

This is a response to the bullying accusations regarding the recently filed lawsuit against the Grinnell-Newburg Community School District. I would like to take this opportunity to address generally the bullying incident. Our school personnel followed the proper protocol when they investigated the situation and determined an unfounded case.

In addition, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. Statute 1232 sets out guidelines for the protection and privacy of student records. Under FERPA, student records are accessible only to students, parents and guardians. Iowa code §22.7 also provides that personal information in records regarding a student is confidential and unattainable by anyone other than the student, parents or guardians. Consequently, school districts cannot release student records to the press or members of the public. It is a statutory privacy right that the students have.

I am writing this memo to assure you, however, that protecting students from bullying and harassment is a priority of the school board, district administration, and staff. Our district has a board policy regarding anti-bullying/harassment. This policy can be accessed on line at our district website. Our district strives to enforce this anti-bullying/harassment policy and it is my belief that our staff is dedicated to protecting each and every student, including the one I believe is being referenced. I assure you the district administration and staff are continuing to work to create an atmosphere in our school system where students feel free to express themselves without fear of bullying or harassment.