

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

April 25, 2013

LISA charter exceeds LR limit on school size (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Little Rock charter school has been operating in violation of a city zoning permit since the beginning of the school year, according to the Planning Department.

The LISA Academy in west Little Rock opened its doors in 2004 and has been increasing its enrollment ever since. Little Rock officials say the increase of more than 190 students last fall put the school over the limit set by the city's Planning Commission.

The fate of those 190 students is in the hands of the Little Rock Board of Directors as it schedules a public hearing to rule on an appeal from the school's leadership to increase the enrollment cap to 800 students. The board will vote May 7 to schedule a hearing date for May 21.

If the board votes to deny the appeal, Little Rock City Attorney Tom Carpenter said, the school will be left with few options - move to another location or decrease enrollment to the 600-student cap.

"The city has the power to say we do not approve your site plan. If we do that, they're going to have to not have more than 600 students, or they'll have to move," he said. "What we would hope is that any institution that calls itself an educational institution would have no issues obeying the law."

School officials and an attorney representing the school declined to comment Wednesday.

LISA Academy, which enrolls students in grades six through 12, is in two buildings at 21 Corporate Hill Drive, near Interstates 430 and 630 off West Markham Street.

The school's leadership got approval in April 2012 from the state Board of Education to increase the enrollment cap from 600 to 800 students. The school then began accepting additional applications and increased its enrollment to 790 as of the beginning of this school year.

According to a special zoning permit, which allowed the school to build and open in a commercially zoned district in 2004, the city capped the enrollment at 600 in 2011 because of concerns for traffic on neighboring streets.

School leaders have appeared before the Planning Commission several times since 2004 to update the stipulations of the conditional-use zoning permit, including a request for a temporary

classroom building, approval for construction of a building for middle-school grades, and approval to increase the height of that building from 40 feet to 70 feet, according to Planning Commission records.

During the 2011 request to enlarge the middle-school building, the Planning Commission added the enrollment cap of 600 because of traffic concerns.

The Planning Department said this week that on some days, during after-school pickup times, cars are backed up for several blocks to West Markham Street and access to residential side streets or businesses is blocked.

School officials returned to the Planning Commission in March, after several deferrals, to ask for an amendment to the zoning requirements that would allow 800 students at the facility.

The Planning Department recommended the allowance, saying that the school must:

Stagger dismissal times for the high school and middle schools by about 30 minutes.

Notify parents of the staggered times and request their compliance.

Use the front and rear parking lots to line up additional vehicles

Maintain a travel lane wide enough for emergency vehicles on Corporate Hill and Executive Center drives.

Provide employees to monitor and implement the traffic plan.

Several area business owners spoke in March against allowing the increase, saying they had lost business and were inconvenienced by the traffic. One business owner said a courier service would not stop at his office between 2:45 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. because the employees felt it was unsafe.

The commission voted 7-3 to deny the school's request.

Atnan Ekin, the chief executive officer of the LISA Foundation, told the commission that the decision to add more students came down to money and the school would be in a tough financial

position without the increase, according to the March 7 commission meeting minutes. Ekin said the school would have asked permission before the increase if the school had known it was requirement.

Under Little Rock zoning rules, the city can't cap enrollment at a school in an area zoned for schools. But because the charter school wanted to build its facilities in a commercially zoned neighborhood, the conditional-use permit allows the commission to set some restrictions.

"This hearing is really an appeal of the Planning Commission decision, which has a limited scope. If they have new ideas on how to handle the traffic concerns, it may be that it would be sent back to the Planning Commission or it could be denied," Carpenter said.

Tony Wood, the deputy commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education, said the contention seemed to be between the city and the school. He said his department was not aware of the details of the dispute.

"I'm carefully stating my opinion that those are two separate issues," he said. "I don't think there is anything that would allow the state Board of Education decision [allowing the enrollment increase] to take precedence over the local zoning issues."

State awards \$130 million to 92 districts (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Ninety-two Arkansas school districts, including the North Little Rock district in central Arkansas and the Bentonville district in Northwest Arkansas, will share in at least \$130.7 million in state aid in 2013-14 for school-construction projects.

