

**INVESTIGATION REPORT: SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
IN RE: RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL
April 30, 2026**

s/ 

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Riverview High School, and many of its leaders, are the primary focus of this investigation report. I want to make clear that all the humans involved and addressed through this report, whether complainants or the objects of the complaints, are public servants. Being in education, being a leader in an educational setting, and all those who help support the school system are to be commended for wanting to be of service to students, community, fellow staff members and others. The times are not friendly to public education and have not been for a while. Yet, all the individuals addressed and/or part of this investigation are good humans who have tough jobs to do, have a lot more on their respective plates than may be reasonable, and whose contributions may not necessarily be valued by all despite the sacrifices being made to serve the public good.

Indeed, sometimes, things can go sideways when attention may be lacking, emotions run high, time is short, patience runs thin, etc. These common life circumstances can cause even good humans to act perhaps in ways that would not be considered ideal, appropriate or policy-compliant, and in ways that can be hurtful or harmful, unwittingly or not. People can be good and also adversely impactful. Both things can be true at the same time.

It is important that this caveat serves as a backdrop for the findings being shared. Yes, there are some hefty situations that should have resulted in better, different, more policy-compliant outcomes through humane leadership or communication approach. To the extent there are findings that are adverse, I am hopeful this will serve as a teachable moment from which positive changes can be made not only organizationally but also in the human-to-human context.

B. COMPLAINTS

Over the course of 2024 into 2025, several individuals raised concerns about multiple issues involving Riverview High School (RHS) that spanned from 2019-20 onwards. The individuals are comprised of students and staff members, both current and formerly of RHS. The nature of the concerns raised include teacher-led academic cheating, a bullying hostile working environment created by certain staff members, favoritism, misuse of public assets for private gain, school safety/security issues, and a culture that led to the perception of a retaliatory working/school environment for those who raise concerns. The common theme was failure in culture and leadership. The targets of the concerns included three primary individuals at RHS, but all also pointed to an alleged lack of presence and leadership from RHS administration, allowing for tumult and inconsistency to foment at the floor levels of the school.

These individuals raised concerns to the Superintendent's level in 2024/2025. Given that most of the issues raised by these several individuals were prior to the current School

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District Superintendent's tenure, and to ensure they were heard and seen, the new District HR and the Superintendent's office decided to have the allegations/concerns freshly reviewed by outside independent counsel.

C. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ISSUES

At the outset of the investigation, I was given a hodge-podge of what appeared to multiple disconnected complaints about various issues and individuals at RHS, creating some confusion about the appropriate scope of the investigation. After some discussion with the District HR as well as the individuals who raised the concerns to be investigated, attention focused on three primary issues, with certain sub-issues as well. The primary issues involved:

1. Cheating by IB Spanish Language Teacher, Vanessa Sanchez
2. Harassment/Bullying/Hostile Environment, Chad Smith
3. Misuse of Public Position for Private financial gain, James Minor
4. Suboptimal Working Environment/Retaliatory Environment

Other issues included lack of attention to alleged ongoing school security/safety protocols, ongoing favoritism with the handing out of 310 and 0145 contracts by RHS to a select few as opposed to opening financial/contract stipend opportunities to all RHS qualified staff for application, amongst other issues.

D. EVIDENCE/TESTIMONY: # INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED AND PRR 578 and 628

Two large public records requests were made as numbered above in August/September 2025. During the investigation, I interviewed nearly 30 witnesses, both currently and formerly employed at RHS as well as current/former RHS students. Some of these individuals were interviewed multiple times to cross-check information received. A few individuals interviewed are employed outside of the School District and/or RHS. I posed questions (without naming RHS and/or any individuals) to these outside individuals to cross-check policy, best practices, IB practices and the like. This report is supported by **EXHIBIT A, 1-77; EXHIBIT B, 1-16; EXHIBIT C, 1-24; EXHIBIT D, 1-157; EXHIBIT E, 1-17; AND EXHIBIT F, 1-100.**

E. REMINDER TO SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION/HR

1. Protection From Retaliation

A great number of the currently employed individuals and students whom I interviewed expressed significant concern over their identities being used in the investigation out of fear that each would be targeted by one or more individuals currently employed at RHS. As a result, the names of said witnesses are not included in this report. By the nature of the allegations at issue, disclosure may be inevitable.

