

May 10, 2024

Dear Commissioner Diaz,

In response to the concerns expressed in your May 9 letter, I am writing to share with you steps we have taken toward necessary change, and I will be announcing additional strategies to improve protections for student safety in June.

To date, the following actions have been taken in response to both internal and external process reviews:

1. This year we launched an online employee misconduct reporting form on our student safety web page. The form enables students and others to report employee misconduct directly to our Office of Professional Standards. These reports can be submitted anonymously, if desired.
2. We replicated the online employee misconduct report form on a student-focused website. We provided each secondary school with posters and flyers with a QR code directly to that site. The site also enables reporting of bullying and other potential student concerns.
3. Earlier this month, we proposed a new policy to our board that mandates rapid removal of an employee if arrested for (either felony or misdemeanor) or alleged to have committed any type of sexual misconduct or exposure, child abuse or harm to a person, or distribution of illegal drugs. We are now operating under this draft policy while it continues to move through our administrative policy board approval process. Our board remains committed to adopting policies that mandate reporting practices that extend beyond their tenure on the board.
4. On May 3, 2023, we shifted from mail submission to electronic submission of employee misconduct reports to the Florida Department of Education. We appreciate the Department's responsiveness to our request to add an electronic receipt confirmation to this process. This feature enables district leadership to monitor adherence to the reporting requirement.
5. The district implemented an employee discipline data tracking feature that enables school and district leaders to quickly see a history of allegations and disciplinary actions against employees prior to transfer or hiring.
6. With the help of our students, the district developed age-appropriate videos on identifying and reporting incidents of harassment. We will deploy these videos with students at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

In addition to the actions already taken, we are taking steps to implement the following strategies as we prepare for the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Additional policy recommendations to include a top-level review of proposed employee disciplinary action under certain conditions.
2. Improvements in staff training including Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) training for human resources leadership staff.
3. Improvements in increasing student awareness of what constitutes inappropriate adult behavior in an educational and extracurricular setting and how to report incidents of this type.
4. Improvements in communication with parents/guardians about what constitutes inappropriate adult behavior in an educational and extracurricular setting and how to report incidents of this type.
5. An increase in the number of investigator positions in our Office of Professional Standards along with an increase in compensation for these positions to improve overall staffing.

The next step in my planning process is to engage the families and other constituencies of Douglas Anderson High School. I will be asking for their feedback on the strategies listed above, as well as input on any further strategies that we may need to consider.

Our board members and I share your goal of keeping students safe at all times. We want to ensure we capture every opportunity to strengthen our ability to meet that goal. If there are additional strategies you feel we need to consider or if there are questions about any of the strategies listed, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Dana Kriznar