The projects - approved Wednesday by the Commission for Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation - range from the installation of fire alarm systems, heating and air-conditioning systems and new roofs, to construction of building additions and schools.

The 15,000-student Bentonville district will receive the largest amount of state funding for a single project - \$15.44 million for the possible construction of a high school.

The 9,000-student North Little Rock School District, which is undertaking an unprecedented \$265.5 million capital-improvement program to reduce its 21 schools to 13 new or renovated campuses, sought \$56 million in state funding for the coming school year. The facilities commission approved just \$5.1 million for work at seven schools - including four new elementary campuses.

But the district is also to receive about \$20 million to be released after July 1 from the governor's General Improvement Fund. More than \$18 million of that is earmarked for renovation and new construction at the North Little Rock High-West Campus.

The commission's decision raised questions about whether the district will appeal, change its construction time frame or alter designs. But the district still plans to proceed with its multi-year, system wide capital-improvement plan.

In all, the Public School Academic Facilities Commission on Wednesday approved funding for 263 school projects statewide over the 2013-15 period. The state's share of those projects is \$212,288,294. Each district also must contribute to its overall projects.

Charles Stein, director of the state Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation Division, told the commission that not all of the building projects approved for year one can be funded in that year. Those first-year projects total \$186 million. There are 51 projects approved for year two of the funding cycle, and the state cost for those would be about \$26.4 million.

"There is good news, though," Stein said.

By combining the \$20 million from the General Improvement Fund and about \$65 million available for year two projects, there is enough projected funding to cover the state's share of all 263 state-approved projects over the two-year period, he said.

The state began providing funding for public school building costs after the Arkansas Supreme Court declared in 2002 that the state's public school system was inequitable and inadequate and, as a result, unconstitutional.

As part of the effort to remedy the inequities, state lawmakers established the Division for Academic Facilities in 2005. By 2015, the division will have distributed some \$800 million for school facilities, Arkansas Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell said. Kimbrell is the chairman of the Public School Academic Facilities Commission.

Through the Academic Facilities Partnership Program, districts can apply for state aid to repair roofs and ventilation systems, replace electrical systems, and build campuses and classroom additions. The projects fall into two categories: keeping students dry, safe and warm, and providing adequate space for instruction.

The state division ranks the proposed projects on the basis of the condition of existing buildings, the property values in a district and a district's projected enrollment. The state's share of the cost of an approved project varies from district to district depending on the district's "wealth index," which takes into account a district's local property wealth. Districts such as the Little

Rock and Pulaski County Special school districts - which have relatively high assessed property values and a high wealth index - are eligible for very little state funding for buildings, while other districts are eligible for far more.

The North Little Rock district, which is eligible for more than 40 percent of the cost of an approved building project from the state, had asked for about \$56 million for its district wide school-improvement program.

District leaders spent Wednesday afternoon assessing their school projects in light of the state's decisions.

"We got about \$26 million. That's certainly less than we expected," Superintendent Ken Kirspel said late Wednesday.

He and other district representatives want to meet with Stein and Stein's staff to get a better understanding of the division's recommendations for approved and disapproved funding for the district's projects.

The commission approved plans and first-year funding to replace Amboy, Boone Park, Lakewood and Glenview elementary schools. But the commission approved only \$617,698 in state aid per school, and the district had requested about \$4 million for each, Kirspel said.

The commission, acting on the recommendation of the division staff, also approved replacement schools for Meadow Park and Crestwood elementary schools, but no first-year state funding for those campuses.

The academic facilities division did not approve the North Little Rock district's plan for a new middle school on the site of the North Little Rock High School-East Campus, and Lakewood Middle School.

The middle-school project was one of 118 statewide not approved for any state funding by the facilities division.

"This certainly isn't going to kill the project," Kirspel said about the state's decisions. He did not rule out the possibility of appealing the decision.

