

From:Jared Cotton <jared.cotton@cpschools.com>
Sent:Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:17 PM
To:Chris Horne <Chris.Horne@wavy.com>
Cc:Angie Smith <angie.smith@cpschools.com>
Subject:Response to Media Inquiry

Mr. Horne,

I have reviewed the e-mail communication that you sent to Dr. Angie Smith on October 14, 2020. The confidentiality of student information is of great importance to Chesapeake Public Schools, and we do not comment on any student-specific matters. Likewise, we work to protect the confidential information of our employees and former employees, and therefore we will not comment on any personnel matters. While I do not agree with many of the assertions implied by the inquiry to Dr. Smith, I am not going to address any specific student or personnel matters.

In Chesapeake Public Schools, our school-based administration, special education teachers and staff, and our administrators in the Office of Exceptional Learning work diligently to provide eligible special education students with an appropriate education. Each student is important to us, and our staff, teachers, and administrators strive every day to work cooperatively and collaboratively with parents to meet the individual needs of our students. While we are proud of the successes our students have achieved, we will continue to review our programming and methodologies in our on-going effort to improve our services to students.

The administration in Chesapeake Public Schools takes very seriously any allegation that relates to the improper implementation of a student's IEP. If any such allegation is made, our administration reviews the situation and works to appropriately resolve any special education-related dispute with parents in a timely manner. If efforts to resolve matters in a timely manner at the school level are unsuccessful, then we offer opportunities to meet with our special education professionals in the Office of Exceptional Learning. Recently, I have asked Dr. LaToya Harrison, Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. Craig Pinello, Director of Exceptional Learning, to meet with several parents from Oscar Smith Middle School and their advocate to discuss the parents' concerns. We also strongly encourage the use of the Virginia Department of Education's statewide special education mediation system. This mediation system has a very high success rate in resolving parents' concerns quickly and at little or no cost to the parents or the school divisions. The VDOE contracts with several outstanding mediators. Parents are not charged for utilizing the mediation system, and it is a highly effective way to bring resolution to parental special education concerns.

I appreciate your interest in Chesapeake Public Schools, and I appreciate your understanding that the school division is committed to protecting the confidentiality of student information. To the extent that a parent, or group of parents, has concerns about the education of their child, we look forward to the opportunity to work with that parent, or parents, in an effort to resolve those concerns.

Thank you.
JCotton



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