For completeness, the record exhibits enclosed with this report are from public records. Given the public nature of the documents produced by the School District in response to my requests, these exhibits are reproduced as-is.

Because total anonymity cannot be guaranteed, and because District HR is aware of the identity of the several individuals who raised concerns subject to this investigation, it is incumbent that District HR take steps to ensure none of the individuals who participated in this investigation be subject to unlawful retaliation of any sort. This may include macroaggressions or microaggressions. I have confirmed that as of the date of this report, none of the individuals are under any HR and/or school-based investigation or have any pending concerns/complaints lodged against them.

2. Ensure Complaint Policy/Procedure Validity With Closure of Communication To Complainants

To promote faith and trust in School District policy compliance and enforcement, it is strongly recommended that School District HR notify those individuals that this investigation has concluded, that those individuals have been seen and heard irrespective of whatever decisions or steps may or may not be taken by School District leadership arising out of this report, along with encouragement to promptly notify School District HR of any subsequent good-faith concerns, including but not limited to retaliation.

F. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the evidence reviewed and the testimony received, I find:

1. RHS and School District HR failed to take appropriate corrective action against Sanchez and/or to ensure consistent compliance with IB Spanish Language oral protocols;
2. RHS and School District HR failed to proactively address/correct inappropriate behavior attributable to Smith relating to the findings from School District HR's own investigations;
3. RHS and School District failed to ensure public trust with the public asset management of Riverview Performing Arts Center, attributable to Minor's private A/V business; and
4. RHS fostered a working environment and/or learning environment for many that was (and those interviewed say, remains) non-responsive, inconsistent, uncomfortable and retaliatory for those who complained about Sanchez and Smith, spoke up against those in

leadership, and/or who have relationships with leadership, or who raise(d) questions in general.¹

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **SANCHEZ AND MINOR:** reinforcement through meaningful in-person training involving ethics, public trust and academic honesty

Objective: change behavior and/or help rebuild trust.

2. **SMITH:** in-person training in professional conduct/behavior and respectful communication style

Objective: change behavior and/or help rebuild any lingering reputational issues/loss of trust with staff and/or students.

3. **ALL RHS LEADERSHIP** (including Athletics, IB Program, All Department Heads, Supervisors, etc.): in-person training in leadership/emotional intelligence training and effective, respectful, timely and complete communications

Objective: Foster healthy, positive workplace/school culture; improve level and depth of proactive communications (responsiveness, speaking and active listening) at the leadership levels;

Objective: Increase engagement built on mutual respect, active listening and active communications to mitigate against cycle of complaints and concerns;

Objective: Reduce fear amongst staff/students of a retaliatory culture, but rather, increase meaningful participation.

4. **SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND RELATED TRAININGS:** Ensure professionalism in the workplace and with student/staff communications as well as the efficacy of current policy and complaint procedure at the school-based levels. For example, are District HR and all School-Based Administrators working together to ensure full understanding of, as well as implementing/enforcing policies and complaint procedures in a consistent manner, with effective communication throughout the

¹ Again, it is important I note that I was not asked to conduct a survey of RHS staff members, or to conduct any sort of a large-scale review into culture. The findings are based on those who were impacted by decisions made during the time period at issue, as well as the consequences described thereafter. That said, a large group of folks perceiving and/or believing such issues need attention can provide an opportunity for leadership growth and development, in addition to the other recommendations being made.

process, to ensure employees and students **trust the process** – as opposed to believing it would be futile to bring up any concerns

Objective: Ensure School District HR policies/complaint procedures relating to reports of alleged inappropriate or unlawful conduct remain valid and defensible under applicable laws. Combined with emotionally-intelligent, trained leaders, also helps rebuild faith that complaints/concerns will not lead to repercussions for those who raise them.

