

Enterprise

Park Rapids

Saturday, May 4, 2019

www.parkrapidsenterprise.com

For home delivery,
call (218) 732-3364
\$1.25

Official newspaper for Hubbard County



Superintendent Bagstad responds to bullying concerns

The following is a May 2 press release from Lance Bagstad, superintendent of Park Rapids Area Schools.

As Superintendent of Schools at Park Rapids Area Schools, I want to address concerns raised recently regarding the culture and climate for students within our district. Since there are strict state and federal data privacy rules that prohibit me from discussing individual student matters, I will focus on the “big picture.”

Some have raised the question of whether there is a culture of student “bullying” within our district. This is a fair question for students, parents

and the community to ask. I do not believe we have such a culture, but I acknowledge that there are individual student situations and conflicts amongst students that arise from time-to-time, as I think you will find in most school districts. I strongly believe that we must continually work on these issues. No student should have to endure bullying, harassment, discrimination or retaliation at school.

At times children make decisions that I wish they had not, treat each other poorly or violate school behavioral expectations.

BAGSTAD: Page A3

Mom says experience at Nevis School was ‘beyond heartbreaking’

By Lorie Skarpness
liskarpness@parkrapidsenterprise.com

Hailey Becker is a seventh grader at Nevis School. Her mom, Kara Norhagel Becker, said the same group of students have been bullying her daughter since kindergarten.

“It escalated to the point that Hailey took a string that she had in her backpack, put it around

her neck and was trying to choke herself on the bus in November last year,” Kara said. “She was suicidal.”

Hailey said what made her want to kill herself was that someone she thought was her friend joined in with other boys who had been bothering her for years and called her a bitch.

NEVIS: Page A2

By Shannon Geisen
sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com

On Monday, Valley News Live of Fargo reported how Brooklyn Partlow, a Century Middle School eighth grader, experienced bullying that escalated from name-calling and exclusion to students cutting her with a razor blade.

An anonymous whistleblower contacted the TV station, which was airing a “Battle Against Bullying Initiative.”

Brooklyn’s mother, Kristen, initially thought the TV reporter was contacting her in a professional capacity, since Kristen is active in helping the community become trauma-informed and more aware of adverse childhood experiences

(ACEs). Brooklyn “wanted to be a voice for other people going through this,” so they did the interview, Kristen said.

“So much has unfolded in the past week,” she continued.

Since the story aired, Kristen said mutilated photos of her daughter, “having blood coming out of her mouth,” are being circulated. On Tuesday, they went to gather Brooklyn’s belongings from the school after-hours because she was warned they were going to be vandalized.

“It’s been so horrible. I still hope there can be some policy or reform,” Kristen said. “I was thinking we could do something positive from this. We could have a bullying policy that is actually a policy — not just a definition of

bullying and ‘zero tolerance’ in writing. So what does that mean? Nothing because everything is discretionary.”

After Brooklyn was cut, “I was told the consequence was talking it out. As a matter of fact, he never had to say he was sorry. It was even more of a joke,” Kristen said, with the boy telling Brooklyn, “You’re a loser, Brooklyn. Nothing that you ever do will ever stop me.”

‘Absolutely devastated’
Brooklyn used to love going to school.

“Brooklyn absolutely felt like she was at the top of the world at that school since first grade. I never would’ve dreamt this would happen. She loved every single

BREAKING: Page A5

Three sisters home-schooled after decade of school bullying



The Markert sisters — fourth grader Kendyl, 10; 12th grader Kinsey, 17; and eighth grader Kamryn, 14 — do their school work at home after the toll of 10 years of bullying led parents Jason and Hanna to pull them out of Park Rapids Area Schools.

By Robin Fish
rfish@parkrapidsenterprise.com

Jason and Hanna Markert of Park Rapids started to home-school all three of their daughters this year after seeing a dangerous decline in their grades, behavior and health.

According to Kinsey, 17; Kamryn, 14; and Kendyl, 10, school bullying played a role — including cyber threats, verbal abuse and physical and sexual assault by other students — while interventions by school staff were less than helpful.

“A faculty member assaulted one of my children, leaving marks on her,” said Hannah. “A faculty member called my child a

SISTERS: Page A5

SPORTS

Success in the pool
Park Rapids swimming, diving teams once again lived up to high expectations — Page B1



OUTDOORS

Gearing up for fishing opener
Outdoors columnist Gary Korsgaden shares tips for catching the coveted walleye — Page B7



ONLINE

Now playing
Click on “Marketplace” for videos, special deals and a local business directory.



CONTACT US

Park Rapids Enterprise
General info (218) 732-3364
Fax (218) 732-8757

203 Henrietta Ave. N
Park Rapids, MN 56470



OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS

MANUFACTURED HOMES

Double Wide • Single Wide • Park Models
Primary & Secondary Residence

Offer of credit is subject to credit approval. Some restrictions may apply. FDIC

• Fannie Mae financing available on double wide homes as primary or secondary residences
• In-house financing options available for single wide homes and park models
• Loans underwritten, approved and serviced by Northview Bank
• Several fixed rate options available

NORTHVIEW BANK

1-800-450-7575
northviewbank.com

Askov • Barnum • Cromwell • Deer River
Finlayson • Floodwood • Grand Rapids • Hinckley • Kerrick
Park Rapids • Sandstone • Willow River