

REPORT TO THE ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**An Independent Review of the
District's Handling of Staff Sexual Abuse
and Sexual Misconduct Allegations**

February 7, 2025

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PREFACE

“Everybody trusts too much!”

SHSD Board Member

When asked the following question, *“What procedural errors or errors in judgement, if any, did District officials make that led to the current controversy?”* a Board member shared the above quote before further explaining their answer. The quote, in my opinion, succinctly characterized one of the major problems or areas of weakness that contributed to the current controversy the St. Helens School District (SHSD) and community is experiencing. All Board members acknowledged and reinforced this sentiment during their interviews.

For example, all Board members reported they trusted the Superintendent to implement Board policies, with fidelity, and ensure that District and building administrators faithfully implemented and followed Board adopted policies. As you already know, however, critical Board policies related to student safety and wellbeing, such as mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and reporting suspected sexual conduct were not implemented and followed with fidelity. Each Board member also acknowledged that, as a Board, you never implemented a process to monitor the effectiveness of the administration’s implementation of policy (in accordance with Board Policy BFD).

This report sheds light on this issue and identifies a number of additional school district systems, policies, and practices that need your collective attention and correction. This report also sheds light on several instances where school administrators had the opportunity to intervene and potentially stop the alleged sexual conduct, suspected abuse, and other alleged policy violations attributed to Eric Stearns and Mark Collins. District records, however, fail to document that the administrators took appropriate action.

Some of the issues identified in this report will be relatively easy for the Board and staff to correct. Other issues will likely be more difficult and take more time, such as addressing school climate and organizational culture. Reestablishing trust with families and the community could take years.

However, based on the interviews I conducted with Board members and District employees, I am optimistic that the St. Helens School District will rise to the challenge, make the necessary corrections, and move forward in a positive direction.

All of the individuals I spoke with cared deeply about the students, the school district, and the St. Helens community. Staff expressed a sincere commitment to do whatever

was needed to ensure students are prioritized and protected and to fully address and correct whatever issues led to this controversy.

During staff interviews, there were numerous instances where questions I asked created a realization for an employee that a school district system, policy or procedure was not being properly followed or properly implemented. To their credit, I observed several employees taking immediate action to address the deficiencies identified during their interviews. In my opinion, staff want to do the right thing for students and the community, and they welcome direction and leadership on how to move the District forward.

As Board members, I know you are committed and actively engaged in identifying and correcting the issues that led to the current controversy. I hope this report provides additional information and insights to help inform your important work.

INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

On December 2, 2024, Dr. Dave Novotney, a retired school superintendent and licensed private investigator, was engaged by the law firm of Garrett Hemann Robertson, P.C., and asked to conduct an independent review of how the St. Helens School District handled staff sexual abuse and sexual misconduct allegations related to Eric Stearns and Mark Collins.

The scope of the review/investigation included an examination of the following key issues:

1. Who knew “what and when” as it related to Eric Stearns and Mark Collins.
2. District policy and policy implementation as it related to:
 - a. Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, suspected sexual conduct, sexual harassment and related policies.
 - b. Child sexual abuse prevention education.
3. Reporting practices and responsiveness related to suspected child abuse, sexual conduct and sexual harassment.
4. Staff training related to suspected child abuse, suspected sexual conduct, sexual harassment, and mandatory reporting requirements.
5. Monitoring and accountability related to implementing the policies mentioned above with fidelity.
6. School district culture related to implementing the policies mentioned above with fidelity.

The investigation took approximately two months to complete (which included a two-week school closure during winter break).

Interviews

During this investigation, forty-two (42) individuals were interviewed between December 3, 2024, and January 27, 2025. A total of fifty (50) interviews were conducted (several individuals were interviewed twice, and one person was interviewed three times). All of the individuals interviewed were cooperative, and the vast majority were candid and provided thoughtful insights into the issues being investigated.

The following is a list of the individuals who were interviewed during the investigation (in the order they were interviewed):

- Pete Moshinsky, Director of Human Resources; interviewed on 12/3/24, 12/19/24 and 1/9/25.
- Kristi Ward, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Lisa Tyler, Director of Teaching and Learning; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Allyson Dubuque, Principal of McBride ES; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Lori Thompson, Director of Student Services; interviewed on 12/6/24 and 12/20/24.
- Ed Leader, Director of Technology; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Dani Boylan, Director of Early Learning; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Matt Lacy, Plymouth HS Principal; interviewed on 12/6/24.
- Mark Janke, SHMS Assistant Principal; interviewed on 12/10/24.
- Stacey Mendoza, Director of Communications; interviewed on 12/10/24.
- Jen Nelson, Student Services Coordinator; interviewed on 12/10/24.
- Christy Woodard, Chief Financial Officer; interviewed on 12/10/24 and 1/21/25.
- Jared Plahn, Director of Facilities; interviewed on 12/10/24.
- Chris Gwilliam, Principal of SHMS; interviewed on 12/11/24.
- Robby Plowman, SHHS Assistant Principal; interviewed on 12/11/24.

- Cheri Martin, Principal of Lewis and Clark ES, interviewed on 12/11/24.
- Ted Hirning, SHHS Assistant Principal/Athletic Director; interviewed on 12/11/24 and 1/9/25.
- Michelle Tullock, District Culture and Care Coach; interviewed on 12/11/24.
- Nicole Hilton, SHHS Assistant Principal; interviewed on 12/11/24 and 1/9/25.
- Kellie Smith, Board Member; interviewed on 12/16/24.
- Bill Amos, Board Member; interviewed on 12/16/24.
- Mark McQueen, HS Teacher; interviewed on 12/18/24.
- Chelsa Anderson, HS Teacher; interviewed on 12/18/24.
- Martin Hehman, Principal of SHVA; interviewed on 12/18/24.
- Ana Vargas, HS Social Worker; interviewed on 12/18/24 and 12/20/24.
- Troy McNeil, HS Teacher; interviewed on 12/18/24.
- Jen Johnston, HS Head Secretary; interviewed on 12/18/24.
- Kris Bumamlag, MS Teacher; interviewed on 12/19/24.
- Laury Carter, MS Counselor; interviewed on 12/19/24.
- Matt Schrunk, MS Teacher; interviewed on 12/19/24.
- Martine Barnett, Principal of Columbia City ES; interviewed on 12/19/24.
- Karee Steinhauser, MS Head Secretary; interviewed on 12/19/24.
- Trinity Monahan, Acting Board Chair; interviewed on 12/24/24.
- Melody Killens, Board Member; interviewed on 12/26/24.
- Ryan Scholl, Former Board Chair; interviewed on 1/4/25.
- Shirley Brock, AVID District Director; interviewed on 1/8/25.

- Kimi Ross, SHHS Counselor; interviewed on 1/8/25.
- Carissa Chism, SHHS Counselor; interviewed on 1/8/25.
- Hannah Davies, SHHS Counselor; interviewed on 1/8/25 and 1/10/25.
- Alyssa Hertel, SHHS Counselor; interviewed on 1/9/25.
- Matt Smith, SHPD Detective Sergeant; submitted responses to written interview questions on 1/14/25.
- Scot Stockwell, Superintendent; submitted responses to written interview questions on 1/17/25.

Interviews were offered to the following individuals. Interview requests were either declined or the individual did not respond to the request:

- Eric Stearns, Teacher.
- Dr. Katy Wagner, SHHS Principal.
- Darcy Soto, Former SHHS Assistant Principal.
- Doug Weaver, TIK Tok Creator/Formal Student.
- Jill Blessing, Public School Works Representative.
- Five (5) current and/or former SHHS students (i.e., students who reportedly had information directly related to the allegations made against Eric Stearns and Mark Collins).

Note: The investigator also consulted with Lisa Miller, Program Analyst for SafeOregon, Oregon State Police; telephone consultation on 1/27/25.

Documents

During the investigation, the following records were requested (going back a minimum of five years). The documents listed below were received and reviewed by the investigator:

1. SHSD emails and Instant Messages (strategically searched) – A total of 5,217 emails, including attachments, and 41 Google Chat messages were reviewed (from January of 2019 to December 15, 2024).

2. Reports of suspected child abuse submitted to the Department of Human Services (DHS) by SHSD staff – A total of 495 reports were reviewed (the reports were from July of 2020 to December 18, 2024).
3. Copies of reports submitted to the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) by District administration – A total of twelve (12) reports were reviewed.
4. Documentation related to previous incidents of staff sexual misconduct – Documents were provided but the information was very limited and incomplete.
5. Select personnel files and working files – A total of eight (8) personnel files were reviewed.
6. A list of staff members who were placed on paid administrative leave for alleged sexual abuse or sexual conduct (as of December 19, 2024) – Documentation was provided and reviewed. An updated list was also provided on January 16, 2025.
7. Training records maintained by the District for all employees – An Excel file was provided that contained the Public School Works (online) training records for all employees for five (5) years. The file was reviewed and the data analyzed.
8. Curriculum related to how Erin's Law (SB 856 - Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education, K-12) was implemented in the District – Documentation was provided and reviewed.
9. Plans developed by District administration to implement mandatory child abuse reporting, suspected sexual conduct reporting, and sexual harassment reporting requirements – No documents were provided.
10. Plans or training documents developed by District administration as the result of previous staff sexual misconduct – No documents were provided.
11. Student/staff climate survey information for the high school and middle school – Survey data was provided for SHHS for 2022, and for SHMS for 2020 (the data for SHMS was in a format that was not usable for the purpose of this investigation).
12. Documentation provided by witnesses – All documents provided by witnesses were reviewed and taken into consideration.

Limitations to the Investigation

The following four (4) issues were significant limitations related to conducting this investigation:

1. Lack of documentation – Documentation related to student and/or parent complaints made against District staff was limited, or frequently non-existent.
 - a. District administrators did not have a designated, centralized location for storing investigation files (hard copies and/or electronic files) related to complaint investigations conducted involving District staff.
 - i. Investigation files would typically contain a copy of the original complaint, witness statements, witness and respondent interview notes, investigator notes, supporting evidence, a copy of the investigation report, etc. This information would have been informative and helpful in completing this review.
 - b. High school administrators did not maintain student complaints in a designated, centralized location at the school. They reported that written student complaints (referred to as “student statements”) were commonly destroyed at the end of each school year.
 - i. This information would have been informative and helpful in completing this review.
 - c. Given the lack of documentation related to student and/or parent complaints made against District staff, it appears highly likely that critical information was destroyed when school administrators and clerical staff periodically purged school records.
2. Not being able to interview key individuals – Several individuals declined to be interviewed as part of this investigation/review.
3. Lack of student voice – No students or former students were interviewed as part of this investigation/review. Interviews were offered to five (5) students/former students who reportedly had information directly related to the allegations made against Eric Stearns and Mark Collins. Ultimately, however, they either declined to be interviewed or did not respond to the initial request.
4. Time limitation – The compressed timeline for conducting such an extensive review was challenging, especially since the investigation time frame included a two-week school closure for winter break.

Overview of Sexual Conduct and Child Abuse Laws

It can be challenging for volunteer school board members to understand and/or keep updated on the rather complex series of Oregon laws and Board policies that pertain to sexual conduct, child abuse and mandatory reporting requirements.

The following table is provided to help the reader understand the Oregon laws that define sexual conduct, child abuse, the ethical educator standards and the agencies that receive reports of suspected violations. Pertinent SHSD Board policies and professional standards are also noted.

| Alleged Violation | Legal Reference | Board Policy | Agencies that Receive Reports |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Sexual Conduct | ORS 339.370 (12) | GBNAA/JHFF | TSPC or ODE |
| Child Abuse | ORS 419B.005 | GBNAB/JHFE | DHS or Law Enforcement |
| Ethical Educator | OAR 584-020-0035 | Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct for Educators - SHSD Document | TSPC |

For reference purposes, the legal definitions of sexual conduct and child abuse are also provided as well as the ethical educator standards.

Sexual Conduct Definition

ORS 339.370 (12)

(12) Intentionally left blank — Ed.

- (a) “Sexual conduct” means verbal or physical conduct or verbal, written or electronic communications by a school employee, a contractor, an agent or a volunteer that involve a student and that are:
 - (A) Sexual advances or requests for sexual favors directed toward the student; or
 - (B) Of a sexual nature that are directed toward the student or that have the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student’s educational performance, or of creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.
- (b) “Sexual conduct” does not include:
 - (A) Touching or other physical contact:
 - (i) That is necessitated by the nature of the school employee’s job duties or by the services required to be provided by the contractor, agent or volunteer; and
 - (ii) For which there is no sexual intent.
 - (B) Verbal, written or electronic communications that are provided as part of and education program that meets state educational standards or a policy approved by the school board.
 - (C) Conduct or communications described in paragraph (a) of this subsection if the school employee, contractor, agent or volunteer is also a student and the conduct or communications:
 - (i) Arise out of a consensual relationship between students;
 - (ii) Do not create an intimidating or hostile educational environment; and
 - (iii) Are not prohibited by law, any policies of the education provider or any applicable employment agreements.

Child Abuse Definition

ORS 419B.005

- (1) Intentionally left blank —Ed.

(a) “Abuse” means:

- (A) Any assault, as defined in ORS chapter 163, of a child and any physical injury to a child that has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury that appears to be at variance with the explanation given of the injury.
- (B) Any mental injury to a child, which shall include only cruel or unconscionable acts or statements made, or threatened to be made, to a child if the acts, statements or threats result in severe harm to the child’s psychological, cognitive, emotional or social well-being and functioning.
- (C) Rape of a child, which includes but is not limited to rape, sodomy, unlawful sexual penetration and incest, as those acts are described in ORS chapter 163.
- (D) Sexual abuse, as described in ORS chapter 163.
- (E) Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor, as defined in ORS chapter 163, and any other conduct that allows, employs, authorizes, permits, induces or encourages a child to engage in the performing for people to observe or the photographing, filming, tape recording or other exhibition that, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct or contact, as defined in ORS 167.002 or described in ORS 163.665 and 163.670, sexual abuse involving a child or rape of a child, but not including any conduct that is part of any investigation conducted pursuant to ORS 419B.020 or that is designed to serve educational or other legitimate purposes; and
 - (ii) Allowing, permitting, encouraging or hiring a child to engage in prostitution as described in ORS 167.007 or a commercial sex act as defined in ORS 163.266, to purchase sex with a minor as described in ORS 163.413 or to engage in commercial sexual solicitation as described in ORS 167.008.
- (F) Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care that is likely to endanger the health or welfare of the child.
- (G) Threatened harm to a child, which means subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare.

- (H) Buying or selling a person under 18 years of age as described in ORS 163.537.
- (I) Permitting a person under 18 years of age to enter or remain in or upon premises where methamphetamines are being manufactured.
- (J) Unlawful exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in ORS 475.005, or to the unlawful manufacturing of a cannabinoid extract, as defined in ORS 475C.009, that subjects a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or safety.
- (K) The restraint or seclusion of a child in violation of ORS 339.285, 339.288, 339.291, 339.303 or 339.308.
- (L) The infliction of corporal punishment on a child in violation of ORS 339.250 (9).

The Ethical Educator

OAR 584-020-0035

The ethical educator is a person who accepts the requirements of membership in the teaching profession and acts at all times in ethical ways. In so doing the ethical educator considers the needs of the students, the district, and the profession.

- (1) The ethical educator, in fulfilling obligations to the student, will:
 - (a) Keep the confidence entrusted in the profession as it relates to confidential information concerning a student and the student's family;
 - (b) Refrain from exploiting professional relationships with any student for personal gain, or in support of persons or issues; and
 - (c) Maintain an appropriate professional student-educator relationship by:
 - (A) Not demonstrating or expressing professionally inappropriate interest in a student's personal life;
 - (B) Not accepting or giving or exchanging romantic or overly personal gifts or notes with a student;
 - (C) Reporting to the educator's supervisor if the educator has reason to believe a student is or may be becoming romantically attached to the educator; and

(D) Honoring appropriate adult boundaries with students in conduct and conversations at all times.

(2) The ethical educator, in fulfilling obligations to the district, will:

- (a) Apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position of responsibility only on the basis of professional qualifications, and will adhere to the conditions of a contract or the terms of the appointment;
- (b) Conduct professional business, including grievances, through established lawful and reasonable procedures;
- (c) Strive for continued improvement and professional growth;
- (d) Accept no gratuities or gifts of significance that could influence judgment in the exercise of professional duties; and
- (e) Not use the district's or school's name, property, or resources for noneducational benefit or purposes without approval of the educator's supervisor or the appointing authority.

