

School alums to be alerted to cancer probe

By ANTONIO M. PRADO
Star-Gazette

Elmira City School District officials are calling on community volunteers to help assemble mailing lists of every Southside High School graduating class since 1980 so the district can inform alumni about the ongoing cancer investigation.

Superintendent Laura E. Sherwood said Thursday that the district will begin by sending a summary of the investigation to more recent graduates and will work back to the class of 1980, the first class to graduate from the school at 777 S. Main St. District officials will work with the state Department of Health to assemble the report.

"It'll be a brief, easy-to-read, concise report on what's been happening at Southside High School, and we'll ask people to contact the Department of Health with regard to concern over their health," Sherwood said. Southside alumni also will be asked to contact former classmates as another way of getting help finding everyone.

Southside sits on property that was home to manufacturing facilities for more than 100 years. The state began investigating possible environmental hazards in April after parents raised concerns about a possibly elevated rate of cancer

CONCERN on the SOUTHSIDE

among current and former Southside students.

At a public meeting at the school Wednesday night, officials of the state Cancer Surveillance Program said they had confirmed 22 cases of cancer among current and former Southside students. The officials also said that although the soil around the school contains chemical contaminants, those contaminants pose no health threat.

School board Vice President Walter M. Badeau said the district also would ask Southside alumni who organize class reunions and anyone else in the community who has lists of class members to help them find everyone, whether they still live in the area or not.

As for current students and their parents, school officials will try to ease any lingering doubts that they may have in light of Wednesday's two-hour presentation at Southside High at which residents learned of the results of air and soil tests on the school grounds.

"We've been trying to get as much information as possible in order to have an intelligent discussion as to where to pro-

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Sun, Apr 14, 2019