5. **RPAC A/V MANAGEMENT:** see recommendation on page 36-37 of this report.

Objective: Address the issue in ways respectful of Minor's time worked, to the extent he remains in that A/V role, while rebuilding public trust

6. **POSSIBLE CORRECTIVE ACTION AND/OR COUNSELING:** Based on findings with respect to each of the individuals at issue, consider disciplinary action(s); if time barred, consider other allowed counseling in conjunction with the training above.

Objective: Record/document steps taken with the goal of ensuring repeat violations do not occur.

Objective: Rebuild public trust through any remedial steps to be taken with re. Sanchez, Smith and Minor and any others implicated at the RHS and District levels.

7. **SAFETY COMPLIANCE:** Ensure RHS complies with the spirit of the safety/security policies implemented by the School Board

Objective: Self-explanatory

8. **SCHOOL SURVEY:** Conduct School District survey of RHS culture to assess whether any adjustments are needed to help holistically foster improved trust, policy compliance, cross-organizational communication, culture etc.

Objective: Self-explanatory

II. ANALYSIS

A. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST VANESSA SANCHEZ

(1) APPLICABLE POLICIES

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS ACADEMIC HONESTY 5.50

- I. The School Board of Sarasota County strongly believes that academic honesty must be practiced by all students.
- A. Definition of Cheating: Cheating shall be defined as:
- a) **The inappropriate and deliberate distribution or use of information, notes, materials, work of another person, or testing materials;**
- b) the unauthorized or inappropriate use of technology devices in the completion of an academic assessment or assignment.
- ll. Students are expected to **demonstrate honesty and integrity at all times.**
- A. **Each student is expected to do his or her own work**, except where collaboration is permitted by the teacher. This includes test taking, homework, class assignments and the original creation of essays, compositions, term papers and research.
- B. **There is no distinction between giving and receiving unauthorized help;** one who helps another to cheat is as guilty as one who benefits from cheating. All work submitted by the student should be a true reflection of that student's own effort and ability.
- D. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, academic consequences, the loss of eligibility for local scholarships, and loss of honors, awards, and membership in extra-curricular activities. **EXHIBIT A, 47-48**

CHAPTER 6.00 - HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL ETHICS 6.27

An effective educational program requires the services of personnel of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. All employees shall be expected to maintain and promote these qualities. The Board shall also expect all administrative, instructional and support staff members to adhere to the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida. Ill. Administrative and instructional personnel, as defined by Florida Statute, shall be required to complete training on these ethical standards. All other employees shall be encouraged to participate in training related to professional ethics. **EXHIBIT A, 001**

**DIPLOMA PROGRAMME
LANGUAGE B GUIDE
First Assessment 2020**

Individual Oral assessment: a conversation with the teacher, based on an extract from one of the literary works studied in class, followed by discussion based on one or more of the themes from the syllabus.

REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The internal assessment is to be conducted entirely in the target language. The final Internal assessment, for which marks will be submitted, **must not be rehearsed as this would not reflect the student's true ability to interact in the target language;** however, the procedures and characteristics of the Individual oral assessment can, and should, be practiced during lessons, as should the development of verbal interaction between student and teacher. Each student's individual oral assessment must be audio recorded and the files must be of high quality. Each recording is to be retained according to the procedures set out in Diploma Programme Assessment procedures. Samples of the internal assessment selected for moderation must be submitted in the form of an audio file.