(3) The ethical educator, in fulfilling obligations to the profession, will:

- (a) Maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, exemplifying personal integrity and honesty;
- (b) Extend equal treatment to all members of the profession in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities;
- (c) Respond to requests for evaluation of colleagues and keep such information confidential as appropriate; and
- (d) Respond to requests from a Commission representative for information, furnish documents to the Commission, and participate in interviews with a Commission representative relating to a Commission investigation, except subject to the exercise of any legal right or privilege.

STEARNS CHRONOLOGY

The following chronology was developed using information from witness interviews, documentation provided by the District, such as personnel records, investigation documents, email messages, etc., and from publicly available sources, such as the SHSD website to view Board policies, review Board meeting minutes, etc.

This chronology provides insight into several instances where school administrators had the opportunity to intervene, investigate and potentially stop the alleged sexual conduct, suspected abuse, and other alleged policy violations attributed to Eric Stearns. District records, however, do not show that the administrators took appropriate action.

Chronology of Events – Eric Stearns

August 29, 2016

Eric Stearns was hired by the St. Helens School District (SHSD) to serve as a Vocal Music Teacher at the middle school and high school. Stearns held a Restricted Transitional License from the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) with an endorsement in Music (PK-12). Stearns began teaching exclusively at the high school during the 2018-19 school year

In his application for the position, Stearns disclosed the following two issues:

- That he was placed on paid administrative leave at the start of the 2015-16 school year while working in the Tigard-Tualatin School District.
 - Stearns failed to disclose specifics but said a complaint was filed by a female colleague who had worked in the same school as he did. Stearns reported that he chose to resign his teaching position in the Tigard-Tualatin School District (while he was the subject of an investigation) rather than fight the allegations. See Appendix A.
- That he had been convicted of a misdemeanor crime ten years earlier (theft). See Appendix B.

Prior to Stearns' hire, it is unclear if a SHSD administrator contacted the Tigard-Tualatin School District to inquire further about why Stearns was placed on paid administrative leave and resigned his position while under investigation.

- There were no records in Stearns' personnel file documenting the District followed up with the Tigard-Tualatin School District on this issue.

- There were no records in Stearns' personnel file documenting the District interviewed Stearns about why he was placed on paid administrative leave when he was an employee of Tigard-Tualatin School District, and why he ultimately resigned from his position while under investigation.
- District administration reported the District did not maintain the reference checks related to Stearns' hire (reference check documents were destroyed after three years).

Records show that the SHSD conducted a criminal background check on Stearns at the time he was hired.

- The background report indicated that Stearns pled guilty in 2006 to two counts of Theft in the Second Degree.
- There is also a hand-written note on the document that states. *"6/30/16 – Applicant addressed situation in application. Laura Jackson spoke with Superintendent Stockwell who approved continuation of hiring this individual."* See Appendix C.
- Laura Jackson was a confidential employee who worked in the HR office and handled most of the HR duties at that time. Scot Stockwell served as the HR Director for the District (in addition to being the Superintendent).

Spring of 2019

Eric Stearns successfully completed his three-year probationary period in the St. Helens School District and became a contracted teacher under Oregon law.

August 18, 2019

District records show that [REDACTED], expressed concern that Eric Stearns was *"hitting girls on the bottom during cheer practice."*

- Stearns served as the cheerleading coach during the 2019-20 school year.
- [REDACTED] shared this information during a meeting with Darcy Soto, Assistant Principal, and Ted Hirning, Athletic Director.
- [REDACTED] described the behavior as sexual harassment.

Darcy Soto asked [REDACTED] to provide her with a written description of the alleged sexual harassment, including the dates they occurred. A written account of the alleged sexual harassment was not provided at that time. See Appendix D.

There was no documentation or evidence that indicated high school administrators initiated an investigation or reported the concern to TSPC, or if warranted to DHS or law enforcement. They decided to wait for [REDACTED] to provide additional written details of the alleged sexual harassment/misconduct.

September 17, 2019

In a meeting with Darcy Soto, [REDACTED] again brought up the concern about Stearns' alleged sexual harassment of female athletes during cheer practice.

- Darcy Soto asked [REDACTED] to write down her concerns and provide more specific details about the alleged harassment.
- [REDACTED] needed to leave the meeting and was unable to provide written details at that time. See Appendix D.

High school administration did not initiate an investigation at that time or report the concerns to TSPC, or if warranted to DHS or law enforcement. They decided to wait for [REDACTED] to provide additional written details of the alleged sexual harassment/misconduct.

Ultimately, no investigation was initiated by high school administration. No documentation was located indicating [REDACTED] concerns were investigated or reported to authorities.

November 18, 2019

Darcy Soto, Assistant Principal, received a complaint that Eric Stearns made two (2) comments about a student's alleged sexual relationship with another student.

- Mr. Stearns allegedly made the first comment while talking with three students in his office. Two of the students were in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship at the time and Stearns reportedly said to the male student/boyfriend, *"Oh, were you thanking him [his girlfriend's father] for letting you have sex with his daughter?"*
- The second comment was said during a Music History class. The alleged comment was said to the same male student mentioned above, *"Were you too busy having sex with your girlfriend?"*
- Soto initiated an investigation and interviewed several student witnesses. She also met with Stearns and his union representative to allow Stearns to respond to the allegations.

December 19, 2019

Darcy Soto issued her investigation findings in a memo titled, "Findings of Complaint Investigation." See Appendix E. Soto determined the allegations made against Eric Stearns were founded and that Stearns failed to:

- "Maintain an appropriate professional student-teacher relationship by:
 - demonstrating professionally inappropriate interest in a student's personal life; and
 - failing to honor appropriate adult boundaries with students in conduct and conversation by referencing a student's...alleged sexual relationship..."

Soto determined that Stearns comments about the alleged sexual relationship between two students was consistent with the definition of sexual conduct as defined by TSPC and Oregon Administrative Rule.

Principal Katy Wagner was copied on the memo. In addition, a copy of the memo was to be placed in Stearns' personnel file.

Note: No documentation was located indicating high school administration reported the sexual conduct concerns to TSPC.

January 9, 2020

Darcy Soto issued a "Letter of Reprimand and Directive" to Eric Stearns.

- Soto determined the allegations made against Eric Stearns were founded (as noted in the section above) and directed Stearns to:
 - *"Maintain an appropriate professional student-teacher relationship with all students;*
 - *Honor appropriate adult boundaries with students in conduct and conversation, specifically;*
 - i. Not talk to students about their alleged romantic or sexual relationships;*
 - *Not engage in any behavior that constitutes 'sexual conduct.'"*
- Principal Wagner was copied on the letter and Stearns signed that he received the document on January 9, 2020.

- A copy of the signed reprimand and directive was to be placed in Stearns' personnel file. See Appendix F.

January 27, 2020

The St. Helens Education Association (SHEA) filed a grievance related to the letter of reprimand that was issued to Eric Stearns. The grievance was directed to Principal Wagner.

- SHEA alleged the District violated Section 26.1 (Just Cause) and Article 30 (Complaint Procedures) in issuing the reprimand.
- The letter was signed by Carrie McCallum, SHEA Union Representative. The letter did not have a date but was received by Principal Wagner on January 27, 2020. See Appendix G.

January 29, 2020

Principal Wagner issued a letter to Eric Stearns titled "Grievance Response." After reviewing the grievance filed by SHEA and the investigation conducted by Darcy Soto, Principal Wagner agreed to withdraw the Letter of Reprimand (disciplinary) and issue a Letter of Expectations (non-disciplinary) in its place. See Appendix H.

Superintendent Scot Stockwell and Carrie McCallum, SHEA Representative, were copied on the letter.

Eight months later, on October 6, 2020, the Letter of Expectation was issued to Eric Stearns by Principal Wagner.

- Stearns signed that he received the document on October 13, 2020.
- Superintendent Scot Stockwell and Carrie McCallum, SHEA Representative, were copied on the letter.
- A copy of the letter was placed in Stearns's personnel file. See Appendix I.

March of 2020

Typed interview notes (of student interviews) were located indicating that an investigation had occurred related to Eric Stearns.

- The interviews were conducted in March of 2020. The typed notes, however, do not include the name of the administrator who was investigating the concerns.
- Students expressed the following concerns related to Stearns:

- That Mr. Stearns put pressure on students to stay in the choir program.
- That he embarrassed students in class (in front of their peers).
- That Mr. Stearns made numerous “sexual references” during rehearsals.

No investigation report or other related documents were located.

May of 2024

Eric Stearns organized and led a choir trip to Alaska (on a cruise ship). The trip occurred May 18-25, 2024, and was approved by the SHSD Board of Directors on October 11, 2023.

- Parent concerns related to the potential mismanagement of funds surfaced and were shared with select Board members.

June of 2024

Email communication between former Board Chair Ryan Scholl and Superintendent Stockwell documented concerns related to the potential mismanagement of funds for the choir trip that occurred May 18-25, 2024.

- The funds for the trip were managed by Eric Stearns.
- On June 15, 2024, former Board Chair Scholl asked for an audit to be conducted related to the concerns. Several families had expressed concern to Mr. Scholl regarding the trip and how the funds were managed by Eric Stearns.
- In an email response on June 17, 2024, Superintendent Stockwell agreed and recommended hiring a third-party to conduct the audit. See Appendix J.

Four months later, on October 21, 2024, the District signed a letter of engagement with Pacific Valuation and Forensics, LLC to conduct the forensic audit of the choir cruise to Alaska. See Appendix K.

- It is unclear why it took the district so long to hire a forensic accounting firm.
- As of January 23, 2025, the audit work still had not begun because the District did not provide the relevant documents to the accounting firm.

Note: The following two (2) additional concerns surfaced during this review that may warrant additional investigation:

1. Concern that one high school student may have engaged in a sexual relationship with an older passenger (not a SHSD employee) on the cruise ship.

2. Concern that Eric Stearns may have benefitted financially by arranging this cruise. According to his Facebook page, Mr. Stearns owns Stearns Travel, and he promotes himself as a cruise and travel specialist. Stearns Travel, however, is not listed on the Secretary of State's Business Registry at this time.

September 2024

Former SHHS student Doug Weaver began posting videos on Tik Tok about the \$3.5 million settlement the District agreed to pay to settle a previous sexual abuse lawsuit related to Kyle Wroblewski, a former teacher in the District. Comments in response to Weaver's videos alleged that other teachers in the District engaged in behavior similar to Wroblewski.

September 19, 2024

SHHS administrators and school counselors received a tip from SafeOregon, the statewide school safety tip line, regarding Eric Stearns. The tip was submitted by Doug Weaver.

- Mr. Weaver reported several concerns he received (in response to his Tik Tok videos) regarding alleged sexual misconduct by Eric Stearns.
- Mr. Weaver also wrote, "They have also expressed that they reported incidents involving Mr. Stearns to the principal of the school, Dr. Katy Wagner, and that she failed to take the appropriate next steps."
- The SafeOregon tip was sent (via an automated process) to the following SHHS employees:
 - Dr. Katy Wagner, Principal
 - Nicole Hilton, Assistant Principal
 - Ted Hirning, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director
 - Robby Plowman, Assistant Principal
 - Carissa Chism, School Counselor
 - Kimberly Ross, School Counselor
 - Hannah Davies, School Counselor

Principal Wagner responded to the SafeOregon tip on the same day it was received (September 19, 2024). Her response was sent approximately 3 hours and 22 minutes after the original tip was received. See Appendix L.

- Principal Wagner responded to the tip even though she was specifically mentioned (in the tip) as having failed to appropriately investigate the allegations in the past.
 - Principal Wagner's written response to the tip was, "These allegations were investigated in 2019-20 and handled through HR."

- The tip was then classified as “Resolved.”

September 20, 2024

Hannah Davies, School Counselor, contacted Officer Gaston of the SHPD via telephone on September 20, 2024, to discuss her concerns related to the SafeOregon tip.

- After their telephone conversation, Ms. Davies forwarded the tip to Officer Gaston (on September 20, 2024).

Ms. Davies was the only SHSD employee to contact law enforcement regarding the SafeOregon tip (verified by Detective Sergeant Matt Smith, SHPD).

September 25, 2024

During the School Board meeting on September 25, 2024, Cossette Rogers, a student at SHHS, shared ongoing concerns about student safety and trust issues at the high school.

- During her presentation, Ms. Rogers stated that multiple issues and concerns had been reported to administration and that the situation had not improved.
- She also shared that a teacher had placed his hand inside the mouth of a student to stop her from talking.

At the end of Cossette Rogers’ presentation, Ryan Scholl, former Board Chair, clearly directed Superintendent Stockwell to investigate the allegation.

- Mr. Scholl stated, “I want a full, detailed report on that, immediately.” He went on to reassure the meeting participants, “It will be looked into.” (School Board meeting video posted online).

Later that evening, Ryan Scholl spoke briefly with Cossette Rogers and she identified Eric Stearns as the teacher who allegedly put his hand in the mouth of a student.

October 8, 2024

Thirteen (13) calendar days after the Board meeting, Principal Wagner met with Cossette Rogers to follow up with her regarding her concerns.

- Nicole Hilton, Assistant Principal, was asked to attend the meeting as a witness and Principal Wagner took notes on her computer regarding what was discussed. See Appendix M.
- No other documentation was located related to the District investigating the matter further.

- There was some documentation that suggested the investigation may either 1) stalled while looking for an independent investigator or, 2) halted when the District received the Grand Jury Subpoena related to Eric Stearns and Mark Collins on October 15, 2024.

October 15 – November 5, 2024

On October 15, 2024, two (2) St. Helens police officers served a Grand Jury Subpoena related to Eric Stearns and Mark Collins, at the SHSD District Office. The officers met with Pete Moshinsky, HR Director, and the interaction was recorded on the body camera worn by one of the officers.

- The subpoena requested specific documents directly related to the allegations of sexual abuse made by current and former students.
- When the subpoena was served, the police officers did not make any comments related to Eric Stearns' employment status or whether the District should place Stearns on paid administrative leave.
- Superintendent Stockwell was out of the office when the police officers served the subpoena. Pete Moshinsky notified Stockwell when he returned to work later that day and provided him with a copy of the subpoena. Moshinsky also sent a copy of the subpoena to Elliot Field, an attorney for the SHSD.

On October 16, 2024, Pete Moshinsky consulted with Elliot Field, an attorney for the SHSD, regarding the specific instructions provided in the Grand Jury Subpoena. The written instructions were:

- *"You are hereby required not to disclose the existence of this request. Any such disclosures could impede the investigation being conducted and thereby interfere with the enforcement of the law. If you have questions about this subpoena, please call Officer Edwards at 503-397-3333."*
- Elliot Field counseled the District to follow the plain language in the subpoena and not to immediately place Eric Stearns on paid administrative leave so as not to impede the investigation or interfere with the enforcement of the law.
 - Handwritten notes provided by Pete Moshinsky of his telephone conversation with Elliot Field specifically state "Call Edwards." Moshinsky did not recall the exact meaning of the notation.
 - Neither Superintendent Stockwell or Pete Moshinsky contacted Officer Edwards or any other official at the St. Helens Police Department or the Columbia County District Attorney's Office to discuss the subpoena.

- No effort was made to explore options regarding how the District could follow the instructions provided in the subpoena (i.e., not disclose the existence of the subpoena) and still adhere to Board policy (which required administrators to place an employee suspected of abuse on paid administrative leave pending an investigation).
- In addition, when the subpoena was delivered to Pete Moshinsky, Detective Edwards informed him to contact Detective Smith or Chief Hogue if he had questions about the subpoena. The following is a direct quote from Detective Edwards to Pete Moshinsky:
 - *"I'm gonna deliver you a subpoena today for some records I'm requesting. Uh, regarding the investigation that we're doing on some of your, your staff members. Uh, it is an ongoing investigation. I'm sure you're gonna have lots of questions. I cannot answer those questions, but if you want to contact either Matt Smith or, uh, Chief Hogue, that would be your best option."*
 - Neither Pete Moshinsky or Superintendent Stockwell contacted Detective Smith or Chief Hogue to discuss the subpoena.
- Ultimately, Stearns was not placed on paid administrative leave.
 - No known complaints surfaced related to Eric Stearns between October 15, 2024, (when the District received the subpoena) and November 12, 2024, (when Stearns was arrested).

