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District plans parents' center

It will help Quakertown parents deal with troubled children. The Upper Bucks YMCA and St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital are partners in the effort.

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QUAKERTOWN SCHOOLS —
Parents who don't know how to deal
with their troubled children will

soon have a place to turn.

A center aimed at solving these problems is in the works, officials said at a school board meeting Thursday night.

"It will be someplace where parents can talk to other parents who have some experience in dealing with these problems," said James R. Newcomer, assistant superintendent for pupil services.

The district is now looking for 25 to 30 parents to volunteer at the center. Volunteers will train by spending about one night per week for 24 weeks in programs run by Lakeside Educational Services.

He said the center would be a resource for parents who don't know how to make troubled children act well, or who need advice on other parenting concerns.

The Upper Bucks YMCA and St.

Luke's Quakertown Hospital are partnering with the district on the parenting center, which should be open at the hospital in the spring.

Part of a \$66,000 drug-free schools grant the district has received will go toward funding the parent center.

District superintendent James R. Scanlon said the district will also be reapplying for grant money to fund an alternative suspension program as another way to help deal with behavioral problems.

Instead of sending students home for bad behavior, which many saw as a vacation day rather than punishment, the program sends troubled students to Renewal Centers on Old Bethlehem Pike.

Students who receive alternative suspension, which typically lasts about three days, perform community service and receive counseling.

The district had a trial run for the program beginning in February involving several dozen students, Scanlon said, and it was successful enough to warrant its continuation.

"They begin to deal with some of the reasons they were there in the first place," Scanlon said. "We're

starting to see some change in their behavior."

More than two-thirds of the students who received alternative suspension only went once, he said, and only 10 percent of the students involved had to go more than twice.

"It's providing a place that's not fun, but that helps them," he said.

The district used a \$22,500 grant from the state to fund the program in the spring, he said.