



April 30, 2024

Dr. Azaiez,

At your request, I am providing a letter related to my contract with the Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD). I have enjoyed working with many dedicated people within the district, including the many officers in the department and truly enjoy making improvements within the department to better serve the students and staff of RRISD. I want to be in a district and agency that truly believes in helping students succeed, improving their pathway to success and finding opportunities to serve and protect our students and staff. RRISD has many amazing staff and students for which I have been charged with overseeing their safety and security with my sworn oath of office. I want to continue service with a district that will support the officers and ensure that we can do our duty to those we serve through leadership at the district that is unwavering in protecting its students and staff.

I am writing this letter to highlight a systemic issue that undermines the collective efforts to fulfill the police department's duty to protect and serve. Here is one of the most egregious examples of not being empowered to uphold my duties as Police Chief. This is in part why I have lost trust in you and confidence in your leadership to ensure I am able to fulfill the duties I have sworn to uphold in my oath of office; I cannot compromise on those duties.

On Friday, April 12, 2024, a five-year-old girl was sexually assaulted on a district owned and operated school bus and the police were not notified by any district employee until nearly 4 pm on Monday, April 15th. The assault was witnessed by a district bus driver, but the bus driver did not report it to police. A Transportation supervisor was made aware of the assault, reviewed camera video on April 12th, sent a copy of the video to school administrative leadership, but did not notify the police.

On Monday morning, campus leadership reviewed the video, acknowledged its receipt from Transportation and indicated to Transportation that they would follow up on the matter. Campus leadership did not notify the police at that time.

The principal, area superintendent, senior chief of schools, general counsel, Title IX investigator and you, the superintendent of the district, became aware of the criminal activity on Monday, but none of you reported it to the police.

A campus assistant principal, at nearly 4 pm on Monday afternoon, called police dispatch requesting an officer to call her back to "document" the incident. This call came

after the administration had spoken with the involved parties and their guardians and had released them from the campus for the day. This further delayed police investigation.

I met with you at 1 pm on Monday, April 15th for our scheduled one on one meeting. During that meeting you asked me if I had heard about something that happened at the elementary school. I said that I had not and asked you if you knew what it was regarding. You told me that you did not have any details and only that there were language issues involved. I said I would look into whether the police department was aware of anything at that campus. Immediately following our meeting, I contacted police dispatch and inquired as to whether the police department was handling any calls for service involving that school. I was told that we were not.

I suspect that at 1 pm Monday, when we were meeting, that you did have specific information regarding a crime that had occurred involving students from that school. I base this on the fact that I found out later that the district took action against the subject student to suspend their transportation privileges before noon that day. I do not believe that this is an action that would occur without your knowledge. If you did have specific knowledge that this incident did occur, it is unconscionable that you, as superintendent, would withhold reporting this sexual assault on a student entrusted to the district's care.

Because the police were not notified and informed immediately, the victim was subjected to additional trauma having to ride the bus to school on that Monday morning with the subject who assaulted her the prior Friday. After investigation, it was discovered that this victim and one other student had been previously assaulted on this bus route by this subject in the recent past.

The victim was further traumatized by the district by not being interviewed just once by a Child Advocacy Center forensic interviewer, but rather by district staff, and then again, by the forensic interviewer. Having sexual assault victims recount their experiences to different parties has been shown to be very traumatic for the victim and it is not a practice used by Round Rock ISD Police. All our officers go through Trauma Informed Response training specifically to better deal with victims of these types of crimes. Conducting investigations otherwise is not in the best interest of victims and is unacceptable.

The police department does not involve itself in the disciplinary matters of students, but we continuously advocate for students whether they are victims or subjects. In this current case, I have already reached out to Williamson County Juvenile Justice Center leadership so that in the event of a referral, they are best prepared to provide support and treatment to the eleven-year-old subject/offender in this case.

Since joining the Round Rock ISD from the Palm Beach School District, I have experienced numerous practices of non-reporting and delayed reporting of crimes, and interference with police operations and investigations by district staff. In the interest of partnership and team cohesion, I have focused on improving process and education in

these areas. I have informed principals and assistant principals at professional development meetings about the Texas Attorney General's School Crime and Discipline Handbook, and recommended that they familiarize themselves with the requirements in the handbook. With this latest incident, I am concerned that these reporting practices may be intentional and even encouraged at the highest levels of the district, namely by Dr. Natalie Nichols and possibly you. Besides numerous specific incidences, I can refer to two efforts that support my concern:

In a meeting you scheduled with me held in your conference room at the beginning of the current school year, I arrived to find Dr. Natalie Nichols had been invited by you into the meeting. Since no meeting agenda had been provided, I asked you what it was we were expecting to discuss. Before you could respond, Dr. Nichols began to speak, indicating to me that she was directing the meeting. She began by saying she wanted to meet with me to discuss the police department and how the department is managed. She went on to say that there would be times when she would have to give direction to me on specific police matters as they relate to campuses and police assignments. She continued for several minutes using the words "direct" and "require." I did not interrupt her during her harangue.

