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Calvert County Board of Education Executive Staff and School Board Members

1305 Dares Beach Road

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Dear Calvert County BoE Executive Staff and Board Members:

This letter is regarding events at Southern Middle school which transpired yesterday, April, 30, and which hurt our daughter and cause us to worry far more than we already did for her well-being at that school.

Travis Mister almost always monitors departing school buses at the end of the day. He knows their schedules, and we are sure, knew by when Sarah would have arrived at home. Sarah got off the bus yesterday at about 3:45, and broke down sobbing when she got in the door. She had already been crying sporadically and was disheveled and shaken. She told us Spanish student Mr. Page was yelling and misbehaving during the first ten minutes of class, and she made some notes in the margins of a paper to document his misbehavior. For the rest of the class Mr. Page was wearing his headphones and using his computer. Another frequent misbehaver wanted to know why she could not use her computer and Ms. Adams commented on how quiet he was being, which she also sometimes does to shame other students out of apparent malice. After the first ten minutes, Sarah had no reason to take any notes on Mr. Page’s egregious behavior, and was working exclusively on her Spanish. In the last five minutes of class, Ms. Adams stopped the lesson completely, confronted Sarah in front of the entire class, and kept telling her what she was doing was wrong. Sarah was genuinely confused, and, although she knew to what Ms. Adams was referring, she had not taken any notes on misbehavior for almost the whole class. Ashley Adams was cold, vicious, covert and insistent, and every kid in the class (except Mr. Page with his headphones) was focused on Sarah and saw her distress. Because she could not manipulate Sarah into any admission of wrongdoing, she continued to confront Sarah on her way out of the sixth period class at the end of the day, and asked her again if she knew what she was doing is wrong while continuing to pry at Sarah for information. Her classmates were confused and asked her questions. At no point would Ashley Adams tell Sarah of what she was accusing her and she spoke in circles. Sarah rebuffed her attempts, and while we wish she had the presence of mind to hand a letter to Ms. Adams, how can we expect such a thing of a twelve-year-old child? Why should she feel as if she failed in forgetting? They may have even hoped that under duress, the situation would devolve to the point Sarah would commit an infraction for which she would be penalized. This was a setup.

Yesterday at 4:06 pm, right as we were preparing to leave for our meeting with Ms. Roof and Dr. Johnson, John answered my cell phone when it rang. Ms. Adams informed him she was calling, and he gathered Sarah and me and placed the call on speaker. I was in shock and stridently blurted out “this call is being recorded.” John was turning on the voice recorder on his cell phone and we stayed near each other as I took my phone from him. We tried to follow Sarah so she could be privy, but she ran around the corner to another room because she was so upset, although she did listen to the conversation, and at one point, crying, interjected to ask what she had done. (Recording below). Is it possible that they were recording the call as well? This is a dual-party consent state, and they never announced they were recording, nor did we hear either of them tell us we may not record. Moreover, Ashley Adams would not tell us what Sarah had done wrong, but tried, smugly and arrogantly, to draw us into a meeting with her and then Mr. Mister. Her saccharine, feigned ignorance was revolting. At this point, we must document everything, and will enter any situation with them with our recorders on, with a reminder, and if they choose to keep talking, they may. However, we refuse to entertain them further, if at all possible, and are committed to avoiding them. They had better avoid our daughter and our whole family, everywhere and on every level. This is not a game, and it is not a challenge. These people are done with our daughter and anything that can hurt the things she cares about, or the people who act on her behalf. These people are exploitive and malicious.

The most likely scenario we envision is that Travis Mister and Ms. Adams (perhaps with Ms. Blackmon’s involvement) conspired to hurt Sarah, in an attempt to pry information from her, so that we would be enraged and demand a meeting which would be on their terms.