CONDUCT OF THE INDIVIDUAL ORAL ASSESSMENT

The timing of the 15-minute preparation period begins when the student is presented with clean copies of each of the two stimuli (from two different themes) from which to choose the one stimulus they would like to use for the individual oral assessment. After choosing the stimulus, the student has the remainder of the 15 minutes to prepare the presentation. **During this preparation time, the student may write brief working notes (a maximum of 10 bullet points). These notes may be used for reference only and must not be read aloud as a prepared speech.** During the preparation time, the student must be supervised. The student may not have access to course materials, class notes, dictionaries (in any form), computers, mobile phones or other IT equipment. The student must be given a blank sheet of paper on which to make up to 10 notes in bullet-point form. The visual stimulus and any notes that have been made in the 15 minutes of preparation time for the individual oral assessment are to be collected and retained by the teacher.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN CONDUCTING AND ASSESSING THE INDIVIDUAL ORAL ASSESSMENT

It is the teacher's responsibility to: Avoid correcting the student or dominating the conversation.

EXHIBIT A, 49-77

(2) APPLICABLE HR EXHIBITS

**MEMORANDUM 2021-2022 HR/ER
FROM: Robert Boney to Al Harayda
June 03, 2022**

Keith Little:

[Complainant] explained that she provided evidence in the form of screen shots of Vanessa Sanchez assisting the students in the Microsoft Teams chat, by typing the words that the students spoke into the recording and also had comments that proved she had helped the students with their scripts, rehearsing their presentations. Dr. Little explained that he was aware of [Complainants] reporting of cheating involving Vanesa Sanchez, IB Coordinator, reported a few years prior. Dr. Little explained that any allegation of cheating is taken very seriously, to include cheating within the 1B Program. He explained that the IB Program requires that all policies and procedures are strictly followed, and with such a serious allegation, an internal investigation was conducted, and notification was made to the IB Program Organization, that also conducted an investigation of the alleged cheating, and neither investigation supported the allegations made[.]

EXHIBIT C-003

INVESTIGATION REPORT PROVIDED BY KEITH LITTLE

May 18, 2020

Subj: IB SPANISH ORAL INVESTIGATION – SANCHEZ

A report of inappropriate test procedures regarding Ms. Sanchez was received on Friday May 15, 2020, from IB program coordinator Dr. James Minor. The following is a summary of the investigation and well as any findings resulting from the report: Five students from Ms. Sanchez's classes were randomly selected. The five students represented a 10% sampling of all her IB Spanish SL/HL classes. The five students interviewed were: Maggie Cool, Savannah Stewart, Michael Allmer, Nicholas Jones, and Kevin Perez.

All five students were consistent in their recounting of the Oral Assessment process used by Ms. Sanchez. The process included receiving a picture or prompt via email when they logged into the scheduled oral exam, panning the testing environment with the camera, a monitored prep period (approx. 15 min), followed by the actual oral examination. Since the original report indicated the potential for practice just

prior to the oral assessment, students were asked about receiving feedback during, being provided the opportunity to re-do portions, and about practice procedures for the oral. Each student was consistent in stating they did not received any feedback during the actual oral assessment, but they were able to debrief after they were finished. Each student also indicated that the assessment moved quickly without any breaks once they started and there was no opportunity to re-do any portion. A picture of a conversation between Ms. Sanchez and K. Perez was presented and it was determined that the conversation occurred after K. Perez's oral as the picture was time stamped at 2:44pm and the oral was conducted at 2:00pm.

Regarding practice time, each student indicated they were provided the numerous opportunities to practice prior to the oral assessment with feedback on how to improve being provided by Ms. Sanchez. Two students from [another] class were interviewed to identify any discrepancies between the two teacher's procedures. Students Alexander Gardner and Amanda Synder provided statements. The accounts of the oral assessment from A. Gardner and A. Snyder matched those provided by the other students with the]following discrepancies: 1. The students from [the other] class indicated that they were not provided the opportunity for any individual practice with the teacher. 2. The students from [the other] class indicated that they were brought into the meeting while the previous student was still giving their oral assessment.

As the potential for inappropriate assessment protocols existed if students sat in on another's oral assessment, both students were asked about that process. Both students indicated that they were muted, the teacher was muted, the student presenting was muted, and no video connection was available for the student waiting. All student statements were taken via Zoom meeting format, each meeting was recorded, and copies of the recordings are available upon request.

