



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Suburban Human Rights Authority
Report of Findings
Eastview Elementary School
HRA #17-100-9020

The North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority (HRA) of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission has completed its investigation of alleged rights violations at Eastview Elementary School. In December 2016, the HRA notified Eastview Elementary School of its intent to conduct an investigation, pursuant to the Guardianship and Advocacy Act (20 ILCS 3955).

The complaint alleges that school personnel did not follow procedures as mandated reporters under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

According to its web-site, Eastview Elementary School is part of school District 300 (D300). The district is headquartered in Carpentersville and stretches into 14 other communities across 118 square miles, such as the Dundees, Gilberts, Pingree Grove, and Sleepy Hollow communities. D300 features 27 schools including a charter school. At nearly 21,000 students in preschool through 12th grade, D300 is the sixth largest school district in the State of Illinois. Preschool programming is available at some D300 schools as well as differentiated instruction. The district offers virtual learning opportunities, a dual language program for English and Spanish speakers, dual credit programming, an award-winning music program, and a robust selection of Advance Placement (AP) courses. D300 graduates earn nearly \$16 million a year in college scholarships, and more than 75 teachers in the district have received the prestigious National Board Certification.

Methodology

The investigation focused on provider policy and practice. Thus, the HRA requested and reviewed school policy on Abused and Neglected Child Reporting. A site visit was conducted at which time the allegation was discussed with the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, the Chief Legal Counsel and the school's Principal. The HRA acknowledges the full cooperation of all involved.

Findings

The complaint alleged that a student reported to her parent that she had been hit by her teacher. It was stated that the parent went to the school and received very little immediate response to the claim, so the parent (vs. the school) went to the police and DCFS to file a complaint of abuse.

The policy states (in part) that any district employee who suspects or received knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child or, for a student aged 18 through 21, an abused or neglected individual with a disability shall: (1) immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on its Child Abuse Hotline and (2) follow directions given by DCFS concerning filing a written report within 48 hours with the nearest DCFS field office, the employee shall also promptly notify the Superintendent or Building Principal that a report has been made. The policy goes on to state that all District employees shall: "Before

beginning employment, sign the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form provided by DCFS. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the sign forms are retained. Complete mandated reporter training as required by law within one year of initial employment and at least every 5 years after that date. The Superintendent will encourage all District educators to complete continuing professional development that addresses the traits and identifiers that may be evident in students who are victims of child sexual abuse, including recognizing and reporting child sexual abuse and providing appropriate follow-up and care for abused students as they return to the classroom setting.”

At the site visit, school personnel reiterated the above policy, in that all school employees receive training as mandated reporters. It was offered that employees realize the importance of being a mandated reporter, and have no reservations reporting any abuse or neglected concerns when it is suspected, observed and/or brought to their attention by the student/parent or another employee. A staff member accused of abuse is not automatically placed on leave, it depends on the allegation. A staff member that is placed on leave stays on paid leave until DCFS finishes their investigation, no matter how long it takes. It was offered that they had a recent allegation where a student went home and reported that a teacher had hit her. According to the Principal, the parent immediately contacted the police and then contacted him. He then contacted his Superintendent. The police and the Department of Children and Family Services conducted investigations.

Conclusion

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ILCS 5/), “Persons required to report; privileged communications; transmitting false report. Any...school personnel (including administrators and both certified and non-certified school employees), personnel of institutions of higher education, educational advocate assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, member of a school board or the Chicago Board of Education or the governing body of a private school (but only to the extent required in accordance with other provisions of this Section expressly concerning the duty of school board members to report suspected child abuse), truant officers, social worker, social services administrator...”

“Whenever such person is required to report under this Act in his capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility or agency, or as a member of the clergy, he shall make report immediately to the Department in accordance with the provisions of this Act and may also notify the person in charge of such institution, school, facility or agency, or church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other religious institution, or his designated agent that such report has been made. Under no circumstances shall any person in charge of such institution, school, facility or agency, or church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other religious institution, or his designated agent to whom such notification has been made, exercise any control, restraint, modification or other change in the report or the forwarding of such report to the Department.”

The school has a policy in place that outlines procedures as mandated reporters under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Based on available evidence, the allegation is not substantiated.