

STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

40 FIELD ST., PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

PHONE: (860) 572-0506

FAX: (860) 599-8948



BOARD OF EDUCATION: Alexa J. Garvey, Chair; Candace Anderson, Secretary

SUPERINTENDENT
Van W. Riley, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Mary Anne Butler

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
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Dear Members of the Stonington Public School Community

The Stonington Board of Education takes seriously its duty to ensure the safety of its students. We are deeply saddened by the reports of allegations by students of improper conduct by a Stonington employee that may date back to 2013, or much earlier.

On Wednesday, February 26, 2020, as part of the school district's plan to address concerns about prior allegations against a former Stonington High School staff member – Mr. Chokas - and the response, or lack thereof, to said allegations, the Board of Education approved a comprehensive investigation by an independent and experienced professional, Attorney Christine Chinni.

The Board has asked Attorney Chinni to conduct a thorough investigation to help it find answers to the following questions:

- (1) the type and frequency of the alleged improper conduct by Mr. Chokas, how many students were impacted and the time frame surrounding the alleged misconduct;
- (2) whether the school district maintained proper policies and procedures during the time period when the alleged misconduct occurred, and whether said policies and procedures were followed;
- (3) if said policies and procedures were not followed, what caused any noncompliance;
- (4) whether the alleged victims reported their concerns and/or complaints to school staff members; and, if not, what caused them not to report;
- (5) whether any school climate/culture issues contributed to any deficiency in implementing district policies and procedures, and/or responding to student concerns and complaints; and
- (6) whether school climate/culture has improved since the alleged employee misconduct occurred in the Stonington Public Schools.

Attorney Chinni will investigate specific concerns and complaints received by any Stonington school officials about Mr. Chokas, receive and investigate any new reports of sexual misconduct by the former employee, review prior policies and procedures, and conduct interviews of staff members as Attorney Chinni decides is warranted, and meet with any students, parents or community members who want to share personal details with her. The Board of Education and Stonington school officials will provide Attorney Chinni with full access to relevant files and records necessary for her investigation.

We strongly encourage anyone with possible knowledge of an allegation of sexual misconduct by Mr. Chokas involving a Stonington Public Schools student to contact Christine Chinni at SPSinvestigation@chinniandmeuser.com or (860) 677-0255 at their earliest possible convenience.

The identity of anyone who reports information to Attorney Chinni will be handled as confidentially as the reporter wishes, and will not be shared in her final report or anywhere else without the reporter's consent, except in situations where a report to government authorities is mandated by law or where, in Attorney Chinni's judgment, a report should be made to those authorities to protect a minor from harm.

We expect that Attorney Chinni's investigation will take two or more months. The Board of Education will make Attorney Chinni's complete report available to the Stonington community.