Investigation findings: Because of the investigation, it is concluded there were no ethical violations or violations of IB Oral Assessment protocols on behalf of Ms. Sanchez.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Keith A. Little
Assistant Principal, Riverview High School
EXHIBIT F, 005-007

(3)(a) ISSUE: DID SANCHEZ DISPLAY IB-COMPLIANT AND SD POLICY COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR WHILE ADMINISTERING IB SPANISH ORALS?

No. Between spring 2020 and summer 2022 – over the course of nearly 26 months -- attempts were made to alert RHS about academic cheating in the IB Spanish orals process. Based on the evidence provided to RHS administrators, including the IB Coordinator and later to School District Human Resources, it is evident that Sanchez breached policy and IB protocol, as per Language B Guide and per guidance of IB language professionals outside of the school district, by inappropriately aiding and abetting students to succeed during IB Spanish Oral exams in 2020. Beyond the screenshots, video evidence established a strong inference of not only assisting students during the orals, but also confirmed advance rehearsal preparation, both in direct violation of IB Language B Guide, and School District policies on academic honesty and ethics. Ironically, the District's academic honesty policy cited above is intended for students, but here, their teacher acted in a manner that put the students at great risk of violating the District's academic honesty policy to the extent the students "accepted" help from their teacher during IB orals, as well as rehearsing scripts, speaking aloud prepared scripts and the like during the IB orals.

Students who were taught by Sanchez at that time as well as in subsequent years as IB Spanish seniors confirmed the rehearsals through script writing, and that prompts were provided ahead of time. One student was allowed to pull out her laptop to write a script on a prompt provided in classroom time which was then read aloud in 2020 during IB orals.

Given the above, with respect to the investigation conducted internally at RHS in May 2020, it is surprising that the rather thin, 2.5-page, double-spaced report prepared by then RHS AP Little claimed to have absolved Sanchez of any ethical or policy violations. It is as if AP Little, IB Coordinator Minor and others failed to review all the screenshots or watch any of the video links provided that led to the investigation. **EXHIBIT C, 0012-0024.** The evidence provided to Minor and to AP Little included more pages than the actual report prepared by RHS. **EXHIBIT F, 005-007.**

Curiously, AP Little's investigation seemed to focus on questioning a few other students but not those students pointed out in the uncontroverted video and screen shot evidence. Just as curiously, RHS AP Little's report seemed to confirm the complaint that Sanchez was practicing ahead of time with the students; to what extent, again the report was extremely vague. But, what can be confirmed is it appears the school completely ignored the clear evidence submitted to in-house RHS administrators and School District HR. The complainant here also informed RHS administrators that this evidence can be provided again to them if needed to ensure all evidence is reviewed but no request was made of the complainant at any time. To that end, there is absolutely nothing in writing from RHS administrators or any other agency that specifically confirms anyone reviewed/watched the screen shots and video evidence. It is quite mindboggling that such detailed evidence

could be sidetracked or ignored, while leading to a finding by RHS AP Little that Sanchez committed no violation.²

By summer 2022, given that no corrective action had been taken, the complaints of cheating involving Sanchez continued to be raised by students and certain staff. District HR agreed in the summer of 2022 to freshly review all evidence submitted with respect to the Sanchez IB cheating issue. **EXHIBIT F, 0008-0016**

In September 2022, suddenly, District HR took a U-turn, deferring to the school-based “investigation.” During a phone interview, HR investigator Boney informed me that at the time, with respect to academic cheating matters, it was HR policy to defer to the schools to handle in-house. Since RHS AP Little concluded in May 2020 that no violation had occurred, nothing more could be done in 2022 according to Boney. As a result, no discipline was rendered against Sanchez that I could discern from interviews and from public records requests. **EXHIBIT F, 00017**

In conclusion, I find that District HR and RHS grossly mishandled the Sanchez cheating complaint. Under these facts, it is hard to discount the views of those who wonder if RHS was protecting those within IB at the cost of academic integrity. Whether there was an intention to protect IB and/or Sanchez, whether the administrators were simply going through the motions without care, I cannot judge. It is simply shocking that with clear unadulterated evidence of academic cheating staring one in the face, that the then-RHS administrators absolved Sanchez, and that District HR decided to place its collective head in the sand.

