

Shelby Police Department, DSS and CCS “Playing Games” with investigation of Abuse of Autistic Shelby Middle School Student!!!—And MORE!! Updated Report and commentary by Robert A. Williams

Several recent articles have been published regarding the revelations of suspected abuse or neglect of an autistic Shelby Middle School student in gym class with three laughing coaches and many students witnessing the beating of the student. All this was brought out by two speakers at the April 8, 2019 school board meeting that prompted me to report the incident to the Shelby Police Department as well as the Cleveland County Department of Social Services. North Carolina law requires anyone with a “suspicion” of child abuse, neglect or dependency to report their suspicion to the Director of Social services in the County the child resides in. Apparently, I was the only person that abided by the law in this incident. Although others informed school officials and one of the laughing coaches (it should have been all the coaches suspended from the get-go) was allegedly forced to retire early over the incident. I suppose that coach is not laughing any more. However, Dr. Dustin Bridges, the Principal of Shelby Middle School made sure the security camera footage of the alleged “beating” incident was destroyed amidst the controversy.

Well, since my report to the DSS as well as the Shelby Police Department, several things have happened:

1. I received a written request from the School SRO asking for the names of witnesses, which I provided. Those witnesses also provided the SRO with the names of the three coaches. Then I was told the SRO works for Shelby Middle School and NOT the Shelby Police Department. A claim that I do not believe. But if the SRO is doing the investigation and HE believes that he works for Shelby Middle School, then the SRO has a conflict and should never be the one doing any kind of unbiased investigation regarding my official complaint.

2. On April 21, 2019 I received a letter from DSS, dated April 12, 2019 and under the letterhead of Jane Shooter, DSS interim Director and well-known and long-time conspirator telling me that DSS did NOT investigate such matters as "school teachers, school personnel and school staff are not considered to be caregivers" and my report had been referred to the Shelby Police Department. Chief Jeff Ledford is the SPD Chief of Police and would be the person in charge of ensuring the proper person was assigned to perform an unbiased and independent investigation of the allegation. I have not received any official notice from the SPD regarding the proper assignment of a trained investigator or the results of such an investigation. I would also note that the Federal Lawsuit filed by Mr. Willie Green against the City of Shelby and City Manager Rick Howell indicate to me that it is very likely that the Shelby Police Department, as well as other city departments, have not received proper oversight and direction from the Mayor, City Council and City Manager on down in quite some time.

That being said:

I have received feedback from the witnesses that provided information to the Shelby Middle School Principal, spoke at the CCS Board meeting and provided input to the SMS SRO that the "official" story (that I believe to be a made-up lie) is that the autistic child was just a part of a "game" and was not "hurt."

At this time, I am going to ask you readers a question that I have asked myself. Is it proper for three laughing gym coaches to single out an autistic-handicapped child with communication issues and play "games" with him in front of a whole class? Especially when at least some of those other students perceived the "game" to actually being a beating? To such an extent that Principal Bridges saw fit to have or allow the security footage of the incident be destroyed. An action that is backed by the school administration and school board, except for Danny Blanton.

As for me, I would say that what the inconsiderate and bullying coaches might consider a "game" was in reality a very cruel "game," an act of bullying. A joke of a game. A cruel game that only bullies at heart could or would laugh about. I would say the beating "game" may not have hurt the autistic-handicapped child very much physically; emotionally it was abusive to the highest degree of brutality as well as a very bad example for the other students in the gym class. A bad example that some students might repeat on the playground, in the classroom, on the street or on the school bus. Bad to the bone and condoned by the Principal, Superintendent and the School Board. All made liars by their propaganda saying Cleveland County schools are a "No-Bullying Zone." And CCS is the biggest bully of all.

So, what to do??

Remember folks, 2020 is election time for five school board members. Shearra Miller, Richard Hooker, Roger Harris, Jo Boggs and Jeff Jones. Let's all us voters give these five the Heave-Ho on Election Day by voting for five good candidates who will not play games with handicapped students as well as with the education and future of all our children.

Folks, Look around your community for good candidates for the School Board for the 2020 Elections. Urge them to run for the office and vote for them. I will start with these

recommendations:

Dr. Jason Hurst: President of the Cleveland Community College with a profound interest in educating students at CCS so they will graduate the best prepared students for CCS, other institutions of higher learning or in the vocational fields. An education specialist.