"The [North Little Rock School] Board is fully committed to completing the project," he said. "We are going to look at our options. There are several things we can look at, either in the phasing or design of the buildings that could reduce the cost. But, our first step is to nail down with the division what the funding is going to be."

Anticipated state funding constitutes only a portion of the money for the North Little Rock program. The district also is relying on proceeds from a 7.4-mill tax increase approved by voters in February 2012 and on savings in district operating costs.

The Bentonville district, home of the state's largest high school, has not typically qualified for state partnership money for construction, said Sterling Ming, the district's executive director of finance.

"We anticipated and were very happy we would be approved for that amount," Ming said after the commission meeting, referring to the \$15.44 million.

The Bentonville School Board could begin discussing options for a second high school as soon as today, Ming said. A new school could cost as much as \$88 million, including athletic facilities.

Bentonville School District voters rejected a 6.7-mill tax increase in June to pay for a second high school, the renovation of the existing Bentonville High and other improvements.

The state partnership money will reduce the amount of money the district will have to ask voters to support, Ming said. Without the state partnership money, the voters would be asked to approve a property-tax increase of 3.51 mills to get the proposed work done. With the state partnership money and \$72 million from bonds, the district could build a second high school with a property tax increase of 2.91 mills.

The Bentonville School District had a wealth index of 74 percent this year.

"Our property assessments has gone down for three-straight years," Ming said. "We were able to qualify because of that."

Other building projects approved for funding by the commission Wednesday include \$4 million for a high school addition and \$4.7 million for an auditorium in the Bryant School District; \$5.7

million for a new middle school in the Brookland School District outside Jonesboro; and \$3.5 million for a new elementary school in the Greenbrier School District in Faulkner County.

Approved funding for other large projects include \$3.2 million for renovations to the junior high and \$2.8 million for the heating and air-conditioning system at the high school in the Helena-

West Helena School District; a total of \$5.3 million for a new elementary school in Melbourne; \$3 million for an addition to the high school in Prescott; and \$2.2 million for renovations to

Coleman Elementary School in the Watson Chapel School District in Pine Bluff.

In Prairie Grove, the cost of replacing an aging roof and rusty metal plumbing in a 1950s building is high enough that district officials plan to tear down the kindergarten-through-second-grade building and expand a building that now houses the district's third- and fourth-graders, Vol Woods, assistant superintendent in the 1,845-student district, said Wednesday.

The state commission approved \$957,344.62 for the Prairie Grove district to put toward the new primary-school building.

It also approved \$462,056.86 for the district to construct a small physical education building for use by kindergarten-through-second-grade pupils. The physical education building also would serve as a tornado shelter for the school and community.

Converting the intermediate school into a primary school will cost an estimated \$7.2 million, Woods said. The projected cost of a safe room is \$1.25 million.

"We'll have to pass a bond issue and get voters to agree to pay for the rest of it," Woods said of the state-approved funding of the projects.

Ex-school chief sees gun charges tossed (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

CONWAY - The prosecution dropped felony charges Wednesday against the former superintendent of the Guy-Perkins School District because of what the dismissal order called "insufficient evidence."

David Foy Westenhover, 49, was arrested and charged in January with at least one charge involving stolen guns. He was also charged with theft by receiving, a felony; aiding consummation of offense, a felony; and hindering apprehension or prosecution, a misdemeanor.

Judge Michael Maggio, ruling in Faulkner County Circuit Court, agreed to dismiss the charges during a hearing Wednesday. The order cited "insufficient evidence to proceed" with the case.

"A complete review of the facts in this case leads me to the conclusion that the evidence possessed by the state is insufficient to meet our burden of proof necessary to convict,"

Prosecuting Attorney Cody Hiland said in a statement.

Hiland has previously said firearms were the stolen property that Westenhover had in his possession.

Westenhover's attorney, Jack Lassiter, said his client "absolutely" maintains his innocence.

The school district placed Westenhover on paid administrative leave after the charges were filed, Lassiter said. Westenhover resigned effective at the end of the past school term.

Westenhover's son, Joshua David Westenhover, 24, remains charged with felony theft by receiving.

