

MES digs out structure

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Students, Scouts, parents and teachers showed up to Monmouth Elementary School on Friday morning, dodging the rain to dig out one of three play structures.

"I'm going to be sore tomorrow!" MES Principal Kim Seidel said as she hauled another load of wet bark and dirt from the playground.

The outdoor structures at MES have been flooded for most of the school year, Seidel said.

"Teachers have said how much of a struggle it's been to come outside and play," she said. "I had parents ask about it."

After talking with people in the district office and on the parent-teacher group, Seidel scheduled a work day on Friday to get the playground in playing order.

Kyleah Medel and Kaily Jackson, both MES third-graders, both MES third-graders, shoveled wet bark from around the slide into a waiting wheelbarrow.

"I'm here because I'm wanting to help the school get the old bark chips out and put the new ones in," Kyleah said.

The playground was so bad, caution tape warned people not to venture onto the structure, Kyleah said.

"It was really muddy," she noted.

"It's kind of like quicksand because if you step on it, it kind of sucks you in," Kaily added.

Two tractors were there to help. One of them, Kyleah's dad was driving.

"This is a lot of dirt," she said. "So we're going to have to work."

The second tractor was from someone in the community, Seidel said. It arrived Thursday night and got a head start scooping out the muddy mess.

Board member Steve Moser directed a group of Boy Scouts while he shoveled.

"What they have here is a drainage issue," he said. "They thought it would drain into the field. The idea is that it needs to be raised up a little so the water can get out."



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Kyleah Medel and Kaily Jackson, third-graders at Monmouth Elementary School, help dig out the wet bark and mud around the playground on Friday morning.

People worked all morning removing the old material before putting down a layer of river rock. On top of that went some garden cloth, topped with fresh bark.

Two more areas need attention, but Seidel said she will be happy that children will come back from Spring Break with at least one area to get some fresh air and exercise.



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Boy Scouts David Lutz and Sean Stephson help fix the drainage at one of the playgrounds at MES on Friday.

DSD sees uptick in attendance

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer



DALLAS — Attendance rates in Dallas School District are up compared to the same time last year in all schools except for one.

Dallas High School, LaCreole Middle School, Oakdale and Lyle elementary schools all had higher attendance percentages as of Monday than on the same date last year.

Whitworth Elementary School fell just a bit, from 94.11 percent to 94.02 percent.

All schools consistently exceed the state standard of 92 percent attendance rate, said Steve Martinelli, director of instructional services.

Martinelli said attendance improvement at the elementary level is largely due to the implementation of "positive behavior support systems," which reinforces good behavior. Full-day kindergarten, which began this school year, also has increased attendance rates at both schools, moving from 93.76 percent to 94.02 percent at Oakdale and 92.35 percent to 94.21 percent at Lyle.

At the middle school, adding back electives has helped.

"Students are connecting to school and enjoying their course selections," Martinelli said.

At Dallas High School, a mentoring program is helping keep students in class.

"The mentor program has had an impact giving some of our at-risk students a positive adult to connect with at school," Martinelli said.

Attendance by percentage

	March 2016	March 2015
Dallas High School	95.41	95.22
LaCreole Middle School	94.16	93.86
Whitworth Elementary School	94.02	94.11
Oakdale Elementary School	94.45	93.51
Lyle Elementary School	94.75	93.62

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