

Sexting...from Page 1A

sports, etc., to act as a deterrent to such behavior.

"It's a combination of everything, there's not one magic solution to this problem," said Hill. "But the first step is to admit you have a problem, put it out there, and get feedback from folks."

As for the athletics programs at Union County High, Brian Allison has decided to step down as athletic director to maximize his efforts as head football coach.

Given the choice between quitting coaching to devote all of his time as athletic director and continuing to coach with a renewed emphasis on team building, he chose the latter.

"I came into this as a football coach, and through the course of the years, the athletic director was something that I elected to and wanted to do and have enjoyed doing, but it just takes up so much time that I feel like it's hurting the football end of it," said Allison.

The High School will also be implementing mandatory parent meetings for kids looking to take part in extracurricular activities, which will allow educators to keep parents informed about potentially harmful student behaviors.

Overall, the school system is looking to concentrate its efforts on positively affecting student culture and character development, which

administrators feel confident will help with the problem.

"I feel that we have to hold students accountable, and we have to have clear expectations so that we can, and they need to know it," said Hussion. "So, I really think communication is the key, but holding them to the line with that is going to be the key as well, and then we move forward. It's painful to change culture. It's going to take time."

Also in the Feb. 19 meeting, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Paula Davenport alerted the board to the establishment of a hotline at 706-835-4357 to allow students to anonymously report potentially illicit behavior at the schools.



Union County Schools Police Officer Keith Lockwood detailing the problem of student sexting in the Feb. 19 BOE meeting. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Henderson...from Page 1A

caved in, I didn't know where I was, I didn't know what happened," said Henderson. "My wife was screaming at the top of her lungs, so I snapped out of it and I pushed the roof off of us. I was trying to protect my family – that's the only thing that was on my mind."

At first, they couldn't locate their daughter who had been in the bed with them, and they started to panic, thinking she was under the tree.

"It was the scariest thing I ever felt, like I'd lost my daughter," said Henderson.

Fortunately, they discovered that their daughter was OK, but they were all stuck. The tree had fallen onto Henderson's legs, spraining both of his ankles and pinning him to the bed.

When he was finally able to free himself, he kicked the AC unit out and jumped down to the ground, cracking his ribs on the unit before running to get help.

"The next door neighbors were a blessing, because they helped me get my family out of the house," said Henderson, who was thankful to learn that his two other children were fine on the other side of the mobile home.

"We're fortunate that my kids are OK," said Henderson. "That was my main worry. I knew my wife had my youngest daughter, but I couldn't even get to my son or my other daughter because we were stuck in a small place, an arm's reach of space, and we had to jump out the window."

The Union County Fire Department and Union General EMS quickly responded to the scene, lending medical support to the family and contacting the American Red Cross, which set them up with local lodging.

Management at the Blairsville Mobile Home Park is working to get another home ready for the family, with plans of scrapping the home previously occupied by the Hendersons.

Sadly, the Hendersons will have to start completely over with new belongings, as the accident caused irreparable harm to more than just the bedroom.

"We lost everything in our home due to mold," said Henderson. "Animals have moved into the trailer. We've lost everything. Now, my kids are having trouble sleeping at night."

"They're waking up in the middle of the night in cold sweats and screaming because they're looking up at the roof. They think the roof's going to fall. They're all sleeping in our bed with us. They're going to need counseling."

Looking ahead, the Hendersons are hoping to be moved into their next home soon, and Antonio said he's just happy that his family is alive and all in one piece.

Furthermore, they are extremely grateful to their neighbors, who have helped out in various ways since the start of their ordeal.

And while the accident was a nightmare for Antonio and his family, he said that they are closer than ever now since avoiding a tragedy.

"We've been praying a lot," said Henderson. "We really weren't a praying family much, we prayed once in a while, but we've been praying every night. It's bringing us closer, and we're trying to ease some of the feelings in our kids, because they're emotionally hurt."

The Hendersons have a GoFundMe set up to help the family cover the various costs associated with the fallen tree accident.

People can find the GoFundMe fundraiser page by searching the website for "Family in need of help Henderson," or by checking out Antonio Henderson's Facebook page.



This is an interior view of the bedroom after the fallen tree was cut up and removed by a neighbor of the Hendersons. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Justice...from Page 1A

"Just try to do your best and be sure you get enough rest to make sure that you feel like you are well prepared."

While Justice got into Kennesaw State, the financial plans did not work out completely, so she currently plans on pursuing a drafting degree at a Technical College before going after a degree in civil engineering.

"I want to go to Atlanta to hopefully open up my own engineering firm," said Justice. "Civil engineers generally use a lot of physics and math to determine what materials to use and where specific support beams should go to prevent the entire building from collapsing."

Justice selected Kim Perren as her STAR Teacher for the year, as Perren aided her throughout her high school goals and inspired her to pursue her dreams.

"From the second I came to Mountain Ed, she took me under her wing," said Justice. "We had conversations about things that were troubling me, and she was there for me emotionally as well as keeping me on the right track for graduation."

"She has taught me to not stress things as harshly as I did previously, and to make sure

that there is always going to be a way to work it out and it will work out eventually."

Perren is a counselor for Union County Middle School and MECHS, with 31 years of education experience.

"I became a counselor because I like helping kids, and I like to make sure they have what they need," said Perren. "And it's kind of sappy, but I like to make a difference."

Added Perren, "It was overwhelming to be selected as a STAR Teacher, and I'm grateful of her because it's a very kind thing for her to do."

Perren believes that Justice will get the chance to experience her dreams and life goals because of the hard work and dedication that she has already put into graduating MECHS.

"We would talk about things that would get her through some of her anxiety, and every single thing I asked her to try, she did it," said Perren. "She didn't want somebody else to fix what was going on, she wanted to figure out how to do it."

"I see her doing whatever she wants to do, because she's smart enough and she has the motivation to do it. She will do whatever she wants to do, and she will do it well. I have no doubt."