Asked about the son's case, Hiland said, "This decision will have zero impact" on that case.

Bullied Teen's Parent Pushes Bus Stop Safety (KLRT, Fox 16)

Video available at http://www.fox16.com/mostpopular/story/Bullied-Teens-Parent-Pushes-Bus-Stop-Safety/fUtm5i_wYEmEazy2oadJbA.csp

After seeing her daughter injured from a fight near the bus stop, one mom is pushing schools to do more to protect kids even when they're off of school property and on their way home.

A few feet from her Sherwood bus stop, 15-year-old Breyana Gatewood pointed to where she was assaulted just a few minutes from home.

"I was just walking and all of sudden she pulled my hair back and I fell to the ground," she says.

The Sylvan Hills student says someone threatening to beat her up on the bus ride home attacked her as soon as they stepped off.

"She got on top of me, she just started hitting me in the face," she adds.

The fight left her with a black eye, broken nose and frightened. Her mother was furious.

"I want them to take responsibility for children when they're on the bus, off the bus and until they make it to their homes," Shannon Gatewood says.

A spokesperson for the Pulaski County Special School District says they can't comment on specific cases but overall, the district is not responsible for students at the bus stop, only when they're riding the bus.

"My concern is safety, of not only my child but other children at school who are being bullied on a regular basis," Gatewood added.

Since the fight happened off campus, the district couldn't discipline the student. Now the perpetrator is walking the halls and continuing to stand at the same bus stop.

"There are strange girls waiting for her to get off the bus," Gatewood says.

Fearful something else may happen, the Gatewoods are sending Breyana out of state for the remainder of the school year, hoping she'll heal and feel safe.

"She's really coming along and healing in a good way," Gatewood says.

After spending two weeks too scared to go back, Breyana returned to Sylvan Hills Monday and the district assigned a resource officer to walk her to all of her classes. But since they couldn't guarantee that type of protection year round or on the school bus, her mother decided withdraw her from school Wednesday.

Sherwood police are investigating the assault.

ESL Achievement on the Rise in Springdale (KNWA, Fort Smith)

Video available at http://nwahomepage.com/fulltextfox?nxd_id=424232

A Northwest Arkansas School gaining new recognition for getting english as a second language learners up to speed with native speakers.

Imagine sitting in a classroom and not speaking the language, "We have 8,600 english learners in the city of Springdale," says Mary Bridgforth, the ESL Coordinator in Springdale.

Springdale has the largest number in the state, adding another layer of difficulty for kids in the classroom.

"Many times the students who are just coming in have very basic english skills."

So the district has been trying for years to get kids up to speed.

"We work with our teachers to make sure that they have strategies for helping students learn english at the same time as they're learning the new content."

But the new common core curriculum, with more complex reading, is just one of many bumps in the road.

"It is very difficult for teachers because in one classroom a teacher may have a special education, a gifted and talented student, and then varying levels of english learners," says Bridgforth.

But Springdale ESL Coordinator Mary Bridgforth says they're finally making headway.

"Our english learners are performing at the same level as our native english speaking students, so it's very exciting news for us."

After five years, the district has now achieved level 3 in the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives something they've never done before.

"It shows that our english learners are performing on par with our native english speakers and that's our goal," giving those students a fighting chance for success.

"We want our english learner students to be as successful as all of our other students so it's important for them to be able to read the same grade level text as native english speakers," says Bridgforth.

Ex-school employee gets probation (Van Buren County Democrat)

A former employee in the South Side-Bee Branch School District pleaded guilty Monday in Circuit Court to second-degree sexual assault.

Shawna Lynn Ward had been scheduled for trial this week, but instead she pleaded guilty to a lesser charge than the original first-degree sexual assault count, and was sentenced to 60 months probation.

Ward was one of three school employees in the county to be charged with sexual assault last spring. The other two, both men employed by the Clinton School District, pleaded guilty to sex-assault charges and were sentenced to prison.