Issues Related to the Grand Jury Subpoena

- School Board members were not informed about the subpoena.
 - Board members were not made aware of any law enforcement investigation until Eric Stearns and Mark Collins were arrested by the St. Helens Police Department on November 12, 2024.
- The following five (5) SHSD employees were the only individuals identified as having knowledge of the Grand Jury Subpoena:
 - Superintendent Scot Stockwell
 - Pete Moshinsky, HR Director
 - Katy Wagner, Principal of SHHS
 - Ted Hirning, SHHS Assistant Principal
 - Jen Johnston, SHHS Head Secretary
- Email communication shows that Pete Moshinsky notified Principal Wagner of the subpoena on November 5, 2024, to solicit her assistance in locating documents that were responsive to the subpoena.

- Principal Wagner verbally notified Jen Johnston of the subpoena to solicit her help in locating documents (exact date unknown). Katy Wagner also spoke briefly with Ted Hirning and gave him a heads up on the development (exact date unknown).

November 12, 2024

St. Helens police officers arrested Eric Stearns at the SHSD District Office on November 12, 2024. Mark Collins, a retired math teacher, was arrested the same day.

November 21, 2024

An envelope was found in Eric Stearns' office on November 21, 2024 (after his arrest). There was \$2,864 in cash and checks in the envelope. Christy Woodard, Chief Financial Officer, took control of the funds that same day, double counted the funds in front of witnesses, deposited the cash, and then contacted legal counsel to discuss how to handle the checks.

- Eric Stearns did not handle the funds according to SHSD procedures. Cash and checks should be turned into the office daily and not retained by individual teachers.

FINDINGS RELATED TO ERIC STEARNS

Documentation revealed there were a total of eight (8) instances between August of 2016 and October of 2024 where school administrators had the opportunity to intervene, investigate and potentially stop the alleged sexual conduct, suspected abuse, and other alleged policy violations attributed to Eric Stearns. District records, however, do not show that the administrators took appropriate action.

Each of the eight (8) instances were discussed briefly in the chronology that preceded this section. The following is simply a more succinct presentation of those eight (8) instances to help the reader understand what occurred:

1. **August 29, 2016** – Related to the hiring of Eric Stearns. There was no evidence the District exercised their due diligence and conducted a thorough reference check on Eric Stearns before he was hired.
 - a. There were no records in Stearns' personnel file documenting the District contacted the Tigard-Tualatin School District and inquired why Stearns was placed on paid administrative leave when he was an employee of that district, and why Stearns ultimately resigned from his position while under investigation.
 - b. There were no records in Stearns' personnel file documenting the District interviewed Stearns about why he was placed on paid administrative leave when he was an employee of Tigard-Tualatin School District, and why he ultimately resigned from his position while under investigation.
 - c. The lack of documentation in Stearns' personnel file calls into question if the hiring process used by the SHSD was thorough and if all potential "red flags" were investigated and resolved before Stearns was offered a position in the District.
2. **August to September of 2019** – Related to the allegation that Eric Stearns engaged in sexual harassment/misconduct (i.e., *"hitting girls on the bottom during cheer practice"*).
 - a. There were no records indicating the sexual harassment/misconduct allegation was investigated or reported to authorities by high school administration even though documents show the concern was reported to them on, at least, two occasions.

- b. The high school administration should have investigated the allegation. All allegations of sexual harassment/misconduct (including the allegation that was made in this case) must be investigated in a timely manner and, when warranted or required by law, reported to the authorities.
- 3. **November of 2019 to January of 2020** – Related to concerns that Eric Stearns engaged in sexual conduct.
 - a. After conducting an investigation, a high school administrator determined Stearns' conduct constituted sexual conduct. However, there was no record that Mr. Stearns' conduct was reported to authorities.
 - b. The St. Helens Education Association (SHEA) grieved the disciplinary action imposed on Stearns and Katy Wagner changed the discipline to a Letter of Expectations (which is non-disciplinary).
 - c. It took another eight months for the Letter of Expectations to be issued to Eric Stearns by Principal Wagner. The letter was issued on October 6, 2020, and Stearns signed the letter on October 13, 2020.
 - d. In short, it took a total of eleven (11) months, from the original date of the incidents, for corrective measures to be implemented (November of 2019 to October 13, 2020).
- 4. **March of 2020** – Related to the allegation that Mr. Stearns made numerous "sexual references" during rehearsals.
 - a. Although a limited investigation into this concern did occur (on some level), there is no evidence that a thorough investigation occurred. This is noteworthy given the fact that Eric Stearns was investigated just a few months earlier by an assistant principal for engaging in alleged sexual conduct.
- 5. **June of 2024** – Related to allegations that Eric Stearns potentially mismanaged funds related to a choir trip that occurred in May of 2024.
 - a. The District failed to respond to this allegation in a timely manner and take decisive action to investigate the concern.
 - b. It took the District four (4) months to hire a forensic accounting firm to investigate this concern and, as of January 23, 2025, the audit work still had not begun because the District did not provide the relevant documents to the accounting firm.

6. **September 19-20, 2024** – Related to the SafeOregon tip alleging sexual misconduct by Eric Stearns.
 - a. Documentation revealed that this tip was disregarded by Principal Wagner and not properly investigated by high school administration.
 - b. Had it not been for Hannah Davies, School Counselor, who reported this issue to law enforcement, the concerns may not have been properly investigated.
7. **September 25, 2024** – Related to Cossette Rogers’ presentation to the Board of Directors and comments made about a teacher placing his hand inside the mouth of a student.
 - a. Although the former Board Chair, Ryan Scholl, directed Superintendent Stockwell to look into the concerns “immediately,” it took administration thirteen (13) calendar days before they met with Ms. Rogers to begin their investigation.
 - b. As of January 23, 2025, there was no documentation that any substantive investigation occurred related to this concern, except for the initial meeting that was held with Cossette Rogers. There was no record that this issue was reported to authorities.
8. **October 15, 2024** – Related to not placing Eric Stearns on paid administrative leave when the District received the Grand Jury Subpoena.
 - a. The District did not place Eric Stearns on paid administrative leave when he was suspected of engaging in abuse (as required by Board Policy GBNAB/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements).

Based on a thorough review of all available information, it is clear that school administrators had multiple opportunities to intervene, investigate and potentially stop the alleged sexual conduct, suspected abuse, and other alleged policy violations attributed to Eric Stearns.

Documentation shows that, on several occasions, school and District administration disregarded their professional responsibilities and failed to adhere to their legal and ethical responsibilities, District policies, and best practices.

The lack of decisive and timely administrative action, in response to the numerous allegations that were made against Eric Stearns, runs counter to, and is in conflict with, the District’s commitment to provide “safe and effective learning environments” for all students.

COLLINS CHRONOLOGY

The following chronology was developed using information from witness interviews, documentation provided by the District, such as personnel records, investigation documents, email messages, etc., and from publicly available sources, such as the SHSD website to view Board policies, review Board meeting minutes, etc.

Chronology of Events – Mark Collins

August 29, 2016

Mark Collins was hired by the St. Helens School District to serve as an Advanced Math Teacher at the high school. Collins held a Preliminary Teaching License from the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission with endorsements in Advanced Mathematics, Engineering Technology, and Information and Communications Technology.

In his application for the position, Collins did not disclose any previous incidents or concerns when responding to the standard background questions.

Records show that the SHSD conducted a criminal background check on Collins at the time he was hired. No issues or concerns were noted in the background check.

Spring of 2019

Mark Collins successfully completed his three-year probationary period in the St. Helens School District and became a contracted teacher under Oregon law.

December of 2019

Between December 9-12, 2019, high school administration received three (3) student reports of “inappropriate verbal comments and inappropriate and/or unwanted touching of female students.” As a result, Mark Collins was placed on paid administrative leave by Principal Wagner on December 13, 2019, pending the outcome of an investigation into the concerns. See Appendix N.

- Concerns expressed by the three (3) students include:
 - *“So, my first day he grabbed my shoulder and squeezed and ran his hand down my shoulder, after a few days he touched my leg.”*

- *"He has rubbed my arm and put his fingers in my hair and said, 'come on, get to work.' Almost every class that I showed up to 2nd period, he would touch me either on my shoulder or on my hair/head or neck."*
- *"He came to where I was sitting...and sat very close to me, in front of me...he said 'you missed so much' he put his hand on the side of my leg for like two seconds and then took it away. As he continued to talk, he touched my leg two more times."*

Records indicate that Principal Wagner took the lead in conducting the investigation.

- Interviews were conducted with the three (3) original complainants and a random sampling of twenty-two (22) students in each of the six (6) classes Collins taught.
- Principal Wagner's interview notes document that several students had observed Collins touch other students.
- Principal Wagner's notes also clearly document the fact that several additional students also reported being touched by Collins (students other than the original three complainants).
- The following additional concerns were documented in Dr. Wagner's notes (in addition to the three original complaints):
 - *"There have been times that he [Collins] has come up to girls and rub their lower backs up and down close to their butt...I told him to stop when he did it to me and he stopped...It made me feel uncomfortable."*
 - *"He [Collins] put his hand on my shoulder, left it there when he was talking to me, and ran his hand down my arm. That made me feel uncomfortable."*
 - *"He [Collins] has touched my head and tousled my hair."*
 - *"He [Collins] rubbed my shoulders and other times the middle of my back. He will do it in the hallway when I'm walking to class. He's rubbed my back four times. He's touched me probably a total of 7 times. It bothers me. It's weird."*

Dr. Wagner met with Collins and his union representative on December 18, 2019, and provided him with an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

Note: No documentation was located indicating Principal Wagner reported these concerns to TSPC, DHS or law enforcement.

December 20, 2019

Principal Wagner issued her investigation findings to Mark Collins on December 20, 2019, in a memo titled, "Letter of Findings and Expectations." See Appendix O.

Principal Wagner wrote:

- "I have determined there is sufficient evidence to substantiate that you physically touched students in the upper back, neck, or leg area."
- "Based on interviews and your statements, I find that there was never any sexual intent to these physical interactions, and therefore does not constitute sexual harassment or sexual conduct under SB 155."

Dr. Wagner also outlined and emphasized the behavioral expectations Collins needed to adhere to going forward.

Note: Once again, no documentation was located indicating Principal Wagner reported these concerns to TSPC, DHS or law enforcement.

The letter was signed by Mark Collins on January 9, 2020, and a copy was to be placed in his personnel file. However, the letter was not included in Collins' personnel file. It was located in an investigation file at the high school and not the employee's official personnel file.

It is unclear when Mark Collins was allowed to return to his classroom and if any additional monitoring occurred.

Superintendent Stockwell was not copied on the letter.

November of 2021

Documentation shows that an investigation occurred in November of 2021. Interview notes document that eleven (11) students were interviewed but it is unclear which administrator conducted the investigation.

The investigation focused on classroom management issues and the experience students had in Collins class. There were no allegations (and no documentation) that Mark Collins engaged in any type of sexual misconduct.

June 17, 2022

Mark Collins resigned from his position as a math teacher at St. Helens High School.

October 15, 2024

Two (2) St. Helens police officers served a Grand Jury Subpoena related to Mark Collins and Eric Stearns, at the SHSD District Office on October 15, 2024. The officers met with Pete Moshinsky, HR Director, and the interaction was recorded on the body camera worn by one of the officers.

- The subpoena requested specific documents directly related to the allegations of sexual abuse made by current and former students.
- School Board members were not informed of the subpoena.
 - Board members were not made aware of any law enforcement investigation related to Mark Collins until he was arrested by the St. Helens Police Department on November 12, 2024.

November 12, 2024

St. Helens police officers arrest Mark Collins and Eric Stearns.

FINDINGS RELATED TO MARK COLLINS

1. Documentation shows that Principal Wagner disregarded her professional responsibilities in December of 2019 and failed to report significant student concerns related to Mark Collins to TSPC, DHS or law enforcement.
 - a. Although Principal Wagner followed District policy and placed Collins on paid leave while an investigation was conducted, she did not follow mandatory reporting requirements related to either suspected sexual conduct or suspected child abuse.
2. A copy of the “Letter of Findings and Expectations” dated December 20, 2019, and signed by Mark Collins on January 9, 2020, was supposed to be placed in his personnel file. However, a copy of the letter was not located in Collins official personnel file (the letter was found in an investigation file at the high school instead).
 - a. It is unclear why the letter was not placed in Collins’ official personnel file.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: DISTRICT POLICY

District Policy

Thirty-four (34) Board policies and administrative regulations (ARs) were identified as being relevant to the scope of this investigation. Spencer Lewis, J.D., Director of Policy Services for the Oregon School Boards Association, was asked to review the following thirty-four (34) SHSD Board policies and ARs and provide feedback based on his professional experience:

Section B – Board Governance

- BF – Policy Development
- BFC – Adoption and Revision of Policies
- BFCA – Administrative Regulations
- BFD – Board Policy Implementation
- BFG – Board Policy Review

Section C - Administration

- CH – Policy Implementation
- CHA – Development of Administrative Regulations

Section G - Personnel

- GBN/JBA – Sexual Harassment
- GBN/JBA-AR – Sexual Harassment Complaint Process
- GBNA – Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing, or Cyberbullying - Staff
- GBNA-AR – Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing or Cyberbullying Reporting Procedures - Staff
- GBNA/JHFF – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements
- GBNAB/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements
- GCAB – Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media – Staff
- GCDA/GDDA – Criminal Records Check and Fingerprinting
- GCDA/GDDA-AR - Criminal Records Check and Fingerprinting

Section I - Instruction

- IIBGA – Electronic Communications System
- IIBGA-AR – Electronic Communications System

Section J - Students

- JBA/GBN – Sexual Harassment
- JBA/GBN-AR – Sexual Harassment Complaint Process
- JFCF – Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing, Cyberbullying, Teen Dating, Domestic Violence - Student
- JFCF-AR – Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing, Cyberbullying, Teen Dating Violence Reporting Procedures - Student
- JH – Student Welfare
- JHFE/GBNAB – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements
- JHFE-AR (1) – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child
- JHFE-AR (2) – Abuse of a Child Investigations Conducted on District Premises
- JHFF – Reporting Requirements Regarding Sexual Conduct with Students
- JHFF-AR – Sexual Conduct Complaint Form
- JHFF/GBNAA – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements

Section K – Community Relations

- KL – Public Complaints
- KL-AR (1) – Public Complaint Procedures
- KN – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies
- KN-AR – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies
- KN-AR (2) – Investigations Conducted on School Premises

Findings: District Policy

1. Out of the thirty-four (34) policies/ARs reviewed, Spencer Lewis recommended the following. The complete analysis is attached to this report. See Appendix P.
 - a. Fourteen (14) SHSD policies/ARs – No updates were needed.
 - b. Two (2) SHSD Administrative Rules – Recommended deleting the ARs.
 - c. Eighteen (18) SHSD policies/ARs – Recommended the Board of Directors review OSBA sample policies/ARs and consider updating their existing policies/ARs.

2. Several of the eighteen (18) recommended updates were relatively minor. However, the Board of Directors should carefully review the recommendations related to the following five (5) policies:

a. GBNA/JHFF – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements

- The SHSD policy was consistent with the OSBA version at the time Eric Stearns and Mark Collins were arrested (November 12, 2024). OSBA released a new update in December of 2024 that the Board should consider reviewing. OSBA has an AR (which provides additional instruction and guidance for staff), which SHSD does not have.

Note: This Board policy directs an administrator who receives a report of suspected sexual conduct by an employee to follow the procedures established in GBNA/JHFF-AR. However, this administrative regulation (GBNA/JHFF-AR) does not exist in the SHSD online policy manual.

b. GBNA/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements

- The SHSD policy aligns with the OSBA version except for some of the procedural language in the first paragraph. OSBA has two ARs (which provides additional instruction and guidance for staff), which SHSD does not have.

