



February 1, 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to update the school community on the status of the criminal investigation of former fourth grade teacher James Eschert and the related investigations of other employees in connection with alleged failure to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Mr. Eschert's criminal case remains pending and he is no longer employed by the District. The criminal cases of four other current and former employees have been dismissed through operation of the court process. Throughout the past year and a half, after reporting these individuals to the authorities, we have cooperated fully with investigations by the Department of Children and Families and the Plymouth Police Department. Two of the employees have retired. We have conducted our own internal investigation of the two remaining employees, who were placed on administrative leave while the investigations were pending. The conduct of each of these individuals has been reviewed thoroughly and carefully. One teacher will remain on administrative leave until further notice and one teacher will be permitted to return to their assignment at Plymouth Center School.

We have treated all of the individuals involved in this situation fairly based on the facts as they are established at the conclusion of the investigation and we would not return a teacher to the classroom if we had any reservations that it would compromise the safety of our children. Under the district's current administration, we reported these individuals to the authorities, have acted swiftly, and have been as transparent as possible throughout this process. Additionally, we have brought in specialized instructors to provide individualized mandated reporter training in each of our schools.

All of our employees are required to report allegations of abuse or neglect of children to the Department of Children and Families as mandated reporters and are not to investigate such matters themselves until DCF and the Police have indicated that such investigations will not interfere with their investigation – and only then in consultation with the Central Office. Failure to do so is inconsistent with the law and our district policies, and will not be tolerated. As a school district, the safety and well-being of our students will always be our top priority and we reaffirm our commitment moving forward to act in their best interest, as you entrust us to educate them safely and protect them from harm.

Sincerely,

Brian Falcone - Superintendent