Also in Circuit Judge Charles Clawson's courtroom Monday:

- Christopher Irby pleaded guilty to possession of drug paraphernalia-meth, and was sentenced to 48 months in the Arkansas Department of Correction.
- Vonda Moudy and Jimmy Moudy Sr., both charged with maintaining a drug premise and possession of drug paraphernalia-meth, waived their right to a speedy trial and were set for pre-trial on May 30. Vonda Moudy also is charged with endangering the welfare of a minor-third degree, while Jimmy Moudy faces the same charge, except first-degree instead of third-degree; both are Class D felonies.
- Penny Gaily Mahaney was sentenced to 36 months in the Department of Correction after pleading guilty to possession of drug paraphernalia-meth. Other drug charges were nol prossed.
- David C. Farwell Jr. was sentenced to 48 months probation for criminal mischief-first degree. Other charges, including a felony theft charge, were nol prossed.
- Sam Frank Walley was sentenced to 24 months in a regional correction facility after pleading guilty to possession of a controlled substance.
- A pre-trial date of May 30 was set for John Paul Maxwell, charged with rape.

- Convicted murderer Rodney Jones was rescheduled for court on May 30. He is alleging that his defense was inadequate. He has been denied a public defender.
 - Jerry Hausler has waived his right to a speedy trial and will be in court on May 30 to face charges including failure to register as a sex offender or report an address change.
 - Harvey Dale Brown, facing charges of manufacturing marijuana and simultaneous possession of drugs and firearms, will have a pre-trial hearing on June 25.
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NLR wants district to pay for school cops (North Little Rock Times)

The North Little Rock City Council on Monday adopted a resolution to ask the city school district for money to help finance the providing of resource officers.

The purpose of school resource officers is to provide enhanced security.

“For approximately 20 years, the city has provided (previously eight, now 5-6) resource officers during the nine-month school year for North Little Rock High School/East and West

Campus, Lakewood Middle School, Ridge Road Middle School, Poplar Street Middle School and North Little Rock (Argenta) Academy, at an annual cost of up to \$400,000 (based on 2008

actual figure),” reads the resolution. “Whereas with rising costs and reduced revenues, it is necessary that the city assess the costs of providing resource officers for the North Little Rock

School District and commence negotiations for reimbursement of the expense, or a portion thereof, by the school district to the city.”

Alderswoman Linda Robinson sponsored the legislation, saying the city needs help in providing the service.

“This is not to get rid of the public resource officers,” Robinson said. “This program has been around for 20 years and the city of North Little Rock has paid 100 percent.”

Robinson said the legislation would authorize Mayor Joe Smith to sit down with the school district and begin negotiations.

“This is due to rising costs and reduced revenues,” Robinson said. “North Little Rock is the only city in the state of Arkansas that is paying 100 percent of the cost for school resource officers.”

The resolution details several areas where the city has provided the school district financial support over the years, including:

- Funding for renovations and repairs to the track and field at the NLRHS West Campus;

- Financial aid toward the construction costs of a new training and concession facility at the high school's West stadium;
- Assistance for travel expenses incurred for student group activities/appearances;
- Funding for North Little Rock Television;
- Funding a portion of the cost for police officers at school events such as football, basketball, soccer, and activities such as graduations, dances, etc.;
- Submitting grant applications through the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department's Safe Routes to Schools Program for the benefit of the school district;
- Constructing sidewalk and drainage improvements at the following schools: Lakewood, Pike View, Poplar Street Middle School, Crestwood, Lakewood Elementary, Pike View, and North

Little Rock East Campus;

- Lobbying and legislative support for the school district on issues such as a waiver of state sales tax on supplies purchased for students at the beginning of the school year.

Robinson said she has had phone calls asking her why the city is paying the entire cost, saying some constituents have expressed the desire for more patrolmen on the streets.

Robinson said the city last October determined that over 60 percent of the city's budget goes toward uniformed officers with 30 percent earmarked for operating the rest of the city government.

"What I was told in October was if we increased anything in uniform officers we would have to move money from the 30 percent, which may result in layoffs for city employees," Robinson said.

