

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading News Source

\$2.99

Dallas, Texas, Monday, August 7, 2023

DallasNews.com

Messi elevates soccer in Frisco

World's greatest player delivers excitement against FC Dallas



Tom Fox/Staff Photographer

Inter Miami's Lionel Messi (left) celebrated his first of two goals six minutes into the match with teammates, including Jordi Alba (18), a former Barcelona linemate who sent a pass to Messi just outside the box for an assist. A sold-out crowd of 19,096 watched the 36-year-old Argentine superstar at Toyota Stadium in Frisco in a 5-3 Miami shootout win after a 4-4 draw in regulation.

THOUSANDS of fans waited in 100-degree heat for hours just to catch a glimpse of Argentinian soccer star Lionel Messi before Sunday night's match. **8A**

THE SEA of jerseys in Toyota Stadium reflected a home crowd for Messi, wherever that may be, Lia Assimakopoulos writes. **SportsDay, 1C**

FRISCO — It has been 16 years since David Beckham arrived on these shores to reinvent and rebrand Major League Soccer as a member of the Los Angeles Galaxy. His first road trip here in summer 2007 produced heavy advanced ticket sales (although nothing like Sunday's game), but it wasn't much of a debut. He was scratched with a sore ankle. So the minute Lionel Messi took the Toyota Stadium field with Inter Miami CF, as an event this blew away anything FC Dallas has ever hosted and possibly ever will host. Beckham, who certainly elevated MLS in terms



TIM COWLISHAW
tccowlishaw@dallasnews.com

of television contracts and general interest, is now an even wealthier man and has a major ownership stake in the Miami club. But he was never really equal to what Messi became or solidified or rubber-stamped (depending upon one's viewpoint) in last year's triumphant World Cup for Argentina.

The man who has earned the title over a decade as the greatest soccer player in the world was right here to do his thing on a hot Sunday night that necessitated an 8:30 start time. FC Dallas held a pair of two-goal leads in the second half before the man people came to see went crazy to tie the game, then helped Miami win a shootout 5-3 after a 4-4 draw in regulation.

FC Dallas had no home game scheduled with Inter Miami this season. But with both teams winning their way into the round of 16 of this

See **LEGEND** Page 8A

Education Lab

Safety rule has schools in bind

Some Texas campuses struggle to fill new requirement for armed security

By **SONIA RAO**
Staff Writer
sonia.rao@dallasnews.com

Journey Jones, 10, was back-to-school shopping with his mom this summer when he asked for a bulletproof backpack to protect him in case of a shooting.

"It could happen anytime," he said.

His mom, MaryAnn Jones, has five kids set to attend school in Lovejoy. However, safety concerns had Jones and her wife considering not putting their 5-year-old triplets into elementary school at the district. They ultimately did.

Jones, a former police officer, does not like that Lovejoy ISD utilizes a school marshal program that allows campus staffers to be armed. Anyone can carry a gun in hand, she said, but training and experience are necessary when it comes to using it.

"What happens if they are mishandling the firearm? Or it gets in the student's hand?" she said. "Accidents happen."

More Texas teachers, administrators and others outside of law enforcement will be carrying guns when school starts this month because a new state law requires armed personnel on every public campus starting Sept. 1. The change represents legislators' most significant response to last year's Uvalde massacre, where 19 children and two teachers were killed at Robb Elementary.

A nationwide police shortage and lack of significant new funding has schools across Texas struggling to hire additional staff to protect cam-

See **SCHOOLS** Page 4A

NATION & WORLD

Groups fight student loan deal in court

Two conservative groups are asking a federal court to block the Biden administration's plan to cancel \$39 billion in student loans for more than 800,000 borrowers. **2A**

Missiles, drones target Ukraine

Russia bombarded parts of Ukraine, Kyiv officials said, as Moscow followed through on its promise to retaliate for an attack on a Russian tanker. **5A**

METRO

Hospitalizations for COVID-19 rise again

COVID-19 hospitalizations in North Texas more than doubled in the last month, according to recent data, as the back-to-school season looms. **1B**

Hot, isolated storms



H 103
L 80

Metro, back page

INSIDE

Nation/World	Jumble	4B	
2-3, 5A	Obituaries	5B	
Editorials	7A	Sports TV	2C
Letters	7A	Dear Abby	1E
Autos	4B	Comics	2-4E
Classified	4B	TV	4E

©2023, The Dallas Morning News



Stunned and done



Hamish Blair/The Associated Press

The U.S. women could only cry and watch as their opponent, Sweden, celebrated advancing at the World Cup in Melbourne, Australia, on Sunday. The U.S. lost on penalties after a scoreless draw. The U.S. women had always placed third or better in previous World Cups. **(Coverage, SportsDay)**

U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

Nun worries, smugglers gain

Abbott backs buoys as critics argue they won't stop migrants

By **ALFREDO CORCHADO**
Border-Mexico Correspondent
acorchado@dallasnews.com

PIEDRAS NEGRAS, Mexico — Sister Isabel Turcios, a nun who runs the Casa del Migrante shelter, confesses that Gov. Greg Abbott's border buoys along the Rio Grande keep her up at

night. She prays for the many families who remain undeterred, trying to cross safely into the U.S.