* Do these people really think that stopping Sarah’s note taking, which she does only when she cannot think due to this young man’s outbursts, or afterward on the school bus or as soon as she gets home, will correct these issues at this point? All we have ever heard from them are lies, dismissals, scorn, panic and contempt. All we have ever seen is deflected responsibility and abuse of those whom Mandy Blackmon, Travis Mister and Ashley Adams prefer to blame.
* Maybe they thought we would rush to confront at the school yesterday evening, or at a time to be determined through Ms. Adams, with no witnesses except those whom they wanted to be present. We know it was an attempt to bait us, no matter what. They abused a twelve-year-old child, to get to her representatives, and after we said he may not speak with her, he triangulated and employed a third party to try to bypass our instructions and get to her and therefore us, anyway. We warned both Mandy Blackmon and Travis Mister on Monday, 4/23 not to speak to Sarah and we called them out on their lies and abuse, yet they still think they can play games and are arrogant enough to think we should entertain them. They have no respect.
* He would have time to plan and strategize, instead of being caught off guard like when we went to Southern Middle School to personally inform Travis Mister and Mandy Blackmon they may not speak to Sarah again, and that they would go through us. Given that we angrily called out Travis Mister and then Mandy Blackmon on their lies and abuse, how possibly would they attempt to rectify the situation? It obviously had deteriorated beyond their capabilities, and none of the possible answers from people like them can redeem this situation.
* The phone number was “private.” We don’t know too many people with private numbers, mostly spammers and the like. Was there an effort to conceal the identity of the caller so we could not prove who had called? The recording, and the transparency we have demonstrated, belie their egregious and astonishing recklessness. How much further will these people go?
* After having gone so far to hurt Sarah, her parents would become so unhinged that, intent on a confrontation and payback, we would reveal information and express so much anger as to compromise our own character and integrity. Mandy Blackmon, Travis Mister and Ashley Adams tear people down. They do not build them up. We explained last night how Mandy Blackmon and Travis Mister feed off of each other, and have an oddly symbiotic relationship where they appear to try to repel everyone around them. What else are the hiding? Are the exposure and consequences regarding their mistreatment of Sarah the only things they fear?
* Why did we receive a call twenty-four minutes before our meeting with Ms. Roof and Dr. Johnson was scheduled to begin? Twenty to twenty-five minutes, coincidentally, is exactly the amount of time one would allot to travel from our home to our meeting at Calvert County High School. Were any of the three at Southern made aware of the meeting, and was this an attempt to talk us out of going, or to cause us such emotional distress that we could not effectively participate in the meeting? They are so daft as to think we wouldn’t see through it, and they could make some half-baked last-minute attempt to reach out after almost an entire year of lies and abuse? These are terrifying lengths to go to, and we will not subject our daughter to their malice and caprice.

Mandy Blackmon and Travis Mister, if anything, are supposed to lead and guide aspiring teachers, not allow them to abuse or be complicit in abuse. This is the example they set for a student/substitute teacher whom we now believe, if this example is any indication, should not enter any helping profession?

Their hubris continues to astonish, and renders them even more irresponsible and reckless. These people and their motives should be obvious by now. How can such foolish, aggressive, and defensive people be trusted to run a school? They cannot, and they present a danger to those around them. What kind of monsters do this, and speak with as much smug satisfaction and condescension as you hear in Ms. Adams’ voice? These people are sick, and, after a sleepless, stressful night and upon reflection, this is the final example of emotional and ethical unfitness to which we can or will allow Sarah to be subject.

Mandy Blackmon (whom we explained last night is complicit and covertly, craftily and sneakily abusive), aside from being the PRINCIPAL of the school, Travis Mister, and Ashley Adams must be permanently and completely be removed from Southern before we can in good conscience allow her to return. They cannot be permitted into our other children’s schools, ever. After what they have done, what else are they capable of? They compromise the school and the people in it, if only because of their selfishness, dishonesty, arrogance and roundly demonstrated lack of insight. Mandy Blackmon knows what Travis Mister does, but she is self-satisfied and content to allow it.