Alderwoman Debi Ross seconded Robinson's motion to support the resolution, but added she does not want to do away with one resource officer.

"Our job in the city council is budgetary and we have to look at all of the money because it is the people's money," Ross said.

Alderman Bruce Foutch added, "We or the school district are under no obligation to make any changes with this resolution. We are asking to sit down, talk with the school district, and negotiate."

Alderwoman Beth White asked City Legal Counsel Matt Fleming if the resolution which change any portion of the current resource officer program. Fleming told White the resolution changes nothing with respect to the current program.

RHS hires Sheila Jacobs permanently (Courier News, Russellville)

The Russellville School District hired Sheila Jacobs as the new principal of Russellville High School during Monday night's school board meeting.

Jacobs will find the position a familiar one — she's has been the interim principal since early March after former principal Sammy Ussery resigned due to health issues. She had also worked as the school's assistant principal in the two months leading up to her hiring as interim principal.

"Being named principal of RHS is an opportunity and challenge to work in a wonderfully supportive community and make a positive difference in the lives of our students," Jacobs said. "I'm thrilled to be here and very grateful."

Jacobs has master's degrees in both English and curriculum administration from Arkansas Tech University, and has more than 20 years of experience in education, a decade of that in an administrative role.

She is an adjunct faculty at Arkansas Tech's Center for Leadership and Learning, and has served on the Arkansas Ethics Board and the National Curriculum Association Board.

The principal brings a wealth of ambition to the position, hoping to foster a student-centered environment that engages parents as co-educators.

"I want to build upon our culture of excellence and passion for students and their well-being," she said.

"I want RHS to be a place where parents feel as though they are genuine partners in education.

"We have outstanding teachers, and through an emphasis on leadership and learning, I want to build a thriving learning community."

Top ten high schools in Arkansas, United States (KTHV, Channel 11)

Video available at <http://www.thv11.com/news/education/261941/120/Top-ten-high-schools-in-Arkansas-United-States>

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (KTHV) - The U.S. News & World Report released the 2013 list of best high schools in the country.

No school in Arkansas made the top 100, but one trailed not too far behind; Haas Hall Academy in Fayetteville ranked at 115.

When it comes to Arkansas schools, the following are said to be the top ten in the state:

1. Haas Hall Academy (Fayetteville)
 2. Bentonville High School
 3. Rogers Heritage High School
 4. Kipp: Delta Collegiate High School (Helena)
 5. Greenbrier High School
 6. Valley Springs High School
 7. Rogers High School
 8. Eureka Springs High School
 9. Sheridan High School
 10. Heber Springs High School
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Sheridan teen wins top volunteer award for Ghana efforts (KTHV, Channel 11)

Video available at <http://www.thv11.com/news/education/261909/120/Sheridan-teen-wins-top-volunteer-award-for-Ghana-efforts>

SHERIDAN, Ark. (KTHV) -A High School Senior is getting national attention for her volunteering.

Tiffany Easter, 18, who is just weeks away from graduating high school, has made quite an impact on her peers at Sheridan High School.

Easter has been named "Arkansas' Top Youth Volunteer" for her efforts to raise money to free young girls from slavery in Africa. The summer after her Freshman year, Tiffany and her sister decided to help a mentor of theirs with her mission in Africa. Three years later, that work is paying off in a big way.

In fifth grade , Tiffany Easter said she was inspired to help others while on a mission to Mexico with her parents.

"I was able to get really connected with the kids, and that's kind of where it all started," she said.

That inspiration has carried on through her teen years.

In 2010, Tiffany learned about Trokosi slavery from a mentor who works with the young women in Africa. The women are sold to priests as sex slaves in Ghana. Moved by the plight of these women, Tiffany said she and her sister decided to raise money for their mentor's mission.

"Every slave is worth about \$200, and that \$200 saves the slave and all of her children, which is about 3 to 5 people on average. Since the first fundraiser went so well, we decided to keep doing it, and so far, we've raised \$7,000," she said proudly.

