

Atlantic Community School District Statement Regarding Personnel Matter

The Atlantic Community School District is providing the following factual update regarding a recent personnel matter, while maintaining the confidentiality requirements of Iowa law.

On Sunday, January 18, 2026, the district received a phone call from a parent raising concerns about a staff member. That same day, district administration placed the staff member on administrative leave to allow the district to conduct an investigation consistent with district policy and best practice.

School administrators gathered information in the days that followed. During this period, the district was advised by its legal counsel, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Atlantic Police Department to refrain from public comment or action while their respective investigations were ongoing. The district acted consistent with this advice in order to preserve the integrity of any ongoing investigations.

The district has since been informed that the Atlantic Police Department continues its investigation. As of this time, the district has not received additional information or findings from law enforcement. The district will continue to cooperate with law enforcement during their investigation.

With any investigation into the conduct of a staff member, the district works collaboratively with DHHS, the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE), and the Atlantic Police Department as appropriate. DHHS is responsible for investigating child abuse allegations and has concluded its investigation with a finding of unfounded child abuse. DHHS is responsible for investigating specific concerns involving students. If the alleged conduct does not meet their definition, then they do not pursue an investigation. The BOEE oversees educator licensure matters, and school districts may report concerns to the BOEE to investigate and handle. BOEE licensing matters are separate from any district investigation, DHHS investigation, or law enforcement investigation. The Atlantic Police Department investigates potential criminal acts. Both agencies will continue their work independently.

Following the conclusion of any district investigation into the conduct of a staff member, the district may issue disciplinary consequences up to and including ending the staff member's employment, either through resignation or termination. Once a staff member submits their resignation, district officials and the Board must consider whether to accept the resignation, thereby ending the staff member's employment. The decision about accepting a staff member's resignation is separate from any procedures occurring with any state entity, such as DHHS or the BOEE, and with law enforcement.

All personnel decisions made by the district are governed by Iowa Code, which strictly limits what information may be shared publicly during investigations in order to protect student safety and to provide staff required due process. The district is aware of misinformation and speculation circulating on social media and in the media. When the employee was hired, the

district followed all required hiring procedures, including background and reference checks. The district takes these procedures seriously, and would not hire an applicant who had a history of concerning conduct directed at students. At the time of hire, no concerns of the nature currently being discussed were reported from previous school districts. Following recent allegations, the district conducted follow-up communication with prior employers, who confirmed no known concerns at the time of prior employment. Any information under review remains allegations, and the district continues to proceed carefully and appropriately.

Earlier, when unrelated concerns were raised, the district conducted a review that did not identify policy violations but did result in clarified expectations. These actions reflect the district's commitment to student safety and professional standards.

The district must also address reports of harassment, threats, and aggressive behavior toward school employees and Board members. This conduct is unacceptable and will not be tolerated on school property or at school activities. While questions and concerns are understandable, staff safety and respectful engagement are non-negotiable. District officials will remove any individual who engages in such behavior. The district also reminds community members that secured building procedures must be followed at all times outside of public events to ensure student and staff safety.

The Atlantic Community School District remains committed to doing what is right for our school community, even in difficult circumstances. We take concerns regarding staff conduct very seriously and act consistent with the advice of legal counsel and our requirements under the law. We ask for patience as appropriate processes continue and for our community to remain focused on our students, their education, and their well-being.

The district will continue to communicate responsibly and within the bounds of the law as more information becomes available.

At this time, the district has not received additional information from law enforcement and acting on the advice of district legal counsel, the Board of Education has taken steps to end employment through resignation or termination, while awaiting information from BOEE and law enforcement.

The Atlantic Community School District remains committed to student safety, professional accountability, and transparent communication within the limits of the law. We ask for patience as appropriate processes continue.