"We need to be better human beings, good Christians, and think of humanity," she said. "We should be talking about solutions, like work permits. Or the root of the problem. Because concertina wire, buoys and walls ... will not stop people from crossing. They continue arriving daily, flee-

ing from unimaginably dire situations at home."

Last week, two dead migrants were found on or near the buoy barriers, strung along the river between Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras, Mexico. The Texas Department of Public Safety has denied that either migrant died by getting entangled in the barriers.

Abbott has defended the buoys, saying he is pro-

See **CRITICS** Page 4A

ABORTION

Woman shares her painful story

Plaintiff in Texas lawsuit hopes to help others caught in similar circumstances

By **MARIN WOLF**
and **ALLIE KELLY**
Staff Writers

During her daily commute, Samantha Casiano talks to God.

More accurately, she sings.

"If You're still there, Lord, spare me," Casiano belts out as the gravelly voice of country singer Jelly Roll blares through the speakers.

For nearly a year, Casiano has lived in her own version of hell. Doctors diagnosed a fatal brain anomaly in her second daughter when Casiano was 20 weeks pregnant. Denied an abortion in Texas and scared to leave the state, she continued the pregnancy until she gave birth in March.

Her baby, Halo, died four hours later.

Casiano was one of four Texas

women to testify about denied or delayed abortions in Zurawski vs. State of Texas, one of the first major lawsuits to challenge state abortion bans. The case — filed by the Center for Reproductive Rights in Travis County Court — asked that people with medically complicated pregnancies be exempt from Texas' near-total ban on the procedure.

After two weeks of sitting in limbo, Casiano's prayer was answered, if only for a few hours: Judge Jessica Mangrum issued the temporary injunction that prevented the abortion bans from applying to people with medically complicated pregnancies, including those with fatal fetal diagnoses.

It was a brief but significant victory for the plaintiffs. The state almost immediately appealed the decision to the Texas Supreme Court, pausing the injunction that First Assistant Attorney General Brent

later. See **PLAINTIFF** Page 3A



Liesbeth Powers/Special Contributor

A collection of tokens of Halo, Samantha Casiano's daughter who died hours after birth, is displayed in Casiano's home.

Schools scramble to find armed guardians

Continued from Page 1A

pusers that don't already have school resource officers, namely elementaries.

To meet the new law, more Texas districts are considering teachers and other employees to be school marshals or guardians, which allow staff to be armed.

Plano administrators acknowledged at a recent July board meeting that "fully trained, on-duty police officers" are the best option. However, at a \$3 million cost, it's not feasible to hire what the district needs to cover the 49 campuses. So they recommended the marshal program as a "strong option."

If the district used school marshals, it would join with other Collin County districts, including Princeton and Lovejoy.

Across Texas, there were 34 school marshals in 2018, the same year of the deadly Santa Fe High School shooting. That number grew to 256 marshals across 62 districts as of May 2022, after new state grants and a law lifting the cap on marshals.

Now, the state has 318 registered school marshals across 77 districts and has seen an uptick in interest since the new legislation, said Gretchen Grigsby, director of government relations for the Texas Commission On Law Enforcement.

'Don't shoot!'

Some districts are still hoping to meet the law with dedicated security staff.

Mark Quinn, Garland ISD's director of security, knows he's in a competitive market as he seeks to fill 40 armed security positions for elementary schools. Those staffers and other additional safety measures will cost the district \$1.5 million.

"We, along with probably every other school district in the state, are going to be scrambling trying to hire armed officers," he said.

The screens showed an empty school hallway and a campus library as two men stood ready to react.

A loud scream. A few shots fired. The men whipped out guns and pointed them to the simulation screen.

"School marshal!" one of them yelled with a booming



Elias Valverde II/Staff Photographer

voice. "Don't shoot! School marshal!"

Thirteen men and one woman had traveled across Texas in June to participate in the 80-hour school marshal training at Tarrant County College. If they passed, they would be able to bring a weapon with them onto campus.

School marshals must be trained by a law enforcement academy approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

Weapon proficiency, campus security, when to use force, how to respond to an active shooter and the history of school shootings are covered.

Marshals must have a license to carry, pass a psychological exam and complete a 16-hour course every two years after their initial training.

At this summer's training, candidates practiced knowing when to shoot and when not to shoot in an active shooter scenario. They rehearsed busting/prying open doors with sledgehammers to breach classrooms.

