

Administration Building

200 North Bernard Street
Spokane, WA 99201-0282

phone (509) 354-5900
www.spokaneschools.org



Spokane Public Schools
excellence for everyone

Dear Chief Meidl,

We received your communication on Friday, March 11th regarding the allegation by the Spokane Police Department that Spokane Public Schools employees are failing to fulfill their legal responsibilities as mandatory reporters under RCW 26.44. Student safety is of the utmost concern to the district, and throughout the pandemic educators have epitomized an unwavering dedication to serve students and ensure their safety. We look forward to addressing these allegations, and are requesting a meeting with yourself, Mayor Woodward, City Council President Beggs, and City Civil Rights Officer Jerrall Haynes to discuss the following items:

- It has recently come to our attention that you have been concerned about the district's mandatory reporting practices since the beginning of the school year. We are troubled to learn that your department has reviewed and has significant concerns without any prior discussions or notice to the district.
- Given your stated significant concern for student safety, why have you delayed in bringing this issue to our attention? We are aware that you recently met with members of the district senior leadership and did not surface this issue. Typically, public entities initiate communication with senior leadership at the onset of such a serious concern.
- The district leadership team is not aware of any patterns of complaints from families or building staff regarding a failure to comply with mandatory reporting responsibilities. We take any report of employee misconduct seriously and are committed to following up appropriately. We would like to discuss why your impressions are so different from ours.
- Neither the Spokane Education Association nor the Spokane Principals Association have communicated to district leadership that they have received any concerns regarding our district's approach to reporting incidents or that messages have been sent that discourage staff from following mandated reporting requirements. Union leadership is a very common pathway for employees to share anonymous concerns, particularly concerns of this nature.
- All SPS staff annually complete a mandatory reporting course online (SafeSchools) that is documented at the beginning of the year to ensure they are aware of the expectations and all staff fulfill the training requirement.
- There are SPS principals that have indicated they have called 911 and officers have not responded to their school. In addition, principals have shared that SPD officers have criticized staff for calling. How can we communicate and calibrate moving forward to address these perceptions?
- We received your letters, and media inquiries on this topic within hours of each other. Our interest is to understand your decisions around how this issue is being addressed and communicated.
- This has caused a great deal of effort from many staff members to react to what appears to be a long-standing concern. How can we best work with the City of Spokane and Police Department so that we can best solve problems together in a collaborative manner?

We look forward to setting up a time for us to meet together as a group and explore how we can strengthen our shared responsibility to serve the community. Going forward, we would like to discuss ways to collaborate on a continual basis.

Sincerely,

Mike Wiser, School Board President
Nikki Lockwood, School Board Vice President
Dr. Adam Swinyard, Superintendent
Paul Gannon, President of Spokane Principals Association
Jeremy Shay, President of Spokane Education Association

CC:

Mayor, Nadine Woodward
City Council President, Breean Beggs
City Civil Rights Officer, Jerrall Haynes