Note: This Board policy also directs an administrator who receives a report of suspected abuse by an employee to follow the procedures established in GBNA/JHFE-AR. However, this administrative regulation (GBNA/JHFE-AR) does not exist in the SHSD online policy manual.

c. GBNA-AR – Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing or Cyberbullying Reporting Procedures – Staff

- The definitions in the SHSD administrative regulation, such as “hazing (based on students), harassment, intimidation (missing protected classes) and cyberbullying do not match” the OSBA version. Procedures largely match, with some notification pieces absent.

d. JHFE-AR(1) – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child

- The SHSD administrative regulation does not incorporate recent changes primarily related to reporting through the centralized reporting system.
- e. JHFF-AR – Sexual Conduct Complaint Form
 - The SHSD administrative regulation contains only a form and does not provide additional written guidance for staff. The version from OSBA provides instruction and guidance for staff.
- 3. Currently, numerous SHSD Board Policies and administrative regulations need to be reviewed and updated. Administrative regulations (which provides additional instruction and guidance for staff) are lacking in the critical areas of reporting suspected child abuse and suspected sexual conduct.
- 4. Board Policy BF – Policy Development clearly states that the superintendent is responsible for “initiating, reviewing, and recommending new policies or policy modifications.” The relevant section of the policy is provided below:

“The basic responsibility for initiating, reviewing and recommending new policies or policy modification will rest with the superintendent.”
- 5. Based on a review of all available information, Superintendent Stockwell failed to work with the Board of Directors to ensure the above referenced Board policies were updated and kept current with OSBA recommendations.

Recommendations: District Policy

1. Review and update Board policies as specified in the analysis conducted by the Oregon School Boards Association. According to the analysis, eighteen (18) policies/ARs should be reviewed by the Board and updated as deemed appropriate. See Appendix P.
2. Require the superintendent to bring all OSBA policy updates to the Board of Directors (or a policy subcommittee of the Board), in a timely manner and on a regular basis, so the Board can review and discuss which policies/ARs need to be updated in order to best serve and protect the students, staff and families in the school district.
3. Consider implementing an adult/student boundaries policy similar to the one implemented by Portland Public Schools (PPS) titled, “Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students.” This policy was implemented by PPS in 2019

after a high-profile case where an educator was accused of engaging in sexual conduct for years. See Appendix Q.

- a. The purpose of this policy was to establish clear expectations and a common understanding for all adults in the District related to setting consistent and safe boundaries with students.
 - b. Collaborate with students, staff, families, local Associations in developing any new policy.
 - c. If implemented, all employees, volunteers, contractors, etc. will need to be trained annually on the expectations outlined in policy.
4. Consider implementing a Board policy that provides clear guidance to staff on how to handle cash from fund raising activities. SHSD has procedures in place but no specific Board policy.
 - a. To clarify, this policy was not part of the OSBA policy review project. Christy Woodard, Chief Financial Officer, notified the investigator of the envelope of cash and checks found in Eric Stearns's office on November 21, 2024. In reviewing this issue, it was discovered that SHSD did not have a specific Board policy in place to provide guidance on how cash is handled in schools.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: DISTRICT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

District Policy Implementation

SHSD Board Policy is clear that the superintendent is responsible for implementing Board policies. Policy also states that other administrators share in this responsibility while the Board's duty is "to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and the effectiveness of the administration's implementation of the policy." The relevant excerpts from two (2) policies are provided below:

"Board Policy CH - Policy Implementation

The superintendent is responsible for implementing the Board's policies and interpreting them to staff, students and the public. Other administrators also share in this responsibility."

"Board Policy BFD – Board Policy Implementation

The superintendent and administrative staff will implement Board policies.

It will be the Board's duty to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and the effectiveness of the administration's implementation of the policy."

Witness interviews and a review of documentation revealed that important policies related to reporting suspected child abuse and suspected staff sexual conduct with students (specifically Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNAA/JHFF) were not fully implemented and adhered to in SHSD.

Documentation and witness interviews also confirmed that the District lacked an effective monitoring system to ensure staff and individual schools were in full compliance with Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNAA/JHFF.

Findings: District Policy Implementation

Findings related to reporting of suspected child abuse and suspected sexual conduct.

1. District administration failed to fully implement and adhere to the following two (2) Board adopted policies:

- a. GBNAB/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements, and
 - b. GBNA/JHFF – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements.
2. Board Policy GBNAB/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements specifically requires SHSD staff to report suspected incidents of child abuse.

- a. This did not occur in the past related to Mark Collins and Eric Stearns. The policy specifically states:

“Abuse of a child by district employees, contractors, agents, volunteers, or students is prohibited and will not be tolerated. All district employees, contractors, agents, volunteers and students are subject to this policy and the accompanying administrative regulation.

Any district employee who has reasonable cause to believe that another district employee, contractor, agent, volunteer or student has engaged in abuse, or that a student has been subjected to abuse by another district employee, contractor, agent, volunteer or student shall immediately report such to the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) or its designee or the local law enforcement agency pursuant to ORS 419B.015, and to the designated licensed administrator.”

Finding related to placing staff suspected of engaging in abuse or sexual conduct on paid administrative leave

3. Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNA/JHFF require administrators, when reasonable cause exists, to place employees suspected of engaging in sexual conduct or suspected child abuse on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation.
- a. This did not occur in the past related to Eric Stearns. It also did not occur more recently related to Eric Stearns, when the SHSD received a Grand Jury Subpoena on October 15, 2024.
 - b. Board Policy GBNAB/JHFE – Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements specifically states the following:

“When there is reasonable cause to support the report, a district employee suspected of abuse shall be placed on paid administrative leave pending

an investigation and the district will take necessary actions to ensure the student's safety."

- c. Board Policy GBNA/JHFF – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements contains an almost identical paragraph:

"When there is reasonable cause to support the report, a district employee suspected of sexual conduct shall be placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation and the district will take necessary actions to ensure the student's safety."

Findings related to the October 15, 2024, Grand Jury Subpoena

- 4. Superintendent Stockwell and Pete Moshinsky, HR Director, consulted with Elliot Field, an attorney for the SHSD, regarding the specific instructions provided in the Grand Jury Subpoena the District received on October 15, 2024. The written instructions were:

"You are hereby required not to disclose the existence of this request. Any such disclosures could impede the investigation being conducted and thereby interfere with the enforcement of the law. If you have questions about this subpoena, please call Officer Edwards at 503-397-3333."

- 5. Elliot Field counseled the District to follow the plain language in the Grand Jury Subpoena and not immediately place Eric Stearns on paid administrative leave so as not to impede the investigation or interfere with the enforcement of the law."
- 6. Superintendent Stockwell and Pete Moshinsky followed the advice of legal counsel and did not place Eric Stearns on paid administrative after the subpoena was received by the District.
- 7. However, the subpoena specifically stated, *"If you have questions about this subpoena, please call Officer Edwards at 503-397-3333."*
 - a. Neither Superintendent Stockwell or Pete Moshinsky contacted Officer Edwards or anyone else at the St. Helens Police Department or the Columbia County District Attorney's Office to discuss the subpoena.
 - b. No conversations occurred related to how the District could follow the instructions provided in the subpoena (i.e., not disclose the existence of the subpoena) and still adhere to Board policy (which required administrators to place an employee suspected of abuse on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation).

Additional Findings

8. Additional areas where the district failed to implement Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNAA/JHFF related to suspected child abuse and suspected staff sexual conduct included the following:
 - a. Failing to formally designate one administrator, and one alternate, in each school building to receive reports of suspected sexual conduct and child abuse and neglect.
 - b. Failing to formally post the names and contact information of the designated administrator and alternate in each building.
 - c. Failing to hold administrators and staff accountable if they failed to implement and adhere Board policies with fidelity.

Findings related to implementing Erin's Law (child sex abuse prevention instruction)

9. The District failed to fully implement required child sex abuse prevention instruction to all students (K-12), as required by SB 856 (Child Sex Abuse Prevention Instruction), commonly known as Erin's Law, and as required by OAR 581-022-1440.
 - a. In July of 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 856 (sex abuse prevention instruction) which required schools to annually provide age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention instruction (K-12). Subsequently, the Oregon State Board of Education passed changes to administrative rule 581-022-2050 (a Division 22 standard) to include instructional standards related to child sexual abuse prevention for students (K-12).
 - b. SHSD Board Policy IGAI (related to human sexuality and health education) contains specific language that requires administrators to implement Erin's Law in the District. The policy states the following:

"A part of the comprehensive plan of instruction shall provide age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention instruction for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The district must provide a minimum of four instructional sessions annually; one instructional session is equal to one standard class period."

- c. A review of SHSD curriculum and instructional practices at each building revealed the following:
 - i. Four (4) schools were in full compliance with Erin's Law and Board policy. These schools were also historically in compliance with the law.
 - 1. Columbia City Elementary School
 - 2. Lewis and Clark Elementary School
 - 3. McBride Elementary School
 - 4. St. Helens Virtual Academy (K-5)
 - ii. All other schools did not implement Erin's Law (prior to the recent controversy) and were not in compliance with the law and Board policy. The schools that were out of compliance were:
 - 1. St. Helens High School
 - 2. St. Helens Middle School
 - 3. Plymouth High School
 - 4. St. Helens Virtual Academy (6-12)
- d. After raising questions about Erin's Law during staff interviews, administrators moved quickly to develop implementation plans for Erin's Law at these schools. Implementation plans were shared with the investigator and all schools plan to be in compliance with Erin's Law and Board policy this school year. See Appendix R.

Recommendations: District Policy Implementation

- 1. Fully implement and enforce school board policies related to reporting suspected child abuse and reporting suspected staff sexual conduct with students (specifically Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNA/JHFF).
 - a. Require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and report all staff suspected of engaging in potential child sexual abuse to DHS and/or law enforcement, and staff suspected of engaging in sexual conduct to ODE or TSPC.
 - b. When reasonable suspicion exists, require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and immediately place employees suspected of engaging in sexual conduct or suspected child abuse on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation.

- i. Consult with the Columbia County District Attorney or SHPD Chief of Police if there are questions related to how to implement this policy when served with a Grand Jury Subpoena.
 - c. Require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and formally designate one administrator, and one alternate, in each school building who is designated to receive reports of suspected sexual conduct and child abuse and neglect.
 - d. Formally post the names and contact information of the designated administrator and alternate in each building, as required by adopted Board policy.
 - e. Hold administrators and staff accountable if they fail to implement and adhere to these Board policies with fidelity.
- 2. Fully implement Erin's Law (SB 856 related to child sexual abuse prevention instruction) in all schools. SB 856 requires schools to provide specific instruction related to preventing child sexual abuse each school year and at each grade level.
 - a. Hold administrators accountable if they fail to implement Erin's Law with fidelity.
- 3. Monitor the effectiveness of Board policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the administration's implementation of adopted policy. This could be achieved by having the superintendent, other key administrators or staff provide periodic verbal and/or written updates to the Board regarding the implementation of key Board policies.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFF TRAINING

Annual Staff Training

The District uses an online training platform operated by Public School Works (PSW), a private company, to provide a series of online compliance training courses for staff. Course topics in the SHSD vary from recognizing and responding to child abuse and neglect, to fire safety and fire extinguisher use. Public School Works manages much of the work for school districts which includes not only providing the online training but also managing recordkeeping related to staff who successfully completed their annual training and staff who did not.

One weakness of the PSW platform is that staff can rapidly advance through all of the video instruction and simply take the online assessment at the end of the training (usually ten multiple choice questions). Staff who score 70% or higher pass the course. If necessary, staff can take the assessment multiple times until they secure a passing score.

Online compliance training can be effective for school districts if it is implemented effectively. However, in the case of the St. Helens School District, witness testimony and data reviewed by the investigator confirmed that large percentages of District employees were completing their online trainings in a very short period of time.

Findings: Annual Staff Training

1. The District provided an Excel document with four (4) years of data related to PSW annual trainings. The Excel document contained the following information:
 - Names of district employees (for each school year)
 - Names of courses completed for each employee
 - Individual test scores for each employee
 - Completion time for each course
 - Date of course completion
2. An analysis of the annual training data related to sexual conduct, child abuse, sexual harassment, and reviewing/acknowledging required SHSD Board policies, revealed that large percentages of staff failed to devote adequate time to review

the online instruction (or skipped completely over the online instruction) and proceeded to take the assessment).

3. For the purpose of this report, four (4) different tables were provided to show the percentage of staff who completed specific online courses and how long it took to complete each individual course. The tables are below.
4. Table 1 - PSW course titled “Abuse, Sexual Conduct and Appropriate Communications in Oregon”
 - a. Over a four (4) year period, an average of 38.4% of staff completed the course in less than five (5) minutes, and 59.8% of staff completed the course in less than ten (10) minutes.
 - b. The course was rated by Public School Works to take an average person approximately 60 minutes to complete.
 - c. The investigator enrolled in and took this course, and it took over 60 minutes to read and advance through all of the course material.

Table 1: Abuse, Sexual Conduct and Appropriate Communications in Oregon

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 35.2% | 38.6% | 42.3% | 36.8% | 38.4% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 23.3% | 19.6% | 17.2% | 25.4% | 21.4% |
| 10 – 20 minutes | 12.6% | 12.3% | 14.8% | 11.2% | 12.7% |
| 20 – 30 minutes | 8.1% | 8.2% | 4.9% | 9.4% | 7.7% |
| 30 – 60 minutes | 8.9% | 9.2% | 9.6% | 7.6% | 8.8% |
| More than 60 minutes | 11.9% | 12.0% | 11.2% | 9.6% | 11.1% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 60

5. Table 2 - PSW course titled “Recognizing and Responding to Child Neglect and Abuse in Oregon”

- a. Over a four (4) year period, an average of 67.8% of staff completed the course in less than five (5) minutes.
- b. The course was rated by Public School Works to take an average person approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- c. The investigator enrolled in and took this course, and it took a little over 30 minutes to read and advance through all of the course material.

Table 2: Recognizing and Responding to Child Neglect and Abuse in Oregon

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 70.3% | 65.0% | 66.5% | 69.7% | 67.8% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 8.6% | 12.4% | 9.6% | 11.3% | 10.6% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 3.4% | 4.1% | 4.5% | 5.0% | 4.3% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 3.0% | 3.2% | 4.8% | 3.2% | 3.6% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 3.0% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.7% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 1.5% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.1% | 2.1% |
| More than 30 minutes | 10.2% | 9.9% | 9.9% | 6.6% | 9.0% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 30

6. Table 3 - PSW course titled “Title IX: Protecting Students and School Employees from Sexual Harassment”

- a. Over that same four (4) year period, an average of 44.6% of staff completed the course in less than five (5) minutes.
- b. PSW rated the course as taking approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Table 3: Title IX: Protecting Students and School Employees from Sexual Harassment (General Awareness)

The course was renamed in 2024-25. The new title is now “Title IX: Federal 2024 Amendments Training for All School Employees”

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 38.2% | 23.2% | 38.5% | 53.4% | 44.6% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 21.3% | 30.4% | 19.2% | 15.4% | 19.0% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 11.6% | 3.6% | 13.5% | 7.7% | 9.2% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 5.6% | 10.7% | 3.8% | 3.9% | 5.0% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 3.0% | 0.0% | 5.8% | 4.4% | 3.7% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 3.7% | 5.4% | 1.9% | 4.1% | 3.9% |
| More than 30 minutes | 16.5% | 26.8% | 17.3% | 11.0% | 14.6% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 30-35

7. Table 4 - PSW course titled “St. Helen's School District Board Policies”

- a. Over a four (4) year period, an average of 77.5% of staff completed the course in less than five (5) minutes.
- b. The District rated the course as taking approximately 30 minutes to review thirty (30) individual SHSD Board policies/ARs.
- c. The investigator enrolled in and took this course, and it took well over 30 minutes to review the thirty (30) Board policies/ARs. The amount of time allotted by the District was not realistic for the number of Board policies an individual was expected to review.

Table 4: St. Helen's School District Board Policies

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 75.0% | 75.0% | 77.8% | 81.2% | 77.5% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 11.4% | 11.3% | 10.0% | 6.0% | 9.4% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.6% | 2.3% | 3.4% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 2.9% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 3.4% | 2.2% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 0.7% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.3% | 1.5% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 1.1% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 1.8% | 1.3% |
| More than 30 minutes | 4.8% | 5.9% | 3.9% | 3.9% | 4.6% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 30

8. During interviews with SHSD staff, most employees reported that the content in the PSW courses was “good” or “pretty good” if staff actually watch and engage with the online videos/instruction.
 - a. However, staff also reported the training did not provide an opportunity for employees to ask questions, discuss real-life scenarios, etc., especially as it pertained to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and suspected sexual conduct.
 - b. Several employees described the online training as “boring” and acknowledged that many people skipped over the online instruction.
9. District administrators reported that employees were provided a minimum of four (4) hours of work time to complete all required annual trainings.

