

Casseri hopeful town hall session will further discussions in community

Continued from Page 1

the incident, the students involved, whether they've had past disciplinary issues. That's how we always treated it. So, there might be a menu of disciplinary consequences.

"We feel, based on what has come out of this incident, that we do need to be more consistent in our approach to these incidents. So, we're working on that, to get on the same page, and obviously that will be something we'll be talking about at the town hall - how we're going to be consistent in our ability to address that."

He went on to address the issue of racial equality at Lewiston-Porter and in the community as a whole.

"There is this feeling that somehow we don't address these issues, or that students are just allowed to go back out into the general population. ... The thing of it is, you know, it's a public school, and as I stated, depending on the nature of the incident and the student involved, whether they've had past incidents, we don't necessarily throw a student out of school, on the first occasion or the first incident," he said.

"We can't throw a student out. We can remove a child from the school, but as long as they live in the school system, we have to educate them - whether they're suspended or not suspended. That is the case, and certainly as these incidents have arose, whether there's a racial slurs, or calling kids out because of gender issues or disability issues, they're always addressed when they're brought to our attention. I can absolutely assure you of that.

"But we do recognize that we need to be more consistent. And we need to be more communicative. Regularly communicative, with our student body, about how hurtful this can be. And that when these words are used, and these behaviors are at another person, they're very, very hurtful. And they cause great harm to other people."

As to how he hopes to address this issue at the town hall meeting, Casseri said, "I can only focus on what I have control over. And that's the school. And the students. We have 2,000 students here that represent a cross section of our community. So, to the

extent that any conversation that we develop around this issue will help in any way to extend into the community, well, that would be wonderful if that's the case.

"The unfortunate thing is that incidents of bullying, and harassment, even harassment with racial overtones, it happens all over our country. It's so unfortunate that here we are in 2022 and we're still grappling with this issue."

"What I have control over is Lewiston-Porter," he continued. "And the difference that I can hopefully make with my administrative team, my teachers, working with our students is to make things better here at Lewiston-Porter. And that's our goal."

Noting the presence of Lewiston Police on the campus, Casseri said, "I think we're one of the safest schools in the country. Every morning, we have two police officers here, all day long; they're patrolling our campus. We don't have a SRO, per se; they're hired by us as security officers."

"They're outstanding," Casseri said as to the police response on this incident. "The Lewiston Police did a marvelous job investigating this issue. They were on it immediately. They quickly determined that a false (student) account had been made, and were able to quickly shift the focus from the student who, unfortunately, had the account made in their name, to the actual individuals involved, based on IP addresses, and cell phone towers, things like that.

"I was very, very impressed with the work of the Lewiston Police."

He said the town hall session will focus on the issue of student behavior in schools and ways to better address it.

"We have a speaker coming; we'll kick it off with that speaker

who has some expertise in this area, allow her to kind of set the stage (for discussion). Where this problem lies within schools," Casseri said. "And then we'll have each of the administrative team talk a little bit about what they're seeing in their schools, and how it's addressed, what we're doing.

"And finally, we're going to have an open mic, to just listen to the community. (The forum) will be open to the entire community.

"I understand there could be some difficult, very emotional (comments, reactions).

"Here, we have four kids that are now suspended, two are being criminally charged, the others are being adjudicated under education law. And there's going to be significant consequences for this behavior."

Casseri said he has had discussions with the parents of the students.

"To a certain degree, they're involved in the process, yes. I can tell that all of the parents have been very supportive of their children," he said.

As to what he hopes achieve in the community from the town hall session, Casseri said, "I know, for myself, having been at Lewiston-Porter since 2005, I very much love this place. And I've put my heart, my soul, my life into this. And so it's very (personal) ... given my past career working in urban environments and working with diverse faculties and staffs and student bodies.

"This is very troubling to me, because I find it so abhorrent, that in this day and age, students would be calling out other students because of the color of their skin. And yet at the same time, I'm the superintendent of this school system, and I have to take responsibility that it's happening. And I have to try my

best to work with my staff and students and families to move beyond it, to help heal it."

Casseri said he has reached out to the mother of the student victim and takes empathy with her on this situation. He expressed hope the dialogue continues.

"We have tried to reach out to her; hopefully she will be a part of the conversation," he said. "I do hope that we will be able to have continued dialogue with her. I recognize the fact that this was a difficult situation, particularly when her son was initially blamed, implicated, because his name was used in this fake account. So, I can understand her being very, very upset.

"And I can also understand her being upset if that derogatory, racially motivated language was used towards her son. I apologize to her and her family, profusely, and hope that through this process we can find a path for them as well."

Casseri closed by stating he has had complaints by other members of the Lew-Port community on this issue and stressed his desire to work better and get this addressed.

