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Different schools of thought

East Lansing, MSU community members debate forthcoming closure of Red Cedar Elementary School

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Yalley Sackett, 8, grabbed his blue lunch box off the counter and packed his backpack. It was time to head to school.

He sat in the backseat of the car, looking out the window as his mom, Ella Sackett, drove him through MSU's campus to Red Cedar Elementary School, located at 1110 Narcissus Drive, last Friday.

Yalley Sackett has lived in East Lansing since 2006 when his family moved from Israel several years ago so his father could pursue a postdoctoral degree at MSU. He has attended Red Cedar — which is directly across the street from university property on Harrison Road — since kindergarten.

But by 2016, the school where the second grader began learning English will be no more, forcing many of the students who go there, including the children of MSU students and faculty, to relocate.

After enrollment numbers shifted toward the northern end of the East Lansing School District, board members and administration decided to close the elementary school and eventually repurpose it.

Liesel Carlson, co-president of the Red Cedar School Association, said a large portion of the student population at the school are MSU-affiliated — ranging from children of professors to graduate students. She said having the school so close to the university was benefit to both, and it



JACLYN MCNEAL/THE STATE NEWS

Red Cedar Elementary second grader Yalley Sackett, 8, brushes his teeth to get ready for school Friday at his house. Sackett is the youngest of the three Sackett children.

is disheartening to see it go. "I think it's really shocking," she said. "I think it's every school's dream to be located next to a university."

Closure of Red Cedar

On Jan. 23 the East Lansing School Board passed a resolution to formally announce that Red Cedar would be closing sometime before 2016 regardless of the outcome of the bond election. The decision to close Red Cedar was based on enrollment trends and census data, superin-

tendent David Chapin said. It has been met with some controversy, including a filed complaint against the district alleging the board's Sept. 26, 2011 decision to close the school discriminates against students based on race, color or national origin. Some board members claimed there wasn't enough notice of the school's closure.

East Lansing School Board President Rima Addiego said despite the discontent, the decision to close Red Cedar was made with the sup-

port of the community. "We have done our homework," Addiego said. "We have invited the public. They have spoken."

Now, Yalley Sackett and other students from Red Cedar Elementary are waiting for the community to vote on a \$63 million proposal to renovate and reconfigure five of the six elementary schools.

Still, members of the community feel there has been no educational justification for the school's closure.

Carlson said the entire

process and reasoning behind the school's closure has not been clear. "We've been given lots of reasons for why this school, but none of them have added up," Carlson said.

Superintendent David Chapin said he feels the conversation about Red Cedar and the bond proposal has moved away from the central issues of investment in elementary education, grade level reset

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MSU research continues to grow with \$18M award

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Officials are looking at continued growth in research dollars awarded to MSU thanks to an \$18 million increase compared to the previous fiscal year.

The university took in nearly \$439 million in research awards during fiscal year 2010-11, attributed to MSU's competitive faculty and their work, said J. Ian Gray, vice president for research and graduate studies.

Fiscal year 2009-10 brought in about \$421 million to the university, according to President Lou Anna K. Simon's State of the University Report and the Office of Planning and Budgets. MSU has been awarded more than \$375 million in funding each year since the 2006-07 fiscal year.

"Add them together, (and) we're establishing a framework for the university," Gray said. "This comes at a time when federal money is tighter."

Faculty and students are able to conduct research when they're properly funded, he said, adding major sources of funding are secured through the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy and others — including corporate, foundation and dwindling state support.

Funding does not come free, however, as efforts must be made to apply to grants, Gray said. But it starts with well-rounded faculty that include senior members with grants already achieved who can act as strong mentors of younger faculty to help push them for additional funding and research.

Karin Pfeiffer, an associate professor of kinesiology, said during her six years at MSU, her line of research has been measuring physical activity and determining ways to increase physical activity among children and adolescents.

Because of the obesity epidemic across the country, she said her work is necessary to help combat the issue.