Recommendations: Annual Staff Training

Improve the District’s annual staff training in the following ways:

1. Consider halting the use of Public School Works online training related to sexual conduct, child abuse and neglect, and sexual harassment. Data revealed that large percentages of staff disregarded or de-emphasized the online training.
2. Instead, consider providing annual, mandatory in-person training for all SHSD staff related to child sexual abuse prevention, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, reporting of suspected sexual conduct, and sexual harassment reporting. Document and maintain records of staff attendance/participation.
 - a. During the training, ensure there are opportunities for staff to ask questions and discuss real-life scenarios (i.e., how to actually report a concern to DHS or law enforcement, etc.).
 - i. Ensure this training is provided to new employees who are hired after the traditional start of the school year.
 - b. A majority of individuals who were interviewed as part of this investigation, commented that they appreciated the in-person training provided by the District after the arrests of Stearns and Collins. Several individuals also stated they learned more during the in-person trainings and liked having the opportunity to ask questions and discuss real-life scenarios with their colleagues.

3. Require appropriate training for volunteers and contractors related to child sexual abuse prevention, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, reporting of suspected sexual conduct, and sexual harassment reporting.

Note: A slightly more detailed version of the tables presented in this section are included in the appendix. The tables simply provided some additional detail for SHSD administrators regarding the percentage of staff who take longer than the rated time to complete their online courses. See Appendix S.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: REPORTING PRACTICES

Reporting Practices

District employees submitted a total of 495 mandatory child abuse and neglect reports to DHS between July of 2020 to December 18, 2024. The District provided PDF copies (in a secure and confidential Google Drive folder) of all reports that were submitted to DHS during this time period.

The investigator reviewed each child abuse report as well as the District's practices related to mandatory child abuse reporting. The review confirmed that staff were following Board policy/procedures and adhering to their legal obligations related to being a mandatory reporter.

In addition, the data related to the number of reports submitted to DHS was organized by year and by school/location. The information was placed in a table to see if any trends or concerns emerged.

Table 5 on the next page of this report clearly shows District employees reported concerns to DHS on a regular basis.

- Refer to Table 5 on the Next Page -

Table 5: Reports of Suspected Child Abuse – St. Helens School District (2020-2025)

| School/Location | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025* |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Columbia City Elementary | 3 | 11 | 8 | 9 | 16 |
| Lewis & Clark Elementary | 13 | 27 | 28 | 30 | 28 |
| McBride Elementary | 16 | 12 | 19 | 18 | 15 |
| McBride Early Learning | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Plymouth High School | | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| St. Helens Middle School | 7 | 19 | 49 | 32 | 15 |
| St. Helens High School | 5 | 20 | 32 | 25 | 13 |
| St. Helens Cubs Corner | | | | 1 | |
| St. Helens Virtual Academy | | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| District Office | 1 | | | | |
| Total | 45 | 97 | 140 | 123 | 90 |

* Note: 2024-2025 data as of 12/18/2024

Presenting the data in this manner shows the obvious increase in the total number of reports submitted to DHS since the 2020-21 school year when schools were closed due to the pandemic. In addition, the data suggests the number of reports submitted to DHS this school year (2024-25) has the potential of exceeding previous school years (with 90 total reports already having been submitted by December 18, 2024).

As previously mentioned in this report, however, there are two (2) significant concerns related to the District's established reporting practices. The concerns are:

1. That specific administrators failed to report employees suspected of engaging in abuse to DHS or law enforcement, and
2. That current online training provided by Public School Works related to mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect may not be the most effective method for training staff on such a critically important topic.
 - a. The essential question for the District is whether more effective training for staff will result in an increased awareness of your employees' reporting obligations and, ultimately, provide a higher level of care and protection for students in your school district.

Recommendations: Reporting Practices

1. Consider monitoring the District's practices related to mandatory child abuse reporting on an annual basis.
 - a. Staff reported that the District typically does not analyze the child abuse reporting data they receive at the District Office. Some school leaders find value in analyzing the data annually to see if any emerging trends develop in their school district.
 - b. The data can help administrators, school counselors, social workers, etc. better allocate limited resources if there are emerging needs in a particular school or across the district.
2. Consider convening a group of administrators, school counselors, social workers and a representative from DHS to discuss the District's practices related to mandatory child abuse reporting.
 - a. Local context is important when reviewing a school district's practices, especially when it involves such an important issue as mandatory child abuse reporting. It is likely that facilitating a conversation between SHSD staff and DHS to discuss the District's practices will generate ideas for further improving reporting practices.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

Findings: Monitoring and Accountability

1. Documentation and witness interviews confirmed that the District lacked an effective monitoring system to ensure staff and individual schools were in full compliance with Board policies and, when necessary, hold staff accountable. This finding encompasses the following:
 - a. Board of Directors – There was no system in place to monitor the effectiveness of Board policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the administration’s implementation of adopted policy.
 - b. District Administration – The process and procedures that were implemented to monitor school, program, and district-wide compliance with Board policies was not effective or adequate, especially as it pertained to monitoring and enforcing policies related to reporting suspected child abuse and suspected staff sexual conduct with students.
 - c. High School Administration – There was no coherent or effective systems in place at the high school to effectively monitor and ensure staff were in compliance with Board policies and, when necessary, hold staff accountable.
2. As noted previously in this report, the District was out of compliance with OAR 581-022-2050 related to implementing Erin’s Law. This administrative regulation (a Division 22 standard) requires school districts to provide child sexual abuse prevention instruction annually for students (K-12).
 - a. However, the SHSD reported to the Oregon Department of Education that the District was in full compliance with this standard.
 - b. The Board of Directors approved the annual Division 22 report (for the 2023-24 school year) presented by Superintendent Stockwell at its October 23, 2024, Board meeting. The report stated the District was in full compliance with the standard, when it was not.

- c. Since the District was clearly out of compliance with Erin's Law, it calls into question how carefully the District monitors its programs and how carefully administrators review and use the Division 22 standards to critically evaluate District programs, policies, and procedures. This is especially important as it pertains to issues related to the safety and well-being of students, child abuse reporting and child abuse prevention instruction.

Recommendations: Monitoring and Accountability

1. Develop a process for the Board of Directors to monitor the effectiveness of Board policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the administration's implementation of adopted policy.
 - a. Hold administrators accountable for monitoring programs, systems and staff and ensuring Board policy is followed.
2. Consider requiring the superintendent and administrative team to develop a written process to guide their work in monitoring programs, systems and staff. The document should clearly establish expectations and responsibilities.
3. Consider requiring the high school administration to develop a separate written process to guide their work in monitoring high school programs, systems and staff.
4. Consider improving the District's process related to how administrators evaluate and verify that District programs meet the state required Division 22 standards.
 - a. This would require administrators to carefully review each standard and then use the standards to critically evaluate District programs, policies, and procedures to determine compliance.
 - b. Require administrators to maintain evidence of compliance with the state standards (this is also a requirement of OAR 581-022-2305).

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SCHOOL DISTRICT CULTURE

This section of the report pertains to school district culture as it relates to implementing the following Board policies:

- Child sexual abuse prevention
- Reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect
- Reporting of suspected sexual conduct, and
- Sexual harassment

Findings: School District Culture

During the investigation, student/staff climate survey data was requested for both the high school and middle school for the last five (5) years. Typically, climate data can provide valuable information and/or reveal trends regarding district culture that can help inform your work going forward.

The information received, however, was largely unusable and not helpful in attempting to assess culture. The district provided the following data:

- One year of survey data for the middle school (for 2020) and for the high school (for 2022) but it was difficult/impossible to draw conclusions for one year's worth of data that was now 3-5 years old.

Given the challenges in acquiring useable student/staff climate information, the review relied heavily on interview data.

Employee interviews revealed the following:

1. All of the employees interviewed stated they cared deeply about the students, the school district, and the St. Helens community. Their statements were genuine, sincere and heartfelt.
2. District staff and Board members frequently described the need for change as a moral imperative and talked about the need to do everything possible to protect students and provide a safe and welcoming environment.

3. Many staff reported that the initial feeling of shock they felt at the beginning of the controversy has subsided and they want the District to move forward (as rapidly as possible) and implement the necessary changes to protect students.
4. In short, there was overwhelming support for the improvement process the District has already started.

Recommendations: School District Culture

1. Implement annual student and staff climate surveys at the middle and high schools, analyze the data, develop a work plan or improvement plan to address any significant issues that surface, and share the information publicly.
2. Implement an annual parent/family survey, analyze the data, develop a work plan or improvement plan to address any significant issues that surface, and share the information publicly.

SUMMARY OF ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and update Board policies as specified in the analysis conducted by the Oregon School Boards Association. Eighteen (18) policies/ARs should be reviewed by the Board and updated as deemed appropriate. See Appendix P.
2. Fully implement and enforce school board policies related to reporting suspected child abuse and reporting suspected staff sexual conduct with students (specifically Board Policies GBNAB/JHFE and GBNA/JHFF).
 - a. Require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and report all staff suspected of engaging in potential child sexual abuse to DHS and/or law enforcement, and staff suspected of engaging in sexual conduct to ODE or TSPC.
 - b. When reasonable suspicion exists, require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and immediately place employees suspected of engaging in sexual conduct or suspected child abuse on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation.
 - i. Contact the Columbia County District Attorney or SHPD Chief of Police if there are questions related to how to implement this policy when served with a Grand Jury Subpoena.
 - c. Require administrators to adhere to adopted Board policy and formally designate one administrator, and one alternate, in each school building who is designated to receive reports of suspected sexual conduct and child abuse and neglect.
 - d. Formally post the names and contact information of the designated administrator and alternate in each building, as required by adopted Board policy.
 - e. Hold administrators and staff accountable if they fail to implement and adhere to these Board policies with fidelity.
3. Fully implement Erin's Law (SB 856 related to child sexual abuse prevention instruction) in all schools. SB 856 requires schools to provide specific instruction related to preventing child sexual abuse each school year and at each grade level.

- a. Hold administrators accountable if they fail to implement Erin's Law with fidelity.
4. Require the superintendent to bring all OSBA policy updates to the Board of Directors (or a policy subcommittee of the Board), in a timely manner and on a regular basis, so the Board can review and discuss which policies/ARs need to be updated in order to best serve and protect the students, staff and families in the school district.
5. Develop a process for the Board of Directors to monitor the effectiveness of Board policy and evaluate the effectiveness of the administration's implementation of adopted policy.
 - a. Hold administrators accountable for monitoring programs, systems and staff and ensuring Board policy is followed.
6. Require administrators to follow and implement progressive discipline in instances where staff have violated school district policies and/or procedures, and to follow the specific language contained in collective bargaining agreements.
7. Conduct thorough reference checks on all applicants (finalists) for all positions in the District (licensed, classified, and administrative).
 - a. If an applicant discloses any issue or potential concerns on their application, or if the background check comes back with a past criminal conviction, thoroughly investigate the issues or concern. If satisfied and the applicant is hired, maintain all documentation that verifies a thorough reference check was completed.
8. Consider implementing an adult/student boundaries policy similar to the one implemented by Portland Public Schools titled, "Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students." This policy was implemented in 2019 after a high-profile case where an educator was accused of engaging in sexual conduct for years. See Appendix Q.
 - a. The purpose of this policy was to establish a common understanding and clear expectations for all adults in the District related to setting consistent and safe boundaries with students.
 - b. Collaborate with students, staff, families, and your local Associations in developing any new policy.

- c. If implemented, all employees, volunteers, contractors, etc. will need to be trained annually on the expectations outlined in policy.
- 9. Consider halting the use of Public School Works online training related to sexual conduct, child abuse and neglect, and sexual harassment. Data revealed that large percentages of staff disregarded or de-emphasized the online training.
 - a. Instead, consider providing annual, mandatory in-person training for all SHSD staff related to child sexual abuse prevention, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, reporting of suspected sexual conduct, and sexual harassment reporting. Document and maintain records of staff attendance/participation.
 - b. During the training, ensure there are opportunities for staff to ask questions and discuss real-life scenarios (i.e., how to actually report a concern to DHS or law enforcement, etc.). Ensure this training is provided to new employees who are hired after the traditional start of the school year.
 - c. A majority of individuals who were interviewed as part of this investigation, commented that they appreciated the in-person training provided by the District after the arrests of Stearns and Collins. Several individuals also stated they learned more during the in-person trainings and liked having the opportunity to ask questions and discuss real-life scenarios with their colleagues.
 - d. Require appropriate training for volunteers and contractors related to child sexual abuse prevention, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, reporting of suspected sexual conduct, and sexual harassment reporting.
- 10. Provide intensive training and support to district and building level administrators to help them develop a higher level of competence in conducting investigations, especially related to complaints made against staff. Most administrators reported they did not have formal training in how to conduct investigations.
 - a. Provide a higher level of training and support for administrators who are formally designated to receive complaints or concerns related to alleged staff sexual conduct or alleged child abuse.
 - b. Require administrators to document all complaints or concerns related to alleged staff misconduct.

- c. Hold administrators accountable if they fail to properly investigate and document all complaints made against staff.
- 11. Implement a centralized tracking system to document all complaints made against staff and their outcomes, including student complaints.
- 12. Implement a centralized storage system and maintain the investigation files for all complaints made against staff and their outcomes.
- 13. Review and revise the student complaint process at SHHS. Develop written procedures regarding how student complaints will be handled by high school administrators (complaints alleging staff misconduct would be processed using different procedures).
 - a. Analyze the student complaint data on an annual basis to see if there are emerging patterns or concerns that need additional administrative attention or response.
 - b. Develop procedures for maintaining student complaints.
- 14. Develop written procedures to guide administrators on how best to respond to tips received through SafeOregon, the statewide school safety tip line. The procedures should include expectations and procedures for investigating tips, maintaining documentation, and include specific language that an administrator is prohibited from responding to or investigating the issue if they are named in the SafeOregon tip.
- 15. Consider monitoring the District's practices related to mandatory child abuse reporting on an annual basis.
 - a. Staff reported that the District typically does not analyze the child abuse reporting data they receive at the District Office. Some school leaders find value in analyzing the data annually to see if any emerging trends develop in their school district.
 - b. The data can help administrators, school counselors, social workers, etc. better allocate limited resources if there are emerging needs in a particular school or across the district.
- 16. Consider convening a group of administrators, school counselors, social workers and a representative from DHS to discuss the District's practices related to mandatory child abuse reporting.

- a. Local context is important when reviewing a school district's practices, especially when it involves such an important issue as mandatory child abuse reporting. It is likely that facilitating a conversation between SHSD staff and DHS to discuss the District's practices will generate ideas for further improving reporting practices.
- 17. Implement annual student and staff climate surveys at the middle and high schools, analyze the data, develop a work plan or improvement plan to address any significant issues that surface, and share the information publicly.
- 18. Implement an annual parent/family survey, analyze the data, develop a work plan or improvement plan to address any significant issues that surface, and share the information publicly.
- 19. Consider implementing a Board policy that provides clear guidance to staff on how to handle cash from fund raising activities. SHSD has procedures in place but no specific Board policy.
- 20. Consider requiring the superintendent and administrative team to develop a written process to guide their work in monitoring programs, systems and staff. The document should clearly establish expectations and responsibilities.
- 21. Consider requiring the high school administration to develop a separate written process to guide their work in monitoring high school programs, systems and staff.
- 22. Consider improving the District's process related to how administrators evaluate and verify that District programs meet the state required Division 22 standards.
 - a. This would require administrators to carefully review each standard and then use the standards to critically evaluate District programs, policies, and procedures to determine compliance.
 - b. Require administrators to maintain evidence of compliance with the state standards (this is also a requirement of OAR 581-022-2305).
- 23. Implement all corrective actions with a high level of transparency and accountability. Share your progress with the community (the successes and setbacks) on a regular basis.