"It appears to be that way; I would have felt that it was an isolated incident. (But), as a result of that mom putting out the article, there were others who responded to her article, her post on Facebook," he said. "And also I received probably six or seven emails that other families of students of color have experienced on this sort of behavior.

"It's too bad, and that's why obviously we're continuing the conversation (here). Not just as reaction to this incident but because it's the right thing to do.

"I just hope that we can learn and grow from this very difficult situation."

WHITE CHAPEL MEMORIAL PARK
3210 Niagara Falls Blvd. • Amherst • 716-692-5353

White Chapel Memorial Park is Western New York's Finest Burial Park
IT IS A NON-SECTARIAN CEMETERY AND OPEN TO EVERYONE

There are only a few cemeteries as unique as our open, picturesque, landscaped memorial park. The feeling is majestic and peaceful as you traverse through this serene setting without the obstruction of raised memorials.

10% SINGLE GRAVESITE OFF With this ad. Expires 3/31/22

50% OFF BUY ONE GRAVESITE, GET THE 2ND ADJACENT SITE OFF With this ad. Expires 3/31/22

★ VETERANS SECTION ★

wcmp3210.com • wcmp3210@aol.com
OFFICE: M-F 9am-Noon & 12:30-4; Sat. By Appt. Only • PARK: May 1 - Sept. 30 8am-8pm; Oct. 1 - Apr. 30 8am-5pm

THE MARKET IN THE SQUARE
535 Division St. Twin City Highway
North Tonawanda • 693-2802
OPEN DAILY! **MON - SAT: 7AM - 8:30PM**
SUN 7AM - 7PM

VISIT US ON THE WEB FOR OUR WEEKLY SPECIALS
themarketinthesquare.com

LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & INDEPENDENTLY OPERATED

HELP WANTED

Classified Coordinator/Designer
Niagara Frontier Publications has an opening for a qualified individual to fill the position of a Part-time Classified Coordinator. Duties will include answering classifieds calls, writing orders and typing. Assisting design department with ad design if needed. Good typing, spelling, grammar, organizational and phone skills are essential. Knowledge of InDesign is helpful but not necessary. NFP is willing to train the right person.

Please send resume to:
Niagara Frontier Publications
1859 Whitehaven Road
Grand Island, NY 14072
or E-mail resume to: HR@wnypapers.com



Tuscarora Nation prohibits cannabis industry

The Tuscarora Nation Council announced has decided to prohibit all cannabis industry activities on its Tuscarora Nation Territory.

In a release, it said, "Recently the people of the Tuscarora Nation considered the creation of a cannabis industry on the Tuscarora Nation Territory. After hearing the concerns of the Tusca-

rorra people, the council decided to prohibit all cannabis activity, including but not limited to transportation, sale and consumption, on Tuscarora territories.

"This process of self-determination can only be conducted by the Tuscarora Nation. Thus, individuals cannot invoke sovereignty without the informed consent of

the Nation. Therefore, all persons are prohibited from entering the territory of the Tuscarora Nation with the intention of participating in any illegal commerce, including cannabis.

"All activities involved with any prohibited commerce are considered a violation of Tuscarora Nation law. Sovereign immunity is held by the Tuscarora Nation, not by individuals."

Get Connected & visit wnypapers.com
Local News, Stories, Classifieds, Coupons,
SERVICE DIRECTORY Plus Exclusive PHOTOS, VIDEOS & MORE

LEWISTON-PORTER CHURCH DIRECTORY

Lutheran Church of the Messiah

Pastor Timothy Anas

915 Oneida Street, Lewiston

Phone: 716-754-4944 Fax: 716-754-0903

www.messiahlewiston.org

Come worship with us at 8:15am and 10:00am

Coffee and Sunday School Hour at 9:00am

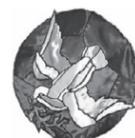
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

400 Ridge Street, Lewiston

716-754-4591 • www.splewiston.org

Announces Change in Service Day and Time
starting February 6, 2022

Worship and Holy Communion Sunday 9am



SHARE YOUR MESSAGE CALL US AT 716-773-7676



The paper industry plants more than it harvests and today there are 25% more trees in the developed world than in 1900. Paper is biodegradable, renewable, and sustainable. Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs while forestry plantations provide clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat and carbon storage. A decline in the demand for paper products risks a decline in sustainable managed re-growth forests. Use print, it is tangible, it is effective in getting your message across and when recycled it will come back to us as paper or board. In 1992 there was 360% more wood in the forest than in 1920. 60% of paper today is recycled compared to 18% of electronic devices. Reading a newspaper everyday spends 20% less carbon-dioxide than reading an online news source for 30 minutes a day.