This morning we informed Sarah she cannot go to school until they are gone. She is angry and upset about the work she will be missing, and PARC testing is almost here. We are compelled to protect her and it is our belief that this abuse requires any related absences of Sarah’s to be excused. We don’t even care if there is a teacher who knows any Spanish for the rest of the year at this point, and which Ms. Roof and Dr. Johnson explained last night is unlikely to be found on such short notice for the remainder of the year. What about all of the kids – how will they be ready for Spanish II? But, Ashley Adams needs to go, and should not be trusted elsewhere, at least not for a long time, if ever. Although we are reluctant to create any more difficulty for Sarah’s other teachers (with whom we absolutely do not have a problem, and from whom we are happy to hear at any time), we must require that they set aside her work, for what we hope is her return to school tomorrow, May 2. We ask that you first contact her teachers and make the initial arrangements, both to protect CCPS and Sarah from any contact being intercepted and teachers from any and all manipulation. After that point, Sarah can communicate with her teachers without reservation. We ask this because we fear teacher retribution and abuse by Mandy Blackmon, Travis Mister and Ashley Adams. Neither Sarah, her dad nor I will set foot on the grounds of Southern Middle School until we know they are gone. We have a flexible schedule many days and under the circumstances must be content to collect and deliver her work to/from the BoE main offices or other agreed upon location – as long as it is not Southern Middle School and neither Mandy Blackmon, Travis Mister nor Ashley Adams are there.

Under no circumstances will Sarah accept nor endure any explanations or apologies from people as lacking in basic decency as these three. Do you know how upset she was this morning, trying to argue to go to school because she cares about her studies? She tried to negotiate that she would keep the protective letters we provided her on her person at all times (such as in the lunchroom when she did not have her folder) and have the presence of mind to hand them to anyone who might try to abuse her. We had to explain to her that she is twelve, asked her if we had been wrong yet, told her we no longer believe a letter can protect her and we cannot let her go. Why should we have to explain to her that while she is appropriately naïve at her age, we have to protect her from things of which she cannot conceive? I had to take her backpack, in case she grabbed it and ran out the door to the bus when it came by. Her dad is home today and waited near the door in case he needed to restrain her. She didn’t try to leave and so he did not, but it took some time for her to begin to accept that her life has been upended by these disgusting and vituperative people. She is a bright and determined young lady, and even with all of the drama, started on her schoolwork by 8:45 a.m., of her own volition. It pains all of us to speak to her and think we will need to treat her that way, and under such circumstances.

Upon reflection of last night’s meeting with Dr. Johnson and Ms. Roof, Sarah, her dad and I all still feel positive about their motives, and in no way fault them for what has been allowed to happen. They asked questions and provided input that showed they knew what they were doing, they care and are paying attention. They each took copious and detailed notes. Please, if you can, see what they think. They heard it from Sarah, and her parents, firsthand.

As we know some of you to whom this email is addressed may not have had a chance to collect your mail, please find attached the letters on which we copied Ms. Roof and Dr. Johnson last night. Although they sensibly declined to listen to the recording last night, we are including it now. Listen to the recording a few times, imagine our shock and horror, and picture our daughter emerging from another room of her own home to come to the phone, crying, and ask what she had done. Sarah knew it was a setup. Aside from the fear, pain, and intimidation, the cognitive dissonance between what is happening, compared to what she knows is right, has shaken her - badly.

Dr. Curry – We require email and/or other certified communication from you or an official representative of CCPS, confirming that Mandy Blackmon, Travis Mister and Ashley Adams have been entirely removed from the school, with no possibility of returning in any capacity, even to pick up anything, before we will allow Sarah to return. This does not mean it is time to pull administrators from other schools to fill the gaps or burden Southern’s other administrators, teachers and staff. While we had preferred to send this email earlier in the day, the CCPS webpage was suddenly down, and we did not have all of your email addresses until a few minutes ago. Time is of the essence.

Urgently,

John Blevins Katharine Blevins

Cc: Dr. Susan Johnson, Director of Secondary School Improvement

Ms. Kim Roof, Director of Student Services