That money has liberated 60 women, and it was raised by selling silicone bracelets with the inscription "Beauty for Ashes" -- a phrase from the biblical book of Isaiah. Tiffany said they even sent a bracelet to their mentor in Africa.

"We ended up getting to send a bracelet to her, and she was able to show it to the women and say someone cares about you," she said.

Tiffany said what motivates her to volunteer is seeing the satisfaction on other people's faces.

"I'm so blessed. I have a house. I'm fed every night. I have good clothes and to be able to help someone else have that same thing is a really good feeling to have," she explained.

As the state's top youth volunteer, Tiffany encourages other teens to give back.

"In our society, we're so wrapped up in ourselves. What we want and I always want the next best thing, but there's people in the world that don't even have a meal," she said.

Tiffany is also an active member of her Schools Student Council and National Honor Society.

She will head to D.C. On May 4 to be recognized for her honor and have the chance to compete for the nation's top youth volunteer. Tiffany will attend Louisiana Tech University next Fall and has already made plans to continue her service work on campus.

She received a \$1,000 for becoming the state's top youth volunteer.

School wants to freshen memorial to WM3 victims (KTHV, Channel 11)

Video available at <http://www.thv11.com/news/education/261960/120/School-wants-to-freshen-memorial-to-WM3-victims>

WEST MEMPHIS, Ark. (AP) - The principal of the elementary school that three slain Cub Scouts attended would like to see a memorial spruced up before next month's 20th anniversary of the deaths.

Stevie Branch, Christopher Byers and Michael Moore attended Weaver Elementary School in West Memphis. Principal Sheila Grissom told The Jonesboro Sun that a gazebo at the site needs a face-lift, and she also would like to see 20 yellow rose bushes put in before the May 5 anniversary. Grissom has raised \$645 of the \$2,800 needed.

Three teenagers were convicted in the deaths. Two years ago, they were released after entering "Alford" pleas, which lets them profess their innocence while acknowledging the state may have enough evidence to convict them.

Mother speaks about son's sexual relationship with teacher (KATV, Channel 7)

Video available at <http://www.katv.com/story/22071848/mother-speaks-about-sons-sexual-relationship-with-teacher>

SHERIDAN -

A Sheridan eighth-grade teacher pled not guilty Wednesday to sexual assault charges stemming from a relationship with one of her students, but the child's mother tells us a different side of the story.

Stephanie Bradshaw, 29, remains on paid administrative leave from the middle school, which started in December.

Months of investigating accusations, as well as thousands of phone records, finally hit a head Wednesday in the initial court appearance for Bradshaw.

The teacher and cheer coach is charged with a Class A felony count of sexual assault for having sex with one of her former students for multiple years.

"I want her not to be able to do this to anyone else's family, to any else's child," said the boy's mother, who spoke to us under anonymity.

She told us it was a December call to the school that has since changed her life. It was in that meeting, that the principal and assistant principal told her about rumors around the school of the relationship. They then called her son in to see if they were true.

"He said, 'Yea it happened, it's been happening for almost two years,'" she describe to us.

According to the court affidavit the victim claims multiple times that Bradshaw would pick him up from his house and they would: "have sex in her bedroom, and she would take him back to his house in the early hours of the morning"

"He can tell you exactly what the inside of her house looks like," said the mother of the teenager, who is now 16. "He took her baby out of the car seat, put her in the crib, so that they could have sex."

There was also more going on than just physical interaction.

A deeper look into court affidavit states that more than 1,300 text messages were sent between the two, in a span of five months. The student also claims additional texts included nude images.

His mother told us she noticed the teacher was always very friendly, and commented her son often at football games. However, she never thought she needed to be concerned about one of his own teachers taking advantage of him.

"I did probably have some signs, but you know I'm not thinking about it, it's a teacher," she added.

"You don't think about that. Yea you hear it on the news all the time or you see it in movies, but you never think it's going to happen to you and your kids."

We spoke to Bradshaw by phone Wednesday, and she told us she's ready to clear her name, but would not speak on camera without her attorney permission first.

She remains free on bond and her next court date is set for the end of May.