

Students step up

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Teachers may be on the picket line, but students are continuing with extracurricular activities on their own.

By Christian Menno

Staff writer

As the rumors of a possible Neshaminy teachers' strike persisted over the last several weeks, various student groups came to high school Principal Rob McGee with variations of one basic question - each beginning with the same three words.

"Can we still ... ?"

Students wanted answers as to what activities would be affected by the teachers' strike, which officially began Jan. 9.

For the most part, according to McGee, students have taken it upon themselves to make the most of a tough situation and continue on with their respective extracurricular endeavors.

Nearly 20 high school students did just that Friday when they gathered, on their own, for orchestra pit rehearsals for the upcoming school production of "Phantom of the Opera."

Senior Kyle Duke - who is playing the lead role of the Phantom - did his best to conduct the group as they prepared for the show, which is scheduled for Feb. 8.

"It's very important for them to play together," he said during a break. "They can practice on their own but they really have to mesh as a group. Having two weeks (during the strike) without doing that can be somewhat detrimental to the show. This is really crunch time."

Duke said he and his classmates had no interest in getting involved in the contract dispute or taking sides.

"We have a job to do," he said. "Whether teachers are here or not - and of course we'd love to have them here - we know that we have a show that's going to happen and we want to be prepared."

In spite of all the hostility that's built up in the community during the contract dispute, Duke said he still has pride in Neshaminy.

"It's definitely tough," he added. "You can definitely feel the tension but I think as a district we'll get through this."

McGee - who also serves as the school's bowling coach - said that witnessing the dedication of the students has been inspiring.

"To see them step up and do things like this just makes me proud," he said. "Whether it be the seniors coming in to work on their graduation projects, or the athletic teams or all the kids involved in activities - it's just amazing to see them take ownership like this."

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