

April 8, 2022

Dear Families and Staff of the East Greenwich Public Schools:

We are writing to inform the community about a difficult matter involving the varsity volleyball program. In November 2021, immediately after the end of the fall season, serious concerns about the assistant coach's interactions with the players were brought to the Superintendent. The Superintendent launched an investigation that day and immediately notified the assistant coach that they were banned from school grounds and from having contact with any player while the investigation was ongoing. The school district reported the complaints to the East Greenwich Police Department and to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

The school district hired an outside investigator, who conducted a two-month investigation, including interviews with current and former athletes, parents, coaches, administrators, and other staff. The investigation concluded that the assistant coach had behaved in violation of the district's Title IX policy with respect to sexual harassment. As a result, the assistant coach and the head coach of the varsity volleyball teams have been terminated from their positions and banned from future employment with the East Greenwich Public Schools.

The Superintendent has sent letters summarizing the allegations, findings, and actions taken to the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Rhode Island Interscholastic League, Volleyball USA, and DCYF. Throughout the process, we have continued to work closely with DCYF, which we have been told is conducting its own investigation. To our knowledge, there have been no criminal charges filed in this case. The district and high school staff have maintained communications with the affected students and families to ensure they have appropriate information and support.

In order to ensure the safety of all student-athletes moving forward, the school district is putting several additional safeguards in place. First, we will institute mandatory annual training to inform all athletes, coaches, and assistant coaches about policies, procedures, and expectations on and off the playing fields, including guidelines for appropriate communication and interaction between coaches and students. In addition, all student-athletes will receive similar training at the start of each season. The training will outline procedures for any athlete to report inappropriate behavior without fear of retaliation. Finally, we are in the process of reviewing policies and practices related to outside interactions between employees and students.

Throughout this process, our top priority has been to protect the privacy and safety of the students and families involved, and we ask all members of the community to do the same. Out of respect for these families, the district will not provide any additional details regarding circumstances. We recognize that high school athletics are an important part of the educational experience for so many of our students and families, and we hope to move forward as a community to ensure the success and safety of all of our student-athletes.

Sincerely,

Anne Musella
School Committee Chair

Alexis Meyer
Superintendent of Schools