Mrs. Jason Hurst: Wife of Dr. Hurst. An educator in her own right. Also, with a profound interest in educating students at CCS so they will graduate the best prepared students for CCS, other institutions of higher learning or in the vocational fields. An education specialist.

Robert Queen: A registered Professional Engineer with a keen interest in sound facility planning as well as fiscal responsibility in the maintenance of existing school facilities as well as in future school planning and construction. Presently on the CCC Board of Trustees and doing a good job. Also a top candidate to fill the soon to be open Operations Director position at CCS. An Operations, facilities and fiscal responsibility specialist.

Rodney Fitch: A well trained, experienced, effective and honorable Sheriff's Department Officer with a keen interest in education and the security of CCS schools. It is well assured that autistic and otherwise handicapped students at CCS would not be beaten or bullied at CCS facilities. SROs would also be properly trained and accountable. Would be instrumental in the incorporation of installed security feature needs and designs for existing and future schools as well as proper selection and training for armed school security personnel. A school security specialist.

Kevin Whisnant: A corporate executive with extensive training and experience in continuing improvement and organizational processes, policies and procedures. Something presently totally lacking at CCS. An organization improvement

specialist.

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Rev. Dante Murphy: Formerly on the CCS Diversity Team and preferred candidate for the position of Director of the Cleveland County Department of Social Services. A Baptist Minister and well versed in social issues and the abuses thereof surrounding governmental agencies in Cleveland County. Including CCS. A social-moral responsibility specialist.

Senator Debbie Clary: Co-founder and Chairman of the Pinnacle Classical Academy. Cleveland County's first charter school and already running rings around CCS in academic achievement. Well versed in personnel selection to hire the best people to get the job done well and within budget. Personnel, financial and organization specialist whose input to CCS would be invaluable.

Betsy Harnage: A businesswoman who is presently the elected Register of Deeds of Cleveland County. And not eligible allowed to serve in a second elected office. However, Betsy Harnage is also a Board member at Pinnacle Classical Academy and whose input and direction has helped PCA get to the top in as very short time. Betsy would not be able to run for the School Board, but she could be called upon to serve as an Ad Hoc CCS School Board member and offer her very much needed independent advice, discussion and direction to the CCS School Board.

Dr. Rev. Rit Varriale: Presently Senior Minister of the Elizabeth Baptist Church. Well known for his understanding, as shown by his Flag Pole arrangement of the Christian and US Flags, that God is Number One-over all governments. Very influential in the community as a champion for doing what is right and Godly, no matter how controversial. A good example of a walking Moral Compass. Something badly needed at CCS. A social-moral responsibility specialist.

Steve C. Borders: Educator, retired from CCS. Known for being

fair and honest. Experienced the failed school merger from the inside and would be instrumental in resolving the still lingering problems, issues and wasteful duplication that still faces CCS from the 20-year-old merger and the educational slide toward mediocrity. A task necessary to plan for future school construction based on up to date demographics. An educational, organization and planning specialist.

Kathy B. Falls: A former School Board member that I worked hard to un-elect at the last (2017) school board election. However, I have come to believe that Kathy Falls has seen the error of her ways. And whose enlightened vim and vigor as an advocate for children, when properly directed, would be useful to make the changes that need to be made at CCS. An instrument for improvement specialist.

Other people that I know or have been described to me as very good potential School Board candidates are:

Billy Scruggs

Wanda Porter

Stan Shaw

Lorraine Enste

\Folks, this list named above (and many others) are all good folks that I know of that would make much better School Board members than the five incumbents up for re-election in 2020. Also note that I did not talk to any of these folks about being put on this list for this article or ask for their permission. Naming good people and telling the truth violates no laws and is covered by the 1st Amendment. But some may not be interested for their own personal reasons. But I would urge each one to consider the proposition. I would also urge every reader to do some thinking on whether or not you or someone YOU know that would be interested in running for the school board in 2020 to start doing some thinking too. It is the best interest of our children and our children's future that each and every one of us step up and do what is necessary to ensure

our educational system in Cleveland County is second to none. We can do it. We are already paying for it, just not getting it. As the USA is a Democratic Republic, it is our responsibility to get it done at the ballot box. And we can!!

Stay Tuned!!! The 2020 Elections will be upon us before we know it.