Officers and marshals

David Vincent normally works as director of technology for Princeton ISD. He volunteered to be a school marshal in the Collin County district because he hopes to be a deterrent to potential shooters.

"This can make it safer, but you can't make it 100% safe,"

he said.

School marshals can remain anonymous under state law, though Princeton lists most of its marshals on the district website. Those staffers wear uniforms for added visibility, schools spokesperson Jean Ann Collins said.

Students don't differentiate between police officers and marshals, Collins said.

"To them, it's all just somebody there to keep me safe," she added.

The district of nearly 8,000 students has used marshals since 2018, when the city police department had staffing shortages, Collins said. After Uvalde, Princeton school trustees voted to have at least one armed marshal at each of its 12 campuses in addition to a few school resource officers.

Cities nationwide report struggles with recruiting and retaining officers because of burnout, difficulties of the job and changing public perception of police. In Dallas, the police department recruited 50 fewer officers and lost about 30 more to attrition than they wanted during the last fiscal year.

Besides the marshal program, districts are turning to private companies for help to hire outside security officers. Last week, Allen trustees approved contracting with a firm for 17 security officers to staff its elementary campuses and early childhood school.

Some districts are using

private companies to arm existing staff through the state's guardian program in which an employee can undergo a 16-hour active-shooter response training from a licensed Texas Department of Public Safety instructor.

Finding 'defenders'

Texas doesn't have numbers on how many school staffers are guardians, but research from a 2020 Texas School Safety Center report found at least 280 school districts opted into that plan.

Security company Cinco Peso trains school employees as "defenders" through the guardian plan. Cinco Peso co-founder Brad Oliver, a retired master peace officer, said he's worked with at least 50 school districts that use "defenders."

With more reaching out in recent weeks, he expects that number to rise above 60. His company's training is booked up through the spring, he said.

Brad Merritt, Pilot Point ISD's police chief, said his district opted for the guardian plan over the marshal program because training spots are limited.

Only two institutions besides Tarrant County College offer marshal training — one through the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and another at the West Texas Central Council of Governments. Four additional training sites will be offered soon,

said Grigsby, the Texas Commission On Law Enforcement spokesperson.

More than 30 school staff receive a stipend to be defenders across Pilot Point's four campuses. While the district does not share the identity of defenders, it makes it well known that teachers are armed, Merritt added.

Journey's sister, Ari Jones, 16, learned a coach she planned to work with this year is a school marshal for Lovejoy. The school district highlights its marshals online.

The thought of being around marshals makes her feel uncomfortable because she is Black, she said. Nearly three-quarters of Lovejoy ISD students are white and only about 3% are Black, which Jones said makes her feel like she stands out.

Impact on students

She is afraid school marshals may view her as more of a threat than other students.

Lovejoy school officials did not respond to requests for comment on their marshals.

Children of color often face harsher discipline consequences at schools, data repeatedly shows. The most recent federal data, for example, showed about 20% of Texas students referred to law enforcement in the 2017-18 school year were Black even though such children made up about 13% of public schools.

Black and Latino students are disproportionately arrested and even assaulted by officers at higher rates, according to a report from the advocacy group Advancement Project. Another study done for Congress by the National Institute of Justice shows police are perceived differently by students depending on their race, although this disparity is smaller for officers in schools.

Most no research exists about the impact of armed educators or private security companies on campuses, noted Anthony Petrosino, director of WestEd's Justice and Prevention Research Center, who worked on the institute's study.

Some education advocacy groups worry about other challenges that may rise from arming educators.

Petrosino said first responders at a school shooting may not be able to distinguish between an un-uniformed school marshal or guardian and a threat.

He also pointed to a January instance where a third-grade student found a Texas superintendent's gun in a bathroom stall. In March, a Granbury teacher who was a school marshal left a gun unattended in a faculty restroom.

At least 28 other states allow schools to arm their staff. Petrosino said this might be some school districts' only option.

"Across the country, there's a real problem with keeping and retaining police for communities, let alone schools," he said. "Where are you going to get the people, when there's already an issue?"

The DMN Education Lab deepens the coverage and conversation about urgent education issues critical to the future of North Texas.

The DMN Education Lab is a community-funded journalism initiative, with support from Bobby and Lottye Lyle, Communities Foundation of Texas, The Dallas Foundation, Dallas Regional Chamber, Deedie Rose, Garrett and Cecilia Boone, The Meadows Foundation, The Murrell Foundation, Solutions Journalism Network, Southern Methodist University, Sydney Smith Hicks and the University of Texas at Dallas. The Dallas Morning News retains full editorial control of the Education Lab's journalism.

Critics call barriers 'inhumane'

Continued from Page 1A

tecting Texas from an "invasion." He has accused President Joe Biden of failing to properly enforce federal immigration laws.

