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**Inside**      **School urged to call all who have walked its halls**

**Sports**



A moment of silence for Adam Petty

**CONCERN on the SOUTHSIDE**

■ Two teachers with cancer among group seeking survey of former workers, students.

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Elmira school district to survey everyone who has attended or worked at Southside High School since it opened 21 years ago.

The school district has encouraged people to report cancer cases to the Chemung County Health Department, but doesn't plan to conduct a survey itself because of confidentiality concerns.

"Health officials are the only ones who can legally ask for that information," said Deborah Pierce, school board president. Pierce said she will ask the board Tuesday night about the possibility of writing former students to urge them to contact the health department about their health or other concerns.

There is concern in the community that contaminated land might be a factor in a seemingly high cancer rate among current and former Southside students. Some people want the district to take action.

"The district needs to send a questionnaire out to all the graduates and faculty," said Ron Owens, a former art and photography teacher at Southside who retired in 1998 after 36 years with the district. "They would do it except they are afraid of what they'll find."

In 1997, doctors diagnosed thyroid cancer in Owens, who lives in West Elmira. He had surgery and follow-up treatment. He said he is now fine.

"You expect the old codgers, like us, to get (cancer)," said Owens, who is past 60. "I'm not going to make the assumption that the school is somehow associated with that, but I

See SOUTHSIDE/4A

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Driver for local

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