



# The Elizabethtown Advocate

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## Drug Expulsions Cause Concern At School Board

Elizabethtown Area School District students should not face non-accusatory expulsions for any violation of drug policy, school board members said.

Instead, a subcommittee will be formed led by school board member Louisa Clark to come up with a less rigid policy.

Currently, a student who is found to be in possession of or under the influence of illegal drugs is suspended and the student's parents are offered the chance to go before the school board to prevent the student from being expelled.

However, parents routinely waive that hearing. The school board is then told that the hearing was waived and votes to expel the student, who is identified only by number at a school board meeting.

Clark said at the school board workshop meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 8, that this procedure provides board members with very little information.

"I have no idea what the background is," Clark said. She said she has no idea what other problems the student has or what extenuating circumstances there may be.

"There should be a punishment, but it should not be as harsh as is outlined here," Clark said.

Board member Kay Andrus said she was concerned that there seems to be little difference in punishment between minor offenses and major ones such as selling marijuana.

"This seems too simplistic for all the variations that can happen," Andrus said.

Board President Jamie Rowley, who has served on the school board more than a decade, said that he remembers how violations were handled before the current policy was in place. He said

in one case a student who was suspected of being under the influence of drugs was suspended for 10 days, then admitted back into the regular school program, but was required to attend a 10-week evening program on drug and alcohol education.

Rowley said that in addition to being a punishment, "it also became a learning experience." He said the punishment is "certainly severe because it's a commitment to do that," but said it is not as drastic as expulsion.

Rowley also said that in the adult world, a commercial driver who fails a government-mandated random drug test cannot be fired for that. Instead, the law requires that the driver be given treatment, Rowley said, adding that he finds it ironic that the school district would expect students in a similar situation.

Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Richard Schwarzman said that is not a good analogy because the school district is not telling expelled students that their obligation is over.

"We're not kicking them out of school. We're providing them with an alternative placement," Schwarzman said.

But school board members said putting someone in an alternative school carries a stigma and is a major punishment.

Board Vice President Terry Seiders said he does not want to see students expelled, but that he fears lighter punishments might make students conclude that the consequences for breaking the rules will be minimal. He said he would like to see parents taking greater responsibility.

"I'm really frustrated that it gets dumped on us as the school board to be the parent," Seiders said.

### Cornerstone Phase Two Opening



Cornerstone Community Ministries, a Christian youth center near the Elizabethtown train station, has completed the second phase of its renovation project. Cornerstone held an opening ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 6, to mark the occasion. The skateboarding and basketball area were renovated as part of the second phase of construction that converted a former warehouse into a youth center. It provides a safe place to go after school, recreational opportunities, homework help and Christian religious education.

## Lack of Nitrogen Discharge From Borough Sewage Plant Means Chance to Make Money

The Elizabethtown Borough sewage treatment plant discharges considerably less nitrogen into the water than it is permitted to – and that means money for the borough.

The borough has approved the sale of 21,993 nitrogen abatement credits to the city of Harrisburg at \$5.10 per credit, which means more than \$100,000 for the borough. The sale was discussed at the Borough Council work session on Thursday, Nov. 3.

Borough Manager Keri Ryan said in a later interview that the borough's permit from the state allows it to discharge a certain amount of nitrogen and phosphorus treatments.

"We were well within those limits," Ryan said. Because of that, the borough can sell credits to someone else whose discharge

exceeds the limits, Ryan said.

In that case, the buyer is another municipality that is using the credits for a sewage plant that exceeds the discharge limits. But the credits could also be sold to a private business, such as a farm or factory that is discharging nitrogen nutrients into the water.

Also discussed at the meeting was an effort to help property owners find restrictions that could stand in the way of home improvement projects. At an earlier council meeting, property owners protested that they were being told they would have to remove shrubs and a fence they had placed in an easement. The homeowners said they had acted in good faith and the one who had built a fence noted that he had gotten a building

permit from the borough.

Now the borough has planned a reference to a county website, [locustandosh.com](http://locustandosh.com), which allows people to look up their deeds and find any restrictions on building.

"It's to give the residents and property owners another resource to go to," Ryan said.

