

NATRONA

COUNTY SCHOOLS

Board of Trustees' Official Statement Regarding Incident at NCHS Staff Meeting on August 25, 2014

On August 25, 2014, Natrona County School District received complaints alleging that Natrona County High School personnel violated District anti-harassment policies during a “welcome back” and new staff introduction skit performed on that date. The skit, based on a “Saturday Night Live” parody, was presented by two NCHS employees. Approximately 215 NCHS staff members and six Student Council members were present.

The Board and Superintendent expects and holds administrators and staff to, high professional standards. Towards that end, an outside investigation was conducted to determine how such material came to be performed in a mandatory staff meeting with students present. Further, given the Board and the District’s emphasis on student well-being, District representatives met with the students who were present and also contacted each student’s parents.

The Board of Trustees reviewed a video of the skit and received a briefing on Monday evening, September 8, 2014. The Board and Superintendent reviewed the investigator’s written report on Monday evening September 15, 2014. The independent investigation determined certain actions and inactions on the part of school district personnel were not appropriate and are violations of District policies. The District with Board support has taken disciplinary action as deemed necessary in light of the investigator’s findings. Disciplinary action was based on investigation findings relating to this event, applicable laws and Board Policies, employee work agreements and contracts, the involvement of school leadership in the matter, and the employee’s overall performance record. The Board and Superintendent agree the employee discipline taken equates to the gravity of the investigation findings. Employees who were involved in the skit remain with the district. This is not an indication that significant ramifications were not incurred.

The Wyoming Public Records Act allows and in essence requires the District to release the skit video, transcript and associated documents in response to a media outlet's request. The Superintendent and Board agree transparency is needed in this matter but have also asked media outlets to be sensitive in the use and dissemination of the video to protect innocent participants. We have no control on how the video and skit will be disseminated except to the degree that we have made efforts to conceal the names and faces of individuals. Release of the investigation report itself is undergoing additional legal review. Our intent as a Board and Superintendent is to be as transparent as work agreements and the law allows with regard to these materials.

This event and the necessary media attention surrounding it sheds light on an activity that was and remains disappointing to the Board and Superintendent. This incident is not a reflection of the hard work and commitment to students that is present every day at NCHS. We intend to move forward with our shared interest to meet the educational needs of all students in this district. We ask for your support in helping us provide positive encouragement whenever possible to students, teachers, administrators, and staff across the district.