ISSUES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The following two (2) additional concerns surfaced during this review that may warrant additional investigation:

1. Concern that one high school student may have engaged in a sexual relationship with an older passenger (not a SHSD employee) on a choir trip to Alaska (on a cruise ship) in May of 2024.
2. Concern that Eric Stearns may have benefitted financially by arranging a choir trip to Alaska (on a cruise ship). According to his Facebook page, Mr. Stearns owns Stearns Travel, and he promotes himself as a cruise and travel specialist. Stearns Travel, however, is not listed on the Secretary of State's Business Registry at this time.

APPENDIX

**Information Item: [REDACTED] Timeline & Documentation**

1 message

Soto, Darcy <darcys@sthelens.k12.or.us>

To: Katy Wagner <katyw@sthelens.k12.or.us>, Ron Hernley <ronh@sthelens.k12.or.us>, Ted Hirning <tedh@sthelens.k12.or.us> Mon, Nov 4, 2019 at 10:24 AM

As a follow up to the concern expressed by [REDACTED], the following is a timeline of the events:

July 22, 2019 - [REDACTED] sends email to Ted Hirning expressing concerns re: Eric Stearns coaching practices (see attached). Concerns are related to lack of communication, uniform measurements, safety, and favoritism. There is no mention of any concerns appropriate student-staff boundaries.

August 16, 2019 - Eric Stearns sends email to Darcy Soto with description of behavior concerns for [REDACTED] (see attached) including cyberbullying, harassment, defiance, and disrespectful behavior and communication during practice and outside of practice times.

August 18, 2019 - Meeting in Darcy Soto's office with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] brings up concerns that Eric Stearns has had the practice of hitting girls on the bottom during cheer practice, and asked how we were going to respond to this concern of sexual harassment. I requested that she provide me with a written description of the specific nature of the sexual harassment with the dates of these occurrences, and gave her a copy of SHSD Board Policy JBA/GBN-AR with the details on the complaint procedure. She said that they would get this list to us soon.

August XX, 2019 (date unknown, but prior to 9/3 based on emails below) - After not receiving any information regarding the concern of sexual harassment, I reached out to [REDACTED] and left her a voice mail to request that she send me specific information on her concerns with dates of alleged sexual harassment behavior. I did not receive a call back.

September 17, 2019 - Meeting in Darcy Soto's office with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] brought up the concern of sexual harassment, and I asked her if she could take a few moments to write down her concerns and give me some specific information with the nature of the behavior and dates of concern. She declined and said she needed to leave.

September 20, 2019 - Met with Kelly Foster from OSAA at the away Football game. She brought up this parent and indicated that she had responded to the parent's email to her and requested that the parent follow up with sending us the written documentation as we had requested. She forwarded me her email communication with [REDACTED] (below). She said that she had not heard back from this parent since her email.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kelly Foster** <kellyf@osaa.org>

Date: Fri, Sep 20, 2019 at 9:19 PM

Subject: Fwd: Safety concerns

To: Darcy Soto (Asst. Prin. St. Helens <darcys@sthelens.k12.or.us>)

- Kelly

KELLY FOSTER
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dear Dr. Wagner,

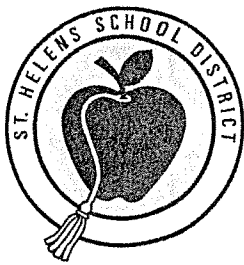
The St. Helens Education Association is filing a grievance related to a letter of reprimand that was issued to Eric Stearns. Please see the details of the grievance below.

- a. Statement of Grievance: Eric Stearns was issued a letter of reprimand and directive dated 1/9/2020. This disciplinary action lacks just cause. In addition, the District has failed to apply the Complaint Procedure.
 - i. The letter of reprimand falsely accuses Mr. Stearns of failing to maintain appropriate boundaries with students on two separate occasions, both of which were not substantiated.
 - ii. Even if the student's statement is believed (despite evidence to the contrary) the punishment does not meet the infraction, as this is the first complaint Mr. Stearns has received since being employed in the district. The district is treating this as two different incidents of wrongdoing when both have not been substantiated and did not try to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level.
 - iii. The discipline against Mr. Stearns was not administered in an evenhanded manner.
 - iv. Mr. Stearns was not given all of the information that formed the basis for the action against him, as the letter of reprimand refers to an interview "with the student's mother who verified that the student recounted the incident to her on the day it occurred." No such interview transcript was ever presented to the employee and was not referred to until the letter of reprimand.
 - v. Mr. Stearns did not have the opportunity to face his accusers and respond to the charges.
- b. Contract Provision(s) Violated: Section 26.1 (just cause); Article 30 (complaint procedure).
- c. Remedy Sought:
 - i. Rescind the letter of reprimand;
 - ii. Cease and desist from issuing unjust discipline;
 - iii. Adhere to the provisions of the Complaint Procedure in the future.

Sincerely,



Carrie McCallum
SHEA Union Representative



GROWING THE FUTURE

474 North 16th Street

St. Helens, Oregon
97051

503.397.3085

503.397.1907 fax

www.sthelens.k12.or.us

Scot Stockwell
Superintendent

SCHOOL BOARD

Bill Amos
Chair

Trinity Monahan
Vice Chair

Melody Killens

Kellie Smith

Ryan Scholl

To: Eric Stearns, SHHS Teacher

From: Dr. Katy Wagner, Principal

RE: Grievance Response

January 29, 2020

Dear Mr. Stearns:

This letter is in response to a written grievance submitted on your behalf by SHEA Union Representative, Carrie McCallum, received by me on January 27, 2020.

I have reviewed the grievance concerns, Letter of Reprimand and Directive issued by Assistant Principal Darcy Soto on January 9, 2020, meeting notes, and your responses. The grievance outlines the following concerns:

1. That the letter of reprimand falsely accuses you of failing to maintain appropriate boundaries with students on two separate occasions that were unsubstantiated,
2. That the punishment does not meet the infraction due to this being your first complaint in the district,
3. That discipline was not administered in an evenhanded manner,
4. That you were not given the interview transcript of a conversations Ms. Soto had with a student's mother, and
5. That you were not given the opportunity to face your accusers and respond to the charges.

After close review of the file relating to these incidents, I have serious concerns about the nature of the alleged conversations. Determining credibility in situations where staff are in private or near private conversations with students can be problematic and delicate. You shared concerns about motive due to the strained relationship the students had with you, as their coach, and your daughter, who was a witness. These relationships further complicate the investigation.

While there is disagreement as to comments made in the private conversation, you did admit to jokingly referencing sex in the second occasion, apologizing for making the statement, and moving on in class.

With the passing of Senate Bill 155, we must be extra vigilant in our conversations with and around students. Specifically, sexual conduct is now defined more broadly as meaning "verbal or physical conduct or verbal, written or electronic communications by a school employee... that involve a student and that are... B) Of a sexual nature that are directed toward the student or that have the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment."

As of January 1, 2020, these allegations by these students would have resulted in you being placed on immediate leave pending an investigation by TSPC, which could have taken up to 90 days. As this investigation was concluded prior to this date, we were able to avoid this leave and the implications it would have on you and your programs.

APPENDIX H

It is clear to me that you are passionate about establishing and maintaining positive relationships with students and enriching their lives through the arts and activities. It is important to remember that you must maintain a professional student-teacher relationship at all times, particularly when students may be discussing their personal life. Any further discussions or comments made that may meet the definitions as set forth by SB 155 will result in immediate leave pending an external investigation.

Based on the assessment of the totality of the investigation and your responses, I am willing to draft a Letter of Expectations to replace the Letter of Reprimand.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Katy Wagner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. Katy Wagner
Principal
St. Helens High School

Cc: Carrie McCallum, SHEA Representative
Scot Stockwell, Superintendent

Fwd: Cruise issue. Do not read until you are working.

From [REDACTED]
Date Sun 12/22/2024 3:44 PM
To Home <rlscholl@msn.com>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ryan Scholl <rscholl@sthelens.k12.or.us>
Date: June 17, 2024 at 9:20:52 AM PDT
To: "Stockwell, Scot" <scots@sthelens.k12.or.us>
Subject: Re: Cruise issue. Do not read until you are working.

Very true. I agree with you. .
Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 17, 2024, at 9:19 AM, Stockwell, Scot <scots@sthelens.k12.or.us>
wrote:

The more I think about it the more I think we may want to bring in an outside person. If we have no findings some folks will think we are sweeping things under the carpet.

On Mon, Jun 17, 2024 at 9:10 AM Ryan Scholl <rscholl@sthelens.k12.or.us>
wrote:

I think to start an accounting from Mr. Stearns on each person with their payments and the \$10,000.00 donation applied. He should have clear records of each payment everyone paid, any fundraising applied and what is left on payments. And if he is short on paying the district back he should have a written plan on how it's going to be paid back or is the district on the hook for the funds.

Ryan.
Sent from my iPhone

<scots@sthelens.k12.or.us> wrote:

And by the way, your subject heading made me smile! Thanks for that . . .

On Sat, Jun 15, 2024 at 9:22 PM Scholl, Ryan

<rscholl@sthelens.k12.or.us> wrote:

In the last few days since the donut issue there has been some information shared with me from a few concerned parents. After hearing all of this I am asking for an audit and a complete list of the cruise the choir went on. I know school just ended and I am not expecting to see it right away. I want to see the student list and the chaperone list and payments that went under the school district. Also, there was a \$10,000.00 donation for this cruise. Did the school district receive the donation and was it applied to all the student/chaperone accounts for payment? I want to see a breakdown for each person and their payments. I know there were some parents that booked through Mr. Stearns own travel company and we don't need to be concerned with that. Here are the reasons why.

Total price per person was \$1400.00 per person.

Family A.

They were a chaperone couple and overpaid \$600.00. They were promised extra things on the cruise since they had overpaid but on the cruise they did not receive the extra perks they were promised.

Family B.

They were told they still owed \$900. When they finally talked to Mr. Stearns it somehow dropped to a "just pay \$100.00 and your good" They tried to talk to Mrs. Peterson but was told Mr. Stearns was handling all of the payments.

Family C.

They had paid \$800.00, Then they figured they owed about \$300.00 left after the donation. Mr. Stearns then told them they owed over \$900.00. That is way over the \$1400.00.

Family D.

This family did not talk with me but from what I have heard from other parents. Two students and two adult chaperones. Mr. Stearns let them go without paying at all. He is close to this family. Parents are questioning if he used the donation

to cover them. The donation should have been spread out evenly between all students.

Mr. Stearns is planning to do a trip to Canada this next school year. I would like to see him use a company or have help this next year. I strongly believe the School District should not be paying up front for the trips and trying to collect the money later. I fear the district will not get all of the money back now and set a precedent. If you would like to meet and talk more I can make time this week. I am off Tuesday all day. Thank you for your time.

Ryan Scholl

--

Strengthening Community Through Exceptional Schools

Scot A. Stockwell

Superintendent

St. Helens School District 502

503-397-3085

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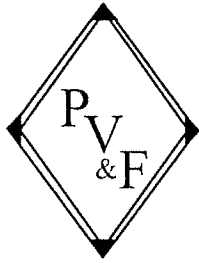
Strengthening Community Through Exceptional Schools

Scot A. Stockwell

Superintendent

St. Helens School District 502

503-397-3085



Pacific Valuation & Forensics, LLC

October 18, 2024

St. Helens School District
Attn: Scot Stockwell
474 N. 16th Street
St. Helens, Oregon, 97051

Dear Mr. Stockwell,

This letter confirms the engagement of Pacific Valuation & Forensics, LLC. and St. Helens School District (the "Client"), as of October 18, 2024. We are engaged to examine accounting records of the St. Helens School District (the "District") as identified by the administration for potential misappropriation of assets related to funds collected from fundraising for a choir cruise trip and to examine student account balances showing questionable deficits related to the trip.

We will perform an examination regarding potential irregularities or misappropriations of funds for the period the records are provided by the administration. The nature of our procedures will be limited. Therefore, fraud may exist in the District that we will not identify during performance of those procedures.

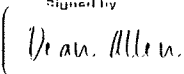
During the course of our engagement, it may be necessary for us to prepare written reports that support our conclusions. We will report to you directly, and submit to you all reports, communications, and work product. These reports are to be used only in connection with the referenced engagement and may not be published or used in any other manner without the written consent of Pacific Valuation & Forensics, LLC.

We understand that in preparing this matter, it may be necessary for you to share with us your theories, impressions, conclusions, and other thought processes. Consequently, we understand that the work performed by us will be confidential. All work papers and documentation or other documents used by us during this engagement will be maintained in segregated files, and such originals may be returned to you upon the completion of our engagement upon request.

We will submit bills to you monthly, payable within 30 days, which will be based on our standard hourly rate for this type of consulting of \$330 for staff time and \$450 for partner time plus out-of-pocket expenses. We expect to spend up to 30 hours on this project and anticipate the total fee to range between \$5,000 and \$10,000. We will require a retainer of \$5,000 at the execution of this agreement. The retainer will be applied toward payment of our final billing in connection with the engagement. If we encounter unusual circumstances that would require us to expand the scope and hours of the engagement, we will discuss this with you before doing additional work.

By acknowledging acceptance of the terms of this engagement, you represent and warrant that you have the authority from St. Helens School District to employ Pacific Valuation & Forensics, LLC on the terms and conditions set forth herein. If this is in accordance with your understanding and meets with your approval, please sign and date and have your client sign and date one copy of this letter in the space provided. If the need for additional services arises, our agreement with you will need to be revised. It is customary for us to enumerate these revisions in an addendum to this letter.

Pacific Valuation & Forensics, LLC

Signed by

By: Dean L. Allen, CPA, CVA, MAFF

The Undersigned agrees to proceed on the above terms and conditions.

DocuSigned by:
Scot Stockwell
Client: 068F4F45B6EE4C1

Date: 10/21/2024

From: Davies, Hannah hannahd@sthelens.k12.or.us
Subject: Fwd: (3367) (153426) You have a new SafeOregon Tip
Date: January 8, 2025 at 2:36 PM
To: novotneyconsultants@gmail.com

It looks like others are not named on here who it is sent to, I was thinking on our Linewize reports. I seem to have access to my account which lists the response and who it was sent to. Let me know if you have any questions.

SAFEOREGON Incidents Resources Settings

Incident Notes (3)

Automated Process
Sep 19, 2024 @ 2:11 PM
Initial contact notice sent to: tip@safeoregon.com

Agent Jarissa C. Call Center
Sep 19, 2024 @ 2:41 PM
Time Lapse set to 1 minute
New Incident Types:
- School Complaint
Tip Level: Standard
Status changed to: Confirmed
Reported to:
- Principal Katy Wagner (katiw@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Nicole Hilton (nicoleh@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Ted Hining (tedh@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Robby Plowman, Assistant Principal (robbyp@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Carissa Chism, Counselor (carissac@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Kimberly Ross, Counselor (kimberlyr@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- Hannah Davies, Counselor (hannahd@sthelens.k12.or.us)
- OSP Contact 1 as of 1/26/22 - Lisa Miller (lisamiller@osp.oregon.gov)
- OSP Contact 2 - Coral Smith - 2nd number to try 503-551-4765 (csmith2@osp.oregon.gov)

Principal Katy Wagner
Sep 19, 2024 @ 6:23 PM
Action Taken changed to: These allegations were investigated in 2019-20 and handled through IIR
Status changed to: Resolved

----- Forwarded message -----

From: SafeOregon <tip@safeoregon.com>
Date: Thu, Sep 19, 2024 at 2:41 PM
Subject: (3367) (153426) You have a new SafeOregon Tip
To: <hannahd@sthelens.k12.or.us>

This report contains confidential information from the reporting party. Please make every effort to keep the identity of the reporter confidential. SafeOregon encourages confidential and anonymous reporting.

A report has been submitted through the SafeOregon web site:

Direct Link: <https://app.safeoregon.com/i/br4r>
Reported by: Doug Weaver Art
School: St. Helens High School

Location of the incident: In an email
When the incident occurred: Sep 19 @ 4:00 PM
Has incident been reported to an adult: Dr. Katy Wagner *principal
How many times has this situation happened: This is the first time
Target of bullying, harassing, intimidating or harm: Students
Person(s) causing harm: Eric Stearns *choir Teacher
Type of person sending in the report: Online Content Creator
Tip Level: Standard
Type of Incident: School Complaint

Optional contact information for the reporter: Dougweaverart@gmail.com/ 314-401-6485

Description of the incident: Tipster emailed,
Reporting Suspected Abuse and Suspicious Behavior
Hello!