Also, Ryan said construction continues on the College Avenue project. The question that nearly everybody is asking is when people will be able to drive over the new bridge that will carry College Avenue over Coney Creek.

"It's very difficult for me to say when that will be," Ryan said. Among other things, weather affects the construction schedule. But it is not expected to open to traffic until sometime in 2012.

## Historic Pa. Signs Being Restored, Re-Erected

Elizabethtown's historic Keystone Markers are on their way to restoration.

Originally a program of PennDOT's predecessor, the Pennsylvania Department of Highways, the keystone markers were once found at multiple entrances to most Pennsylvania towns, as well as trails, rivers, creeks, etc. Tens of thousands of the markers once dotted the Pennsylvania landscape, solidifying Pennsylvania's reputation as "The Keystone State." Today, a precious few remain. A list of known markers can be found at [www.keystonemarkers.org](http://www.keystonemarkers.org).

Elizabethtown has found three of its four original markers. Two were still located in the borough, one erected and the other stored in a maintenance shed.

"We knew that the borough was undertaking to re-erect its remaining two markers, and that a third still existed but needed restoration," said Nathaniel Guast, president of the Keystone Marker Trust, a non-profit dedicated to restoring and re-installing the markers.



Century-old cast iron signs like this one are being restored and should be re-installed by spring at Elizabethtown.

"Thanks to the generosity of Ron and Denise Helm, local business owners, we were able to locate the three markers again," said Guast. On Nov. 3, the missing marker was moved for restoration and will be re-erected in its historic location.

"Products of a time when Pennsylvania led the nation in technological innovation and transportation, these now century-old cast iron markers celebrated Pennsylvania and helped forge its identity as the Keystone in its historic location.

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"The Helm's and the people of Elizabethtown should be applauded for taking the initiative to restore their markers," Guast said. "This kind of community re-investment is a good sign for our future."

The Keystone Marker Trust is looking for additional volun-

## Bear Creek Event Rescheduled

The Bear Creek School dedication ceremony and open house, which was first scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 30, but postponed due to a freak snowstorm that caused widespread power outages, has been rescheduled for Sunday, Nov. 20, at 2 p.m.

The public is invited to attend the dedication ceremony and take part in guided tours of the school located at 1459 Shaffel Road, Elizabethtown, immediately following the ceremony as part of the open house. Light refreshments will also be served.

The school opened for students in September. It currently serves over 900 students district-wide in grades 4-8. The facility was built on the 11.8 acre district-owned Bear Creek Farm in Mount Joy Township. With the opening of the school, classroom capacity issues at all district-run schools were immediately improved.

"We are very excited and pleased to invite the greater Elizabethtown community to this special celebration of our newest school building," said Jamie Rowley, school board president. "The opening of this beautiful facility is an exciting time for our students, parents, teachers, staff,

board members, and community, and would not be possible without their tremendous support."

School district officials including Rowley, school board vice president Terry Seiders, and Superintendent Michele Bullett, along with students, parents, faculty and support staff members, and construction partners will participate in the dedication ceremony. Anyone who wants more information may contact Troy Pottner, director of school and community information for the district, by e-mail at [tryp.pottner@elizabethschools.org](mailto:tryp.pottner@elizabethschools.org) or by phone at 717-367-1523.

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## Disaster Relief Deadline Now Dec. 14

Pennsylvanians now have an additional month to register for disaster aid.

At the request of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has extended the registration deadline for anyone who suffered damage from Hurricane Irene and/or Tropical Storm Lee from Monday, Nov. 14, to Wednesday, Dec. 14.

"We've extended the registration deadline because the number of new registrations remains high and we want to ensure that everyone who needs to register and has not yet done so has the oppor-

portunity to register for assistance," FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Thomas J. McCall said. "Our goal is to ensure that all eligible home and life survivors have ample time to seek disaster aid."

Disaster assistance to individuals could include grants to help pay for temporary housing needs, essential home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance or other sources. Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration are also available for homeowners, renters and business owners to re-

pair or replace real or personal property.

People can register with FEMA by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3562) or visiting [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov).

Information to have ready when registering with FEMA includes the address of the damaged property, names of members of the household, a general description of the damage, the Social Security number of any family member living in the home, the extent of insurance coverage and contact information needed to expedite the process.