"Even if we didn't have obesity issues, interventions to increase activity are important in terms of reducing risks ... of disease," Pfeiffer said. "If you can't measure (activity) very well, you don't know their impacts (to improve health)."

Like life, Pfeiffer said funding for her research has ebbed and flowed; there are good times and sometimes things don't go as planned.

She said she's been content with funding to conduct her research, but those levels might change depending on factors, including the federal and state government's resources and the number of people applying for a particular grant.

Robin Green, a biochemistry and biotechnology senior, currently works in a campus lab to study hydrogenases — enzymes that allow organisms to make hydrogen gas.

His lab's efforts might one day provide an answer to alternative energy, Green said.

"(Research) has been the staple of my undergraduate career," Green said.

"My life would not have a direction that it has now. I wouldn't be as excited to learn science and do science."

To watch a video about one family's connection to Red Cedar Elementary School, go to statenews.com/multimedia.

BASKETBALL

Spartans prepare to face Gophers

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One year ago, the MSU men's basketball team was in a much different position than it is now. With four games left in the regular season, the Spartans held a 15-11 record and were clinging to their NCAA Tournament hopes. They eventually made it to the Big Dance, but only after clawing and scrapping their way there.

This season, MSU's next opponent, Minnesota, finds itself in a similar predicament, fighting for a postseason berth. And while the No. 6 Spartans (22-5 overall, 11-3 Big Ten) will look to move one step closer to a Big Ten championship at 8:30 p.m. tonight at Williams Arena in Minneapolis, the Golden Gophers hope to add a marquee win to their tournament résumé.

It will be the second game in a row in which MSU will take on a borderline NCAA Tournament team after beating Purdue 76-62 Sunday in West Lafayette, Ind. And as the Spartans learned Sunday, when they trailed the Boilermakers at the half, teams playing for a chance to be included in March Madness can be tough to beat.

"I'd rather play a team that's not playing for (its tournament hopes)," head coach Tom Izzo said



DEREK BERGGREN/THE STATE NEWS

Head coach Tom Izzo reacts favorably as the Spartans hold the lead over Wisconsin near the end of the basketball game Feb. 16 at Breslin Center. The Spartans beat Wisconsin with a final score of 69-55.

COURT

Evidence disputed at pretrial for Marion Jr.

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At the pretrial for David Marion Jr. in Lansing's 30th Circuit today, possible physical evidence against Marion was argued to be invalid by his lawyer.

Marion is on trial for allegedly murdering Owen Goodenow, 23, and then-MSU student Darren Brown, 18, in March 2010 in the process of stealing a safe containing about a pound of marijuana and \$1,250 in cash. Marion's alleged co-conspirator Benjamin French was sentenced to life in prison without parole on Jan. 25 after being found guilty of the same charges.

During the pretrial, Marion's attorney Stacia Buchanan questioned the evidence presented by Ingham County Assistant Prosecutor Bill Crino.

Buchanan argued Marion should have read his Miranda rights prior to his initial interview.

Michigan State Police first contacted Marion for questioning after going through Goodenow's phone records in September 2010. They saw Marion on the days between 2 and 2:30 p.m. on the days of the murders

— close to the time the murders occurred.

Michigan State Police Detective Sgt. Michael Foley set up the initial interview with Marion, who was staying at his mother's house in Dolton, Ill.

Police escorted him to an FBI office about 20 minutes away in Orland Park, Ill.

When Foley and Detective Sgt. Frank Marx first questioned Marion on Sept. 14, 2010, Foley said Marion was not yet a suspect in the killings of Brown and Goodenow.

But after the questioning began, Foley said it was apparent Marion was lying about details involving his relationship with the victims.

"We came in contact with a lot of people who smoked and sold marijuana," Foley said of many of the other witnesses interviewed about the deaths. "We saw this in David Marion Jr. not wanting to say he smoked marijuana or sold it on a regular basis."

At first, Foley reassured Marion he would be leaving the office after the inter-

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