



## KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY Office of Education Accountability

### MEMORANDUM

TO: SUPERINTENDENT MIKE LAFEVERS  
BOYLE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

JENNIFER NEWBY  
BOYLE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: DAVID WICKERSHAM, DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

DATE: APRIL 18, 2018

SUBJECT: FINAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

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The Office of Education Accountability (OEA) has completed an investigation of allegations of wrongdoing in the Boyle County School District. OEA is empowered to investigate complaints dealing with regulatory and statutory issues [KRS 7.410(2)(c)4, KRS 160.345(9)(b)]. In the course of an investigation, OEA is to have access to all public records [KRS 7.410(2)(e)].

On January 30, 2018, OEA staff visited the district and interviewed Board members, central office staff, and coaches. The district/school provided requested documents to OEA staff. The following represents the **ALLEGATIONS, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,** and **RESOLUTIONS** by OEA.

**ALLEGATION #1: Superintendent Mike LaFavers and Board Member Jennifer Newby exerted pressure on a Boyle County Middle School softball coach to force her resignation.**

**FINDINGS**

In March 2017, members of the Boyle County Board of Education and Superintendent LaFavers received two anonymous letters containing allegations against Boyle County Middle School softball coach Shanda Machia Everage. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, LaFavers assigned Assistant Superintendent Chris Holderman and Finance Officer David Morris to investigate the allegations. Holderman and Morris returned their report on March 24, 2017.

Holderman and Morris interviewed students, parents, Boyle County Middle School Principal Steve Karsner, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director Brian Wheeler, and Ms. Everage during their inquiry. Both Morris and Holderman stated that they did not interview or speak to Jennifer Newby regarding this investigation, though Newby had a child on the softball team. No board member was made aware of this investigation until after it was completed and Everage had resigned her position as softball coach in May 2017. Everage later resigned from her teaching position.

OEA interviewed three of the four current board of education members and one former board member. Board members stated that they were made aware of Ms. Everage's resignation after it had already happened, they had no role in the resignation, and they were not aware of any other board member having a role. LaFavers stated that he did not speak to Newby about softball or Everage at all except for occasional small talk when he asked how the softball season was going. He said that Newby never went into any details regarding Everage during these brief conversations. Newby also stated that she did not discuss Everage with Superintendent LaFavers.

There is some evidence to suggest that Everage and Newby did not see eye-to-eye about softball. One interviewee stated that she had heard Newby say disparaging things about Everage at some of the softball games, and loud enough for several people to hear. Everage said that she suspects Newby was upset about the distribution of playing time. Newby stated that she had concerns about playing time but that she did not take her concerns to Everage because Everage had a

policy that players had to personally request more playing time. Newby denied having any role whatsoever in the investigation and in the subsequent resignation of Everage.

Everage stated that she felt she was forced to resign after the investigation was completed. She said that she was brought into the Principal's office to sign a document about her achieving tenure in the district and then Principal Karsner presented her with another document regarding her resignation. LaFavers stated that he had given Principal Karsner a pink slip notice for Everage only for her softball duties. Principal Karsner said that he did not give Everage the pink slip notification because Everage resigned first. Principal Karsner denied pressuring Everage to resign.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

OEA finds no violation of law or policy.

Superintendent LaFavers, through his designees, appropriately conducted an investigation into the issues raised by the anonymous letters about Ms. Everage. There is no evidence that the investigation was biased. The investigation was thorough, and within the powers of the Superintendent under KRS 160.350 and KRS 160.390.

Jennifer Newby has served on the Boyle County Board of Education for five years and is currently in her second year as board chair. Ms. Newby has undergone all required training and demonstrated that she knew her role and limitations as a board member. No person interviewed verified that Ms. Newby used her position or influence as a board member to force Ms. Everage to resign as softball coach.

The investigation into the allegations against Ms. Everage was carried out without Ms. Newby's knowledge. Board members were not made aware of Everage's resignation until they received a Personnel Report ahead of the monthly board meeting. While Ms. Newby may have had personal opinions about Ms. Everage's coaching, there is no evidence to suggest that those personal feelings carried over into her role as a board member. Because Ms. Newby was unaware of the investigation or Ms. Everage's resignation until after they occurred, Ms. Newby cannot have influenced either.

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**RESOLUTION**

**Allegation #1:** No resolution is necessary as OEA found no violation of law or policy.