When she finished, I turned to you and asked if you were in support of her comments. Instead of a direct yes or no response, you started by saying that it was important that the campuses be supported and that, something to the effect of, maintaining harmony within the district is a priority.

At that point, I summarized what I had heard, and that the words used by Dr. Nichols were "direct" and "require," and that those words were materially different from "work together" and "collaborate." I reminded you and informed her that by Texas statute a district police chief reports only to the district superintendent and that I would only take direction from you.

That was when Dr. Nichols began to laugh in an incredulous manner while asking me, "do you mean I have to ask the superintendent to have you do something?," to which I responded, "that is what the statute says and that is how it works."

After that, there were no other material issues to discuss, and the meeting ended shortly thereafter. You never made it clear to Dr. Nichols during that meeting that you supported my statements. This meeting did put me on notice as to Dr. Nichol's desire to manage and control the police department.

In a separate, but now related effort, due to my continued concerns regarding reporting and interference, I thought it beneficial to develop a service level agreement for use between the police department and campus leadership. The template that I used for this agreement is based upon the guidance provided in the Attorney General's handbook. The agreement was intended to be a document that both campus leadership and campus-based officers could refer to when setting expectations.

I worked with Assistant Chief Rose White, Area Superintendent Dr. Nancy Guerrero and Area Superintendent Zack Oldham on the draft of this agreement. At our last meeting during January of this year, Dr. Nichols, through Dr. Guerrero, had proposed additional language to the draft that would have given discretion to campus administration for crime reporting that was contrary to the handbook guidance. I pointed out my concern over the proposed additional language and Dr. Guerrero said she would bring those concerns back to Dr. Nichols. As of the date of this letter, I have not heard back from either Dr. Guerrero or Dr. Nichols on this matter.

Now, again with hindsight, a question might legitimately be raised as to whether Dr. Nichols and you want to have a service level agreement that would strengthen compliance with crime reporting requirements. I maintain the lack of an executed service level agreement contributes to the delayed reporting, the continued traumatization of the victim in this case and increases the potential liability of the district.

In light of these serious concerns, and as a result of the inappropriate pressure I've experienced from district leadership, specifically Dr. Nichols and you, and the apparent intentional failure of district leadership to notify, inform and involve the police department in police matters that directly impact the department's ability to protect victims who are students of RRISD, I have contacted the Texas Attorney General's Office to formally request involvement in investigating this specific case, and the practices and actions of district leadership as they relate to police matters.

There may not be any criminal liability or malfeasance in the current case or in the historic practices and actions of district leadership, but I am by statute a direct report to you, and as such, I am unable to investigate these matters secure from undue influence, pressure, or involvement.

I must address the pressure I have felt to resign from my position and the suggestion that I am not valued as part of the leadership team beyond June 30th. It is disheartening to feel that my dedication to the safety and well-being of RRISD students and staff is not appreciated or supported by district leadership.

Furthermore, I must also address the concerning behavior of the District's new Director of Safety and Security, Rich Andreucci, who now reports to Dr. Nichols. He has actively undermined me and my office as Police Chief. In a recent meeting with other RRISD staff, the Director of Safety and Security called me a liar, casting doubt on my integrity and credibility. Additionally, the Director has attempted to undermine the work of RRISD PD by reaching outside the district to partners and questioning the viability of the police radio system as it relates to interoperability. In an email to the city of Austin, the Director stated, "I have been tasked by my leadership to provide them with the viability of the current First Net PTT radios actually working properly on the GATRRS system."

Despite our discussion on this matter, you stated that this directive did not come from you and that you were not aware of it. You assured me the practice would stop, but it continued the following week. It appears this directive came from either you or Dr.

Nichols. Either way, this is interference with my duty to provide a public safety radio capability to our department, and a potential Texas Penal Code violation as it is a crime for any person including school administrators to interfere with school district peace officers while they are performing their duties or lawfully exercising their authority. This behavior further highlights the need for accountability and transparency within district leadership.

In conclusion, I reiterate my commitment to continuing the important work we do at RRISD, but I cannot do so without the full support, cooperation and a potential change of district leadership.

Due to the purpose of this letter, and the nature of my concerns, I am compelled to copy the district board on this communication.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Weiner". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a cursive "Weiner".

Dennis Weiner
Chief of Police
Round Rock Independent School District