

Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Families and Staff,

I want to write to you directly about a very difficult topic that has been in the media this week.

Last Friday, a former Bedford School District employee was sentenced to prison time. It was based on the sexual assault of a student during her employment at Exeter High School. As the leader of our school system and as a father, I am appalled by the horrible acts of this former employee. Our hearts are with the young victim, and we keep the safety of our students of utmost priority.

I have had several parents express anger and confusion that the Bedford School District had representation at the sentencing hearing. Although I recognize that an explanation will not simply “fix things,” I think the community should know why we attended.

Several weeks ago, the attorney for our former employee requested that the Bedford School District attend the hearing to share information about the former employee’s performance while in Bedford. Our staff agonized about the right response - this employee, after she left, violated the basic principle of our profession when she harmed one of her students. At the same time we have a responsibility as a public school system to provide information to those who are entitled to it.

We decided that we would share information only from the point of view of a supervisor and only using the actual written evaluations. I agreed with that plan including attending the hearing. While the former employee’s behavior was reprehensible, that does not change the reality that we possess a written record of her performance while in Bedford and an attorney for that former employee had asked us to present it in court.

At the hearing, we were surprised and upset by the additional and disturbing details shared about the former employee’s behavior. However, our staff was already there and the attorney proceeded to have her share her statement. In hindsight, we regret attending the hearing in that it may have suggested, however incorrectly, that we support this horrible and illegal behavior. We could have shared the evaluations without attending.

I intend to use this experience as a learning opportunity for myself. I want to build back the trust that has been lost. There is much work to do. My hope is that this is our first step.

Sincerely,
Chip McGee