I am an online content creator and in reply to one of my videos multiple students from St. Helens High School expressed their concerns about misconduct by their choir teacher who is named Eric Stearns. They have also expressed that they reported incidents involving Mr. Stearns to the principal of the school, Dr. Katy Wagner, and that she failed to take the appropriate next steps.

Here are their remarks:

Message 1:

" Hey I don't know if you'll look at this message, but the st Helen's high school and school district is still hiding predators to this day. There's a teacher there who's been the choir teacher for like 4-5 years now. He was also a cheerleader coach for a while. There's multiple girls who have tried to report him for inappropriate comments, conversations, and even inappropriate touching. I quit choir because of him. He never made gross comments towards me, but my freshman year he definitely got closer than a teacher should and I didn't realize until years later. He would give me full on hugs and would sometimes come up behind me and massage my shoulders while I was looking over our music sheets. Looking back at it now, it was definitely very much groomy vibes. He's given girls sex advice, and touched a girls backside during practice. The school won't do anything. When reported, the principal Katy wegner protected him because they are friends.

" You have a bigger platform and I was wondering if you could shed light on this issue please, before more girls get hurt because Saint Helen's won't do anything about it."

Message 2:

"thank you so much for speaking out about shhs, eric stearns was my choir teacher, also the cheer coach, he had me stay behind after class MULTIPLE times to "work" on parts of our music but would say inappropriate things to me while giving me "feedback" and i had multiple friends on the cheer team that were too scared to say anything. thank you so much for speaking up for us."

Comment:

"shhs is soooo fcked up; all of the teachers/staff there protect & hide each others evil. I was SA'd at cheer camp by the choir teacher (who was coaching the cheer team: they did nothing to help me."

-

There were a few other comments referencing this teacher but I did not screenshot them so I don't have them now. I do have the names of the tiktok accounts who went these messages. I am concerned about these students receiving negative reactions from the school by talking about this online. I can share those account names which will make them identifiable, but I want to make sure that they are kept safe from harassment.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.


Doug Weaver
314-401-6485

Helpful tip: enter the SafeOregon phone number, 844-472-3367, as a contact in your cell phone. This way you will recognize the number if SafeOregon ever needs to call you.

--

Hannah Davies, MS, NCC
High School Counselor
St. Helens School District

Prohouns: she/her

#153426 _ Incidents _
SafeOregon - Report... 
55 KB

| OSBA Policy Analysis | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| | Code | Matches OSBA Code and Title? | District Adoption | Last OSBA Update | Policy Designation | Notes | Recommendation | |
| 2 | BF | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 10/8/2015 | Highly Recommended | SH policy largely matches OSBA sample. Lone difference is the district's inclusion of the superintendent making "all final policy recommendations to the Board." | No update needed | |
| 3 | BFC | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 6/30/2016 | Highly Recommended | OSBA has two version. SH version is most like version 1. SH version has some unresolved bracketed language ([consensus] [majority vote]) that should be resolved. There is a formatting difference between the SH and OSBA versions, but it does not significantly impact the policy. | No update needed | |
| 4 | BFCA | Close, no significant differences | 1/23/2019 | 10/8/2015 | Highly Recommended | OSBA's version includes "(AR)" at the end of the title, but SH does not (not significant). SH has amended the bracketed language in paragraph 3. | No update needed | |
| 5 | BFD | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 10/8/2015 | Highly Recommended | SH's policy closely matches OSBA's sample, the only language that differs: 1) OSBA's sample says that board members will be provided information regarding access of policies; 2) SH's policy states that policies are available on the website. | No update needed | |
| 6 | BFG | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 10/8/2015 | Highly Recommended | Largely match | No update needed | |

| | Code | Matches OSBA Code and Title? | District Adoption | Last OSBA Update | Policy Designation | Notes | Recommendation |
|----|------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|--|
| 7 | CH | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 4/5/2016 | Optional | Largely match | No update needed |
| 8 | CHA | Yes | 1/23/2019 | 4/5/2016 | Optional | Match | No update needed |
| 9 | GBN/JBA | Yes | 9/23/2020 | 11/24 (prev. 4/04/24, 7/20/2020) | Required | | Update to match current policy. |
| 10 | GBN/JBA-AR | Matches old version | 3/4/2019 | OSBA no longer has this AR (prev. 7/31/20) | | In the November 2024 update, OSBA | Delete |
| 11 | GBNA | Yes | 12/11/2019 | 2/28/2019 | Highly Recommended | Largely match | No update needed |
| 12 | GBNA-AR | Yes | 11/13/2019 | 10/5/2021 | Highly Recommended | Definitions of hazing (based on students), harassment, intimidation (missing protected classes) and cyberbullying do not match OSBA's. Procedures largely match, with some notification pieces absent. | Review sample and update. |
| 13 | GBNAA/JHFF | Yes | 12/7/2021 | 12/24 (prev. 10/05/21) | Required | SH policy is consistent with the OSBA version prior to the 12/24 update. OSBA has an AR, which SH does not have. | Review recent update and make appropriate edits. |
| 14 | GBNAB/JHFE | Yes | 12/7/2021 | 4/04/2024 (prev. 10/05/2021) | Required | Policies align except for some of the procedural language in the first paragraph. OSBA has two ARs. | Review sample and consider updating. |

| Code | Matches OSBA Code and Title? | District Adoption | Last OSBA Update | Policy Designation | Notes | Recommendation |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------|---|--|
| 15 GCAB | Yes | 2/26/2020 | 11/22/2019 | Highly Recommended | SH policy does not include "public websites" in paragraph 5. SH policy addresses communications re: "non-school-related matters" while OSBA's addresses "school-related matters." | Review sample and consider updating. |
| 16 GCDA/GDDA | Yes | 12/11/2019 | 04/04/24 (prev. 7/18/19) | Required | In April 2024, OSBA condensed GCDA/GDDA and GCDA/GDDA-AR into a single document, policy GCDA/GDDA. | Review sample policy and considering updating. |
| 17 GCDA/GDDA-AR | Matches old version | 11/13/2019 | OSBA no longer has this AR (prev. 8/8/2022, 7/18/2019) | | In the April 2024 Update, OSBA deleted this AR. | Delete |
| 18 IIBGA | Yes | 6/3/2021 | 4/22/2021 | Required | SH policy largely matches OSBA sample. Lone difference is the addition of AR requirements in item 8. | |
| 19 IIBGA-AR | Yes | 8/28/2019 | 4/22/2021 | Required | SH policy is consistent with OSBA sample, but not identical. OSBA has made updates regarding technical terms and the inclusion of bias incidents and symbols of hate. | Review sample policy and considering updating. |
| 20 JBA/GBN | See GBN/JBA above | | | | | |
| 21 JBA/GBN-AR | See GBN/JBA-AR above | | | | | |
| 22 JFCF | Yes | 12/7/2021 | 10/5/2021 | Required | Largely match. A few minor differences. | No update needed. |

| Code | Matches OSBA Code and Title? | District Adoption | Last OSBA Update | Policy Designation | Notes | Recommendation |
|---------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| 23 JFCF-AR | Yes | 11/13/2019 | 3/15/2023 (prev. 2/28/19) | Required | Largely match, but OSBA version has language regarding final decisions. | Review sample policy and considering updating. |
| 24 JH | Yes | 8/28/2019 | 4/04/2024 (prev. 4/17/2017) | Optional | SH policy does not incorporate April 2024 OSBA updates. | Review sample policy and considering updating. |
| 25 JHFE/GBNAB | Double coded, see GBNAB/JHFE above (line 14) | | | | | |
| 26 JHFE-AR(1) | OSBA has a combined JHFE/GBNAB-AR(1) | 2/26/2020 | 04/4/24 (prev. 10/5/2021, 1/22/2019) | Required | SH administrative regulation does not incorporate recent changes primarily regarding reporting through the centralized reporting system. | Review sample policy and considering updating. |
| 27 JHFE-AR(2) | OSBA has a combined JHFE/GBNAB-AR(2) | 8/28/2019 | 10/5/21 (prev. 6/21/2018) | Highly Recommended | Policies match, except SH is coded as JHFE-AR(2) and OSBA's is combined as JHFE/GBNAB-AR(2). | Consider recoding. |
| 28 JHFF | See JHFF/GBNAA and GBNAA/JHFF. | | | | | |
| 29 JHFF-AR | OSBA has a combined JHFF/GBNAA-AR | 8/28/2019 | 10/5/2021 | Required | SH administrative regulation contains only a form. OSBA version provides instruction and guidance. | Review sample administrative regulation and consider adopting. |

| Code | Matches OSBA Code and Title? | District Adoption | Last OSBA Update | Policy Designation | Notes | Recommendation |
|---------------|---|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| 30 JHFF/GBNAA | Double coded, see GBNAA/JHFF above (line 13). | | | | | |
| 31 KL | Yes | 5/23/2023 | 11/22/2019 | Highly Recommended | OSBA has four versions. SH policy matches OSBA version 1. | No update needed. |
| 32 KL-AR(1) | Yes | 2/26/2020 | 3/15/2023 | Highly Recommended | Largely match. The primary difference regards timelines for complaints filed against the principal, superintendent or a board member: OSBA's sample includes a broad timeline for the entire step, SH's version includes timelines for actions within the step, but not an overall timeline for the step. | Review timelines and requirements in OAR 581-022-2370 to determine if a change is necessary. |
| 33 KN | Yes | 8/28/2019 | 5/31/2017 | Highly Recommended | Match | No update needed. |
| 34 KN-AR | Yes | 8/28/2019 | 6/21/2018 | Highly Recommended | Largely match. Key difference is SH's inclusion of "Parental Notification following Law Enforcement Interviews in School" section which largely restates provisions 5-7 in the preceding section. | No update needed. |
| 35 KN-AR(2) | Yes | 8/28/2019 | 9/28/2017 | Highly Recommended | Match | No update needed. |



Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students

PURPOSE

District staff show extraordinary dedication and care in their daily work with students. A hallmark of this commitment is the development of strong relationships between adults and students. We believe that:

- A. Children are always learning about healthy relationships, and their most significant learning about relationships comes from how adults behave.
- B. Consistent relationship boundaries help children feel safe. Boundaries help them trust adults and help them know what is healthy behavior.
- C. Children need adults to be adults. Adults' behaviors set the conditions for healthy relationships.
- D. Adults are responsible for creating safe spaces.

The purpose of this policy is to establish common understanding and expectations for all adults in our District on setting consistent and safe boundaries with students. Those boundaries maintain the healthy relationships and safe spaces that students need to thrive.

GENERAL STANDARDS & DEFINITIONS

- A. For purposes of this policy, **except as specifically noted**, "adults" include any and all District employees, coaches, substitutes, contracted service providers, and volunteers in their interactions with students in District schools and programs.
- B. "Student" means any person: (1) Who is: (a) In any grade from pre-kindergarten through grade 12; or (b) Twenty-one years of age or younger and receiving educational or related services from an education provider that is not a post-secondary institution of education; or (2) Who was previously known to the adult covered under this policy as a



Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students

student and who left school or graduated from high school within 90 days of any alleged conduct violating this policy.

- C. For purposes of this policy, the term “legitimate educational purpose” includes matters or communications related to teaching, counseling, athletics, extracurricular activities, social-emotional support that serves the interest of the student, treatment of a student’s physical injury or other medical needs, school administration, or other purposes within the scope of the adult’s employment or other District-related duties.
- D. A “boundary violation” is behavior or interaction by an adult with a student that has no legitimate educational purpose and has the potential to cause harm to the student.
- E. All adults should maintain the highest professional and ethical standards when interacting with students. These standards are defined by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission and by District policy.
- F. Volunteers play unique and important roles in students’ lives, and many also have relationships outside the school setting. **This policy applies to volunteers in the context of their volunteer commitment with the District.** The District expects volunteers to maintain appropriate conduct with students when they are engaged in District-authorized activities as outlined in this and other policies.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ADULTS AND STUDENTS

A. General Guidelines and Required Training

The interactions and relationships between adults and students should be based upon respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of our schools. Adults may not intrude or appear to intrude on a student’s physical and



Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students

emotional boundaries unless the purpose of the interaction is to serve a legitimate educational purpose.

Adults with direct, unsupervised contact with students are required to complete annual training provided by the District on sexual conduct prevention to provide guidance and establish appropriate professional boundaries for student-adult interactions.

We recognize that forming a relationship with students is an important aspect of teaching; however, adults should not engage in discussions with students when its purpose is to meet the adult's personal needs rather than the student's needs. If a student initiates a discussion about a significant personal or family problem, adults are encouraged to seek guidance from appropriate resources such as their principal or school counselors, as needed.

B. Conduct Outside a School Setting

Adults shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting. Informal and social involvements with individual students should be based on appropriate professional boundaries. Volunteers with community-based relationships with students are not subject to this provision in their relationships with those students in non-District settings. In addition to regular classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, staff members may also act in their professional capacity outside of the school day—for example, in providing before- and after-care, tutoring to improve students' academic skills, mentoring that provides students with positive role models, answering questions about school assignments, hosting school-sanctioned or school-sponsored activities and events. We recognize that adults will also encounter students out in our community in the normal course of their personal lives.

Even during non-school hours, when District employees and third-party contractors are acting in their professional capacity, they must maintain at all times ethical standards consistent with Teachers Standards and Practices



Professional Conduct Between Adults and Students

Commission (TSPC) standards and District policies.

One-to-one tutoring and mentoring offered during school or non-school hours must take place at the school unless the principal or appropriate supervisor has received prior notification of an off-site location and written permission from the parent/guardian has been obtained. Unless otherwise approved by the principal or other District administrator, volunteers on District property must be under the supervision of a District staff member.

C. Appropriate Personal and Community Relationships

There may be circumstances where there is an appropriate personal relationship between staff and a student's family that exists independently of the staff member's position with the District (*e.g.*, when the families' children are friends). This policy is not intended to interfere with such relationships or to limit activities that are normally consistent with such relationships.

The District understands that adults may be involved in other roles in the community through civic, religious, family, athletic, scouting, private tutoring, or other organizations and programs whose participants may include District students. This policy is not intended to interfere with or restrict an adult's ability to serve in those roles; however, staff members are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity with regard to all youth with whom they interact in the course of their community involvement.

D. Appropriate Use of Email, Websites & Social Media

The District allows and supports the use of technology to communicate transparently and for legitimate educational purposes. As with all forms of communication, adults are expected to maintain professional boundaries with students when communicating via electronic communications and social media.



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Staff or students may use approved educational websites if such sites are used solely for legitimate educational purposes.

1. Email Communication

All email communications from employees to students must be through a PPS-provided email address as described in the District's Acceptable Use Policy (8.60.40) and Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD.

2. Social Media

District employees who wish to use social media as a tool to assist them in their professional duties must maintain separate accounts for professional and personal social media use and may follow or accept requests to connect from students only through their professional social media presence established consistent with the requirements set forth in the Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD. Staff should have no expectation of privacy when communicating to students, including on a social media platform (*e.g.* Facebook, Twitter). Staff should not promise students absolute confidentiality in their communications.

3. Group Text Messages

The use of group text messaging has become a convenient tool for coaches and other staff working with students to relay information. District employees and third-party contractors shall use this method of communication only with both District approval and parental knowledge. Text messages to individual students through District-approved platforms shall contain only information with a legitimate educational purpose.



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E. IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS

1. One-on-one meetings with students

There will be times when adults are alone with students to discuss legitimate educational issues, including discipline or academic performance, for example. When possible, adults should meet one-on-one with students in a public space, such as libraries, open classrooms, or in places observable by others, such as offices or classrooms with windows and unlocked, ajar doors. When supporting students with sensitive issues, as is common for staff such as counselors and social workers, it is appropriate to provide a private setting. To maintain transparency, it is also good practice to let others know when and where meetings with a student will occur.

2. Personal communication with students

Connecting with students and building rapport is an important component to the staff-student relationship, and adults should promote healthy relationships with all students.

There are many times when a staff member's request for personal information is for a legitimate educational purpose. For example, personal reflection, relationships, or experiences are often part of a journaling exercise, and this policy is not intended to interfere with or impede this type of educational activity. It is appropriate for adults to check in with students about their well-being and/or whether they need any support with their school work. This policy does not prohibit that kind of healthy support of students.

