed in the hallway between periods, they don't always know when intimidation is happening between students.

"This form was developed as a way for them to be able to report tings to us if they need to in a confidential manner," he stated.

Murphy said that the form asks students to list the conflict and students or witnesses involved in the conflict. The form also has Yes/No questions.

"This is not a form that's shared amongst students," he said. "It's not a form that's mailed home. It's simply a way for Mr. Kearney (assistant principal Brian Kearney) and I to keep notes of what's happening.

"In the case of intimidation, in order to enact our bullying policy, we do need to show some sort of progressive or patterns of behavior," he said.

He said that the high school has been using this form for two years.

Murphy then announced the other anti-bullying initiative, which is Rachel's Challenge. He said that eleven students attended a Rachel's Challenge conference at Keystone College.

"They returned with a renewed sense of focus and a renewed sense of purpose," he said.

Murphy said that he met with the students and issued them a challenge, which is to do good deeds to the school community and challenge them to do the same deeds in return and report back to them. He listed a few examples, such as juniors and seniors of Rachel's Challenge going to the elementary center and doing research about kindness, and sharing this knowledge with the elementary students.

"We're hoping to start some chain reaction between the buildings," he said.

In other business, assistant principal Brian Kearney announced that former Lackawanna Trail student Devon Clarke was named performer of the week (men's cross country) for the Colonial State Athletic Conference for Marywood University. He also said that his brother Justin Clarke, who was also a student at Trail, was named the same title twice this year for Keystone College.

"It's nice to see our kids moving on and doing good things out there in college," said Kearney.

Also, in her special education report, director Stephanie Russell announced that the major project of special education at this time is refining the role of responsibilities in the new social worker Miss Chadwick.

"Miss Chadwick started at Lackawanna Trail on September 15th following her September 8th board approval" said Russell.

Russell said that Chadwick immediately has been working with and observing students, collaborating with administration, and meeting with faculty and parents.

"Miss Chadwick and I have been meeting with other social workers, who provide school-based counseling service in districts while we are molding, refining, and reviewing the needs of Lackawanna Trail."

In other news, Desiree Gallager, coordinator of the cancer fundraiser Pink Paws for a Cause, thanked everyone involved in it.

"This year, our district fundraiser raised $7,825 that will be donated to the American Cancer Society," she said, "Today from 2008, our total is $54,226.50."

Also, elementary PTO Joanna Wright announced that the PTO finished their fall fundraiser.

"I was impressed with the number that came in," she stated. "As of yesterday, we sold 736 books so that actually we made $7,360 for the PTO, which is a great start for us."

Wright also said that the book fair starts next week (Oct. 23-25).

"Last year, we were able to give each child a dollar towards a book," she said. "So everybody walked out of the book fair with at least one book."