In a letter dated July 24, Abbott wrote to Biden: "Neither of us wants to see another death in the Rio Grande River. Yet your open-border policies encourage migrants to risk their lives by crossing illegally through the water, instead of safely and legally at a port of entry. Nobody drowns on a bridge."

Abbott spokesman Andrew Mahaleris has said four migrants drowned in the Rio Grande in July — before the barriers were installed — and blamed the deaths of migrants who have drowned in the last few years on Biden and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Last year, according to immigrant rights groups, more than 70 migrants drowned in Maverick County, which includes Eagle Pass. So far this year, 26 migrants have drowned in the area.

Construction of the buoy barriers began in July as the latest escalation in Abbott's \$10 billion border security effort dubbed Operation Lone Star, which includes deployments of state troopers and the National Guard.

The Justice Department filed a lawsuit last month to try to force Texas to remove the floating barriers. On Friday, a federal judge for the Western District of Texas scheduled an Aug. 22 hearing to consider the Justice Department's call for an injunction requiring Texas to remove the barrier within 10 days.

The barriers comprise buoys 4 feet

in diameter strung together in lengths of 1,000 feet. They are not wrapped in razor wire as early reports indicated, but there is a sharp metal strip between each one, ensuring cuts for anyone who might try to climb through the narrow gap.

Avoiding the barriers

Turcios, an emphatic figure of faith who doesn't mince words, says asylum seekers avoid the buoy barriers by walking three to four hours up and down the shores of the Rio Grande, risking more dangerous crossings of the river.

The buoy barriers make the journey longer and more dangerous, agreed Ieva Jusionyte, associate professor of international security and anthropology at Brown University.

"Like the steel wall, the buoys in the river endanger the lives of people who are attempting to cross," said Jusionyte, who has researched what she calls the "mechanisms of injury" that threaten migrants' lives.

"We have seen again and again," she said, "that these obstacles don't deter border crossers, that they only function as inhumane, cruel tools to inflict pain."

Mexican officials say the barriers violate an international treaty and encroach upon Mexican territory. Speaking of last week's migrant deaths, Roberto Velasco, the top North American official in Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry, told *The Dallas Morning News*: "We are shocked by this tragic event and the impact of unilateral actions by the state of Tex-

as."

Mexico became the top U.S. trading partner at the start of 2023, with trade between the two countries totaling \$263 billion during the first four months of this year, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

"Neighbors deserve respect," Velasco said.

News of drownings

One recent evening, fresh arrivals knocked on the door of Turcios's shelter, looking for a meal, a bed and a shower.

News of the drownings dominated conversations inside a courtyard filled with Venezuelans and Central Americans — in particular, three Hondurans who were headed to a store, where friends and relatives in Houston would wire them money.

The latest drowning victim was a 20-year-old Honduran man, referred to by his wailing mother, as "mi niño, my child."

One of the Honduran migrants, Miriam Garcia, 43, said she had just spoken to her brother and her 19-year-old daughter back in her homeland. Her daughter urged her to be careful crossing the river.

Garcia said she left because, at the maquiladora plant where she worked, a gang extorted the plant's employees, including management.

The gang demanded 1,500 lempiras, or about \$60, biweekly. Then the gang increased the amount to 2,500 lempiras. When she told them she couldn't pay more, they urged her to leave for the U.S. They threatened to



Alfredo Corchado/Staff

Sister Isabel Turcios, who runs a migrant shelter in Piedras Negras, Mexico, criticized Gov. Greg Abbott's border buoys along the Rio Grande. Two migrants' bodies were recently found near the barriers.

rape her daughter and force her into sex work.

Garcia told her daughter to move to her brother's house. Garcia hoped to get to Houston where friends had secured a job for her cleaning hotels.

As the sun set over the Rio Grande, the river was at times deceiving, always treacherous. Garcia and the two other Honduran migrants approached a smuggler. They planned to cross in the coming days.

Human smuggling

Another smuggler, Jose Roberto, stared across the river and saw a landscape dotted with Texas state troopers. He pointed to four Venezuelans whom he was about to help cross the river. On the other side, they would turn themselves in to border authorities.

"These are people who are not trying to evade detention," he said, speak-

ing on the condition that his full name not be used. "Many come with children. The currents, at times, are strong and they [the migrants] can end up tangling up along the buoys downstream."

"My job is to help them turn themselves in safely" to U.S. authorities in places where the concertina wire doesn't threaten migrants, he said. Away from the buoys, which he called "human traps."

Abbott's actions have made the migrants' journey harder, resulting in higher prices paid to smugglers like him, he said. He used to help as many as 25 migrants a day. Lately, the numbers have increased to about 40 people, he said. His job is to get the people across the river for a few dollars each.

Abbott's latest efforts, including the Rio Grande buoys, are "a waste of money for you, as taxpayers," he said, "and a quick buck for us."