

**BEDFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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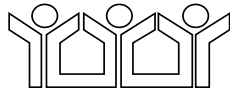
**STATUS REPORT – AS OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2006
ON EVENTS RELATED TO ALLEGATIONS THAT CERTAIN
DISTRICT PERSONNEL FAILED TO REPORT A SUSPECTED
CASE OF CHILD ABUSE**

Qualification on disclosure of information

The school district has been requested by the Office of the District Attorney and the investigating officers in this case to respect the needs of confidentiality in this very serious investigation, which will help protect the rights of everyone involved, including the child and personnel in this district. The district cannot divulge any information that could in any way jeopardize the investigation or compromise the rights or privacy of all of those individuals involved.

Brief chronology of events

- The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools were not made aware of certain allegations of sexual abuse of a child in our district until August 20, 2006. Upon being informed of these allegations, the District offered its full cooperation with the District Attorney's investigations.
- In the course of the District Attorney's investigation, questions were raised as to whether certain district personnel had appropriately fulfilled their legal reporting obligations during December 2005 and thereafter. Consequently, the district immediately began its own investigation.
- In the course of the District Attorney's and the district's investigations, various staff members have provided information. As result of the ongoing nature of these investigations, a total of six staff members – the principal and five others – were placed on administrative home reassignment with pay.
- On Friday, September 1, the principal of Bedford Hills Elementary School was charged with one misdemeanor count of failing to report a case of suspected child abuse. Prior to that, on Tuesday, August 29, the principal was placed on administrative home leave and relieved of her day-to-day duties. The district is continuing its investigation, which may lead to further action.



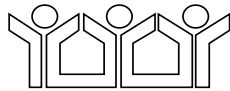
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- Mr. Fred Merz, who served as principal at Bedford Village Elementary School last spring, was asked to assume the leadership of Bedford Hills Elementary School for the 2006-2007 school year.

District actions to ensure a smooth opening of school

- Counseling and ongoing support for the child and her mother have been arranged.
- The district hired additional staff and we are pleased to say that several current staff members agreed to voluntary reassignments to guarantee that all students at Bedford Hills are fully supported in their instruction (this action should in no way be interpreted to mean that those individuals placed on home reassignment have been permanently replaced).
- An initial information meeting was held with Bedford Hills teachers on August 31.
- Arrangements were made for additional counselors to be available for students and parents and teachers at Bedford Hills beginning the first day of school.
- Arrangements have been made to have representatives of Longview Associates – through the district’s Employee Assistance Program – available to provide confidential counseling as requested.
- A team of professionals from Northern Westchester Hospital has been put together to guide the district in its support for staff and students. That team held an initial planning meeting at Bedford Hills Elementary School on Friday, September 1.
- Bob Barrett, of BCL Solutions, volunteered to assist the district during this period. For many years, BCL Solutions has provided the district with crisis training and strategy development services. As in the past, he will be continuing his training of the district’s crisis teams. The district had an initial meeting with Mr. Barrett on Sunday, September 3, 2006.
- The district mobilized its state-mandated building response teams to ensure that all support possible is given to staff and students.
- The district has provided staff with written information that can be used in answering questions that might be raised by students and parents.



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- As part of the district's investigation into this matter, the Board of Education and the administration have initiated a thorough review of all policies, district procedures and state requirements as they relate to the safety and welfare of students. If a deficiency or gap is uncovered, it will be fixed. If the Board and the Superintendent determine that the district should go beyond, for example, what is stipulated in state teacher certification requirements, a more comprehensive program will be established.
- To ensure that all staff has a clear understanding of state-mandated reporting obligations of suspected child abuse, information and resources on reporting have been included in all staff member handbooks. Additionally, on Friday, September 8, district principals participated in an intensive review session on the identification and reporting of child abuse. This review training will be provided to all district staff.

Getting accurate and timely information out to staff, parents and the media is critical. To help ensure the district does this, several steps have been taken and/or will be taken:

- A meeting was held with district wide parent presidents last week. The district will continue to schedule these update meetings in the coming weeks.
- A letter was mailed, dated August 30, to all district parents informing them of this situation. That letter was immediately posted on the district's web site. The district statement released to the press on Friday, September 1 was posted on the district's web site. All the information shared with staff on Tuesday, September 5 and with Bedford Hills parents on Thursday, September 7, will be summarized and put in a letter to all district parents. This information will also be posted to the district's web site.
- We invited Bedford Hills Elementary parents to a special meeting on Thursday evening, September 7 to introduce them to the new principal, Fred Merz. Arrangements have also been made for additional counselors to be available for students and parents at Bedford Hills beginning the first day of school.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Jackson's office at 241-6011.