



BLUFFTON-HARRISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"A LEARNING COMMUNITY WHERE A QUALITY EDUCATION EMPOWERS
ALL STUDENTS TO LEARN AND ACHIEVE TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL."*

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Discussing BHMSD Personnel Matters

As a public school corporation, Bluffton-Harrison MSD must balance the rights of students and employees with ensuring the public is informed. Often this balance results in the following response from BHMSD: "Bluffton-Harrison MSD does not discuss personnel matters."

This statement can be frustrating to some and protective to others, depending on the individual's relationship to the particular personnel matter. We understand this response causes frustration when the public is seeking more information to fully understand the whole story, and may lead to speculation or concern that crucial information is being hidden. At times, it may seem easier to provide a full account of all the facts in an employee-related situation.

Our rationale for not discussing or elaborating on a personnel matter comprises three critical factors:

1) Fairness

BHMSD has an important responsibility to treat all employees fairly. In situations of alleged wrongdoing all employees must be afforded the right to have the personnel matter reviewed in a fair, professional, and private manner. Those rights are not only spelled out in Indiana state law but also supported by the BHMSD Board of School Trustees. Essentially, each BHMSD employee is treated with dignity and respect, and therefore should expect to not have the details of their employment record discussed in a public forum.

2) Full Investigation

Personnel matters, especially those involving accusations of wrongdoing, are oftentimes complicated situations. In order to uncover the truth and ensure a fair outcome for all parties, a thorough review should take place every time a personnel matter is brought forward. It is important to note the timelines for personnel reviews may not always align with expectations from other parties. However, it would not be appropriate for BHMSD to release partial information that violates an employee's due process or presents an incomplete depiction of the situation. The school district, like any good employer, must be judicious in performing a fair and professional review. Releasing incomplete information while the process is yet to be completed jeopardizes the fairness of the investigation.

3) Legality

Employees within the State of Indiana are afforded specific rights as defined by state law. Additionally, BHMSD may be subject to legal action as the result of a discharge or other employee discipline. If BHMSD fails to follow the law regarding employee discipline, BHMSD may be subject to litigation that could be costly for taxpayers, as well as our schools. Therefore, BHMSD is committed to ensuring an employee's rights are respected so that our resources are best invested in educating BHMSD students.

Our job is to create a learning community where a quality education empowers all students to learn and to achieve their full potential. At the same time, we must ensure our employees are treated with respect and matters of employment are conducted by the rules. And, as a public school corporation, BHMSD must be as transparent as possible. This combination can be a delicate balance with no two situations being the same. When able, we will provide information, but there will be instances when BHMSD cannot discuss a personnel matter.