

Dallas high could add new programs

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Of people who do not finish high school, 80 percent say that they didn't see how the skills they were learning in school would help them after graduation.

Tim Ray, Dallas School District's career and technical education coordinator, presented that statistic at a joint meeting between the Dallas City Council and Dallas School Board on March 13.

"They didn't connect with what they were being taught in school," he said. "They didn't see how it was going to relate to them after they left."

He thinks successful CTE programs can be a remedy to that.

"High school students involved in CTE are more engaged, perform better and graduate at higher rates," Ray said.

He said nationwide, students in CTE programs graduated at 93 percent. Their counterparts not participating in a program graduated at 80 percent. In Oregon, the difference is bigger, 91 percent for CTE students compared to 75 percent who were not.

Dallas High School has only two accredited programs — meaning they offer enough classes for two credits — agricultural science, and technology and engineering. Within those two areas, the graduation rate is 94 percent.

"That is my challenge to myself: To increase those opportunities for students to find their passion or — just as importantly — figure out what they don't want to do," Ray said.

A former agricultural teacher in Dallas, Ray has returned to lead the district's effort to develop CTE programs.

Ray said Dallas could easily develop up to four more areas of study in addition to its accredited agricultural science, and technology and engineering programs. The district is halfway to developing an information and communication technology program.

He said the school could add education, health science, and culinary arts.

"That's the low-hanging fruit that I think we can get to fairly easily," Ray said. "The classes are there, we have teachers teaching them. It's a matter of organizing them and getting some context around them."

Other options, though they would require more planning, are business and manufacturing.

Ray said modern CTE programs are not the vocational courses of yesteryear. They are open to all students and offer options for jobs out of high school or continuing education.

For that reason, the programs at high schools need to meet standards of those offered at community colleges.

Making sure programs teach skills needed by local industry is key, Ray said. The district will ask business owners and professionals to work on committees designing the programs.

"I believe this will work. I can't do it by myself. This has to be a community effort," Ray said.

"If we start producing skilled workers, guess what will come? I believe skilled jobs will come. Skilled jobs pay well."



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Lilly Gallagher's Eggeception shows promise when it comes to keeping her egg safe from the 20-story free fall.

Physics helps keep eggs safe

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Lilly Gallagher was fairly confident that her contraption would keep her egg from breaking.

Her project was an open cardboard box with support tape wrapped around the center of each edge. In the middle, her egg was suspended with tights — nothing cushioning the cargo.

But once the Polk County Fire District No. 1's ladder truck — 20 stories high — was set, Gallagher had a twinge of doubt.

"I'm looking how far that is up, and it just seems impossible," she said.

Gallagher is a senior at Central High School in Greg Craven's physics class. The egg drop is a project to test students' knowledge of physics.

"We had to abide by a lot of different parameters," Gallagher said. "For exam-



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Some eggs survived the giant drop, others didn't.

ple, it couldn't be a solid box because we didn't want to have a lot of drag."

Unlike an egg drop project in eighth grade, the one in high school is not about slowing the egg down, Craven said.

"The physics we've been studying is being able to manage, you've got some-

thing going and then you want it to stop," he said. "How do you make that happen without destroying the thing?"

Students built their contraptions with the idea of a fast fall, followed by a slow stop, Craven said.

"They want to manage it so that, after the impact starts, the slowing down

happens over a long period of time, because that's the small force that doesn't break the egg."

The egg itself could be wrapped in a container no larger than a liter, and surrounded with a cushion such as foam or padding. Because of the spectacular mess it makes, peanut butter and Jello were off this year's list of approved padding, Craven said.

The project caps the class' study on momentum, he added.

"It's fun because I want my kids to learn in different ways, and this is different than sitting there and taking in information or discussion or reading," Craven said. "This is a chance for them to problem solve, and I think that really is a life skill, which is why I do this."

Gallagher said she hoped the outer part of her contraption would act as crumple zones found on cars.

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