



## River Valley School District

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October 10, 2017

Dear River Valley Community:

As Superintendent, I have been privileged to share with you the many positive events occurring in our schools; and today, I am following up regarding an unusual situation that I shared with you last May.

As you know from my letter last spring or from recent media reports, four staff members were charged with two misdemeanor counts for allegedly failing to report suspected child neglect to the State of Michigan. The failure to report charges focused on the tragic case of a former student whose parents were convicted in August 2016. The charges against the staff are alleged to have occurred in 2015 and 2016. At this time, I want to update everyone on these cases.

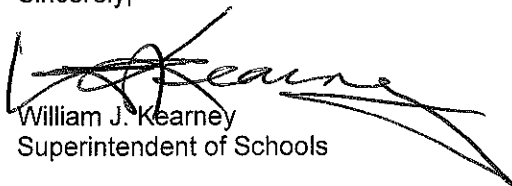
In September, two of the four staff members pled no contest to one criminal misdemeanor count of failure to report child neglect. As a result, these staff members committed to 100 hours of community public service, payment of court fines, and participation in District training. The other two staff members are contesting the charges; their trials are scheduled in the next several weeks and months.

The District reported both pleas of "no contest" to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Since this particular misdemeanor is not a reportable listed misdemeanor offense under the Michigan Revised School Code, the MDE will not take any adverse action against our staff. The District is conducting an investigation and review of the investigative records, statements and court records regarding the pleas and pending cases as they become available to the District. We will wait to see the outcomes and facts of all cases, prior to considering whether disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please be assured that our first commitment has and will continue to be on the safety and well-being of the children in our district. Difficult moments such as these continue to be learning opportunities for everyone in our district. Without question, this was a very unusual case as our staff did report their concerns in December 2015, and were told by the state the following February, that there was no basis for their report. We are looking at the processes between teachers reporting incidents and CPS following up. We also need to make sure that we continue to be accountable for reporting as required. Our District's training and policies have been reviewed and we have ensured that all staff are informed of their obligations.

While this is a difficult time for all concerned, our staff and students are focused on the quality learning experiences and positive activities taking place in our schools and classrooms every day. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at 756-7675.

Sincerely,

  
William J. Kearney  
Superintendent of Schools

**"Home of the Mustangs"**