If a student discloses information about the student's significant personal or family problems, adults are expected to seek guidance from appropriate resources such as their principal or school counselor, as needed.



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Adults are also expected to bring their concerns to their supervisor's attention when they have reason to believe a student is or may be becoming overly attached to or interested in them or other staff.

3. Traveling with or transporting students

When transporting students to athletic events and other extracurricular activities, adults need to notify the District and the student's parent/guardian of the travel itinerary and may not transport students in a personal vehicle in a non-emergency situation without advance authorization by the District or as defined by the Coaches Handbook (<https://www.pilathletics.com/page/show/5161432-hs-coach-s-handbook>).

If an emergency situation arises that requires a staff member to transport a student without prior approval, the staff member shall alert a direct supervisor and the parent of the situation as soon as practicable.

When traveling out of town, staff must follow the procedure outlined in the Field Trips Administrative Directive (6.50.011-AD). Adults are prohibited from entering a student's hotel room without another adult present, except in an emergency.

4. Physical contact with students

Adults should not initiate any physical contact without a legitimate educational purpose including offering public greetings, positive acknowledgments, or responding to a crisis. There are times when adults have a legitimate educational purpose to initiate physical contact with a student, and noninvasive contact, such as "high fives" or fist bumps to acknowledge a job well done are fine. In other instances, adults may be required to assist an injured student or a



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student with special needs who requires physical assistance. Likewise, adults may need to touch a student's arms or hands to redirect them in an activity. Coaches, music teachers, and other instructors may have a need for physical contact as a method of instruction. Adults need to be aware of what kinds of physical contact with which a student is and is not comfortable and limit physical contact to only that which is necessary for a legitimate purpose. Any physical redirection of students must be pursuant to the District's Physical Restraint and Seclusion Administrative Directive 4.50.060-AD.

5. Respecting student privacy

Adults must honor a student's physical and emotional boundaries unless the interaction serves a legitimate educational purpose or is in response to an emergency.

Examples:

Physical Surroundings: Adults should not invade a student's privacy by entering a restroom, locker room, or other space where a student may not be fully clothed unless it falls within a staff member's regular job duties under an established written protocol, an emergency, or the staff needs to use the facility for a legitimate and intended purpose (*e.g.*, if it is not practical due to distance and time constraints to use a staff-only restroom).

Personal Space: Adults should respect a student's private space and be conscious of a student's cultural and personal boundaries when communicating (*e.g.*, adults should be conscious of standing too close to students when interacting with them).



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6. Exceptions

An emergency or a legitimate educational purpose may justify deviation from professional boundaries set out in this policy. Adults shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any exception from the requirements of this policy and must demonstrate that an appropriate relationship was maintained with the student at all times. Adults must ensure that any exception is narrowly tailored to the circumstances and must report it to their supervisor within 24 hours.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

A boundary violation is behavior or interaction by an adult in a position of power with a student that has no legitimate educational purpose, and has the potential to cause harm to the student.

A. Examples of boundary violations/prohibited conduct

Examples of conduct that violates professional adult/student boundaries in or outside of school hours include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any type of conduct that would be considered sexual harassment under the District's Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy (1.80.020-P);
2. Having any sexual conduct, including verbal or physical conduct or contact through written or electronic communications, with a student that is a sexual advance or request for a sexual favor or is of a sexual nature and is directed toward the student or that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; and
3. Assault when sexual contact occurs without a student's consent



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because the student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is unconscious, or is pressured through physical force, coercion or explicit or implied threats.

a. Examples of this behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student;
- 2) Dating, flirting with, or propositioning a student;
- 3) Showing pornography to a student;
- 4) Discussing, writing, texting, transmitting, and/or displaying material to students about sexual topics unrelated to curriculum or a legitimate educational purpose;
- 5) Banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos of a sexual nature with students;
- 6) Patting buttocks or touching other intimate parts of a student;
- 7) Permitting students to engage in behaviors with an adult that cross appropriate physical boundaries, *e.g.*, allowing students to give shoulder massages to the adult or allowing students to sit on an adult's lap;
- 8) Singling out a particular student or students for favoritism, special privileges, or exchanging of gifts beyond the employee-student relationship;
- 9) Disclosing intimate or sexual matters to a student, unless necessary to serve a legitimate educational purpose.

4. Bullying or other violations of the District's Anti-Harassment Policy 4.30.060-P.



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5. Favoring a student when its purpose is to meet the adult's personal needs rather than the student's needs;
6. Inviting individual students to the adult's home without parental notice and approval unless otherwise noted in "Exceptions" section of the policy;
7. Being in the company of students who are consuming alcohol, drugs, or tobacco without intervening and reporting the conduct to appropriate personnel;
8. Sending or accompanying a student on personal errands or travel unrelated to any legitimate educational purpose;
9. Telling a student to keep something secret from other adults;
10. Addressing students or permitting students to address adults with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner that may cross appropriate professional boundaries;
11. Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation; except as permitted under this policy and Field Trips 6.50.011-AD;
12. Engaging in prohibited social media and electronic communications between adults and students as defined by the District's Acceptable Use Policy (8.60.40) and Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD.

a) Examples of this behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) District employees acting in their District capacity are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing with students, including phone calls, texting, skypeing, instant messaging, or use of any other telecommunications method, or from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, District policies,



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or
other generally recognized professional standards.

- 2) Adults shall not communicate with students, for any reason, through use of a medium, blog, or app (software or phone application) that is designed to eliminate all traces or records of the communication (*e.g.*, Snapchat).
- 3) District employees and third-party contractors may not communicate with current students through social media directly or through private messaging tools without both written District approval and parental notice.

DUTY TO REPORT POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS

- A. Adults shall discuss with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether their conduct, or the conduct of other adults, is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy. If the adult is dissatisfied with the response of the building administrator or supervisor, or does not feel comfortable discussing the situation with those individuals, they may bring it to the attention of the Chief of Human Resources. If the alleged behavior deals with harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the process in Policy 4.30.060-P should be followed. The District will investigate all complaints.

Any District employee who has reasonable cause to believe that another adult has engaged in sexual conduct as defined by Prohibition Against Employee Child Abuse and Sexual Conduct with Students 5.10.063-AD or sexual abuse as defined by statute shall immediately report this behavior to their school compliance officer and to the District Title IX Director. Additionally, any District employee or other mandatory reporter of abuse/neglect who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused must promptly fulfill the mandatory reporting requirements to law enforcement and the Department of Human Services and report the allegation to their principal or supervisor.



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District employees whose conduct violates this policy or who fail to report violations of this policy, may face discipline and/or termination, consistent with the District's policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Violations of this policy by volunteers or contracted service providers may result in a prohibition from working or serving on District properties or with District students in school programs, or may result in contract cancellation. The District shall notify law enforcement of any potentially unlawful conduct, as appropriate.

B. Student/Parent and Guardian Reporting

Students and/or parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal or other appropriate administrator if they believe an adult may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

Staff members making a report of potential boundary violations or other prohibited conduct are specifically advised of the following:

1. They must directly notify a supervisor of the conduct;
2. They are required to maintain confidentiality; and
3. They are neither permitted to investigate nor responsible for investigating whether the conduct is inappropriate.

Confidentiality protects the student(s) as well as the adult who is the subject of the report. Failure to maintain confidentiality may impede the investigation and foster untrue and potentially harmful rumors. False reports are regarded as a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.



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The District prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a good-faith report under this policy. Any District employee who retaliates against any complainant, reporter, or other participant in an investigation may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

TRAINING

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop an annual training for all staff and ensure ongoing review of procedures to support this policy.

Adopted 10/15/2019; Amended 1/2021; Amended 6/2021

Legal Reference: ORS 342.704; ORS 339.370 et seq.

| Erin's Law Compliance | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| PRESCHOOL | What programs, curriculum, or materials are being used to meet the requirements of Erin's Law? | How and when is this instruction delivered to students? | Who is facilitating these lessons? | Are there any supporting documentation or resources you can share to demonstrate implementation? | |
| | Safe & Unsafe Touches Safe & Unsafe Touches 2 | | Lead Teachers | Preschool Family Letter | |
| ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS | | | | | |
| Columbia City Lewis & Clark | The Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation Lessons (copies in resources) | In classrooms | Classroom Teachers | ELEMENTARY RESOURCES | |
| McBride | | | | SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS @ LC - Timothy Montgomery, ESD SELC Administrator reported they will be completing Erin's Law lessons between now and Spring Break. LC Principal will share the LC parent letter with him and the link to all the lessons. He will share this with his families and communicate the days when lessons will be taught and how to view the lessons ahead of time. | |
| St. Helens Middle School | 1-My Future My Choice: Changes & Anatomy 2-My Future My Choice: Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships 3-My Future My Choice: Consent 4-My Future My Choice: Respect & Support (Bully & Harassment Prevention) 5-ODE Toolkit: Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs) | 1-Health Classes : 6th, Sexual health Unit 2-Focus Classes: 6, 7, 8, February 21-31 - Combined grade level workshop & instruction provided by 2- counselors & support staff 3-Focus Classes: 6,7,8, February 21-31 - Combined grade level workshop & instruction provided by 2- counselors & support staff 4-Focus Classes: 6,7,8, February 21-31 - Combined grade level workshop & instruction provided by 2- counselors & support staff 5-Focus Classes: 6,7,8, February 21-31 - Combined grade level workshop & instruction provided by 2- counselors & support staff | 1-Certified Health Teachers 2-Counselors & Support Staff - Combined grade level instruction & workshop w/counselors leading and support staff 3-Counselors & Support Staff 4-Counselors & support Staff 5-Counselors & Support Staff | Erin's Law Implementation | |

| | What programs, curriculum, or materials are being used to meet the requirements of Erin's | How and when is this instruction delivered to students? | Who is facilitating these lessons? | Are there any supporting documentation or resources you can share to demonstrate implementation? |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| - | Secondary teachers will use lessons from the ODE Distance Learning for All: Erin's Law Toolkit for Districts. Parent/family letters will be sent to all 9-12 parents during the first weekend of February (2/7/25-2/9/25) and again on the first weekend in March (3/7/25-3/9/25). | Teachers will work together to develop the chosen lessons (See Parent Notification Letter) into appropriate presentations for students during grade-level gatherings. During the presentation, counseling staff, certified teachers, and administration will be present to support the students and ensure the delivery of content. | Certified Health Teachers, Counselors, Certified Classroom Teacher to provide additional support | SHHS Erin's Law Materials |
| St. Helens High School | | | | |
| Plymouth High School | None historically - Lisa Tyler gave ODE website packet to Principal Lacy to review and offered support from T & L for 2025 compliance and implementation this school year. | The instruction will take place during the first two weeks in April after Spring Break (3/31/25-4/10/25). Additional notices will be sent to parents during the 3rd weekend in April (4/18/25-4/20/25) for students who did not receive the initial instruction. The make up sessions for students who did not receive the instruction in April will be provided during the first Two weeks in May (5/5/25-5/16/25). | Classroom teachers will facilitate the lessons with support from the principal, counselor, and the special education teacher. | PHS Erin's Law Materials |
| St. Helens Virtual High School K-5 | Elementary Teacher worked with elementary peers to present the same information. She copied the letter the elementary principals sent to parents and added it to her elementary newsletter. "This Year" ***Administrator will be working to get his secondary staff trained and prepared to implement Erin's Law this year to all students. | | Elementary - Noydena Douglass | SHVA Erin's Law K-5 documents |

| - | What programs, curriculum, or materials are being used to meet the requirements of Erin's | How and when is this instruction delivered to students? | Who is facilitating these lessons? | Are there any supporting documentation or resources you can share to demonstrate implementation? |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| St. Helens Virtual High School 6-12 | Secondary teachers will be using lessons from the ODE Distance Learning for All: Erin's Law Toolkit for Districts. Notification letters will be sent to all 6-12 parents during the first weekend of February (2/7/25-2/9/25) and again on the first weekend in March (3/7/25-3/9/25). Teachers will be working together to develop the chosen lessons (See Parent Notification Letter) into Canvas courses to present the information to students during grade level Homerooms. During the presentation, two staff members will be present in the virtual meeting to support students. | The instruction will take place during the first two weeks in April after Spring Break (3/31/25-4/10/25). Additional notices will be sent to parents during the 3rd weekend in April (4/18/25-4/20/25) for students who did not receive the initial instruction. The make up sessions for students who did not receive the instruction in April will be provided during the first Two weeks in May (5/5/25-5/16/25). | Homeroom teachers will facilitate the lessons with support from the principal and the special education teacher. | SHVA Erin's Law 6-12 documents |

APPENDIX

Required Online Training – Public School Works

Course Title: Abuse, Sexual Conduct and Appropriate Communications in Oregon (M-258)

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 35.2% | 38.6% | 42.3% | 36.8% | 38.4% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 23.3% | 19.6% | 17.2% | 25.4% | 21.4% |
| 10 – 20 minutes | 12.6% | 12.3% | 14.8% | 11.2% | 12.7% |
| 20 – 30 minutes | 8.1% | 8.2% | 4.9% | 9.4% | 7.7% |
| 30 – 60 minutes | 8.9% | 9.2% | 9.6% | 7.6% | 8.8% |
| 1 – 2 hours | 10.0% | 7.6% | 7.9% | 6.6% | 7.9% |
| 2 – 4 hours | 1.5% | 2.2% | 1.1% | 1.8% | 1.6% |
| More than 4 hours | 0.4% | 2.2% | 2.2% | 1.3% | 1.6% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 60

2021-2022: rated 30 minutes for 22 employees and 60 minutes for 248 employees

Required Online Training – Public School Works

Course Title: Recognizing and Responding to Child Neglect and Abuse in Oregon (M-234)

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 70.3% | 65.0% | 66.5% | 69.7% | 67.8% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 8.6% | 12.4% | 9.6% | 11.3% | 10.6% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 3.4% | 4.1% | 4.5% | 5.0% | 4.3% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 3.0% | 3.2% | 4.8% | 3.2% | 3.6% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 3.0% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.7% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 1.5% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.1% | 2.1% |
| 30 – 60 minutes | 6.0% | 7.6% | 6.2% | 3.9% | 5.9% |
| 1 – 2 hours | 3.4% | 1.9% | 3.1% | 1.6% | 2.4% |
| More than 2 hours | 0.8% | 0.3% | 0.6% | 1.1% | 0.7% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 30

Required Online Training – Public School Works

Previous Course Title: Title IX: Protecting Students and School Employees from Sexual Harassment (General Awareness)

Current Course Title: Title IX: Federal 2024 Amendments Training for All School Employees (M-993)**

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 38.2% | 23.2% | 38.5% | 53.4% | 44.6% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 21.3% | 30.4% | 19.2% | 15.4% | 19.0% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 11.6% | 3.6% | 13.5% | 7.7% | 9.2% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 5.6% | 10.7% | 3.8% | 3.9% | 5.0% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 3.0% | 0.0% | 5.8% | 4.4% | 3.7% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 3.7% | 5.4% | 1.9% | 4.1% | 3.9% |
| 30 – 35 minutes | 1.9% | 5.4% | 3.8% | 1.9% | 2.3% |
| 35 – 60 minutes | 7.9% | 14.3% | 9.6% | 5.5% | 7.3% |
| 1 – 2 hours | 4.9% | 7.1% | 3.8% | 1.9% | 3.5% |
| More than 2 hours | 1.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 1.5% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

**Note: Course was renamed in 2024-2025

Rated minutes = 30-35

2024-2025: rated 30 minutes

Required Online Training – Public School Works

Course Title: St. Helen's School District Board Policies (C-100)

| Course Completed | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | Average |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 minutes | 75.0% | 75.0% | 77.8% | 81.2% | 77.5% |
| 5 – 10 minutes | 11.4% | 11.3% | 10.0% | 6.0% | 9.4% |
| 10 – 15 minutes | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.6% | 2.3% | 3.4% |
| 15 – 20 minutes | 2.9% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 3.4% | 2.2% |
| 20 – 25 minutes | 0.7% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.3% | 1.5% |
| 25 – 30 minutes | 1.1% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 1.8% | 1.3% |
| 30 – 60 minutes | 3.3% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.5% |
| 1 – 2 hours | 0.0% | 1.3% | 1.1% | 0.5% | 0.7% |
| More than 2 hours | 1.5% | 2.2% | 0.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Rated minutes = 30