3(b). ISSUE: CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILURE TO TAKE ACTION

The failure of RHS administration and/or District HR to overlook such key evidence had consequences. A number of students in years subsequent to 2020 raised similar concerns of inappropriate coaching, advance prompt disclosure, script writing, reading aloud etc. Many felt they could not complain because of the IB leadership and fear that nothing would happen.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: in 2020, the IB language orals were by video and audio due to COVID, but thereafter, they reverted to audio-only recordings in compliance with IB Language B Guide. **EXHIBIT A, 49-77.** Thus, the scripts being read aloud during IB Orals after 2020 would not be discoverable by video evidence but for the testimony of the students who submitted as such.

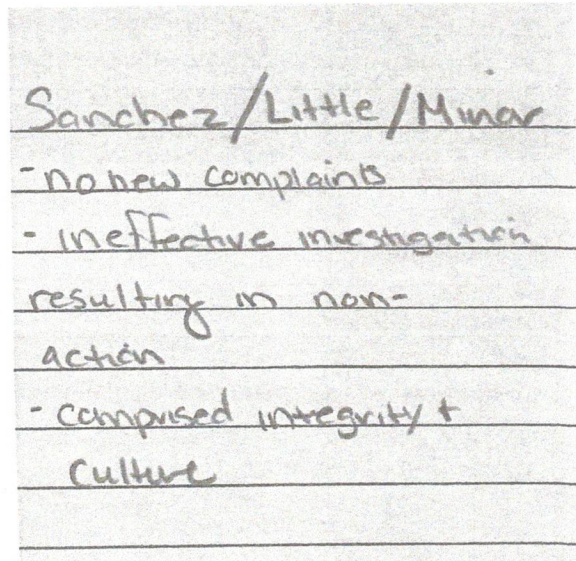
² It appears that AP Little may have acted to complete an investigation without Principal Haughey’s knowledge because the latter appeared confused about this issue when asked for details. **See EXHIBIT F, 0001-0003.** Principal instead shared information with me in an email (See Ex. F as noted) unrelated at all, and it appears had no idea that AP Little prepared a report on the Sanchez cheating issue. It also appears that Principal had no idea that video links and screenshots were shared with Minor and Little. Rather, Principal’s focus was on an inappropriate sign during IB Orals, not on the guts of the actual complaints.

Given the testimony of students who observed ongoing violation of IB protocols even through 2025, it cannot be disputed that it adversely impacted the IB Spanish language students to the extent those in other classes did not have the same advantage enjoyed by their cohorts in Sanchez's class – all due to RHS and/or District HR's failure to act despite clear, convincing evidence.

3(c). ISSUE: RETALIATION AGAINST THE COMPLAINANT

The failure to act had adverse impact as noted above on academic integrity. There was additional harmful impact. While Sanchez was not held accountable, the complainant who raised these concerns multiple times through different channels within the District was then subject to cross-complaints and investigations despite not having anything on her disciplinary record prior to raising the Sanchez complaint. Twenty-six (26) years with a clean record until this broke. Whether or not there was validity or not to the underlying claims was not my focus. However, when one has a clean record while working for the same group of leaders and then suddenly is faced with complaints, it is entirely reasonable for the complainants (and any others aware of these matters) to believe she/they were being targeted and retaliated against. One could reasonably understand how folks could believe the working environment was broken too. With proactive attention to the situation from a holistic HR perspective, the matter could have been handled quite differently in light of the various personalities and conflicts/cross-conflicts that were at issue in these counter-complaints. By instead allowing a cycle of complaints and investigations, RHS leadership and HR failed to work together to address meaningfully. This is also addressed in Section IV further below.

As of today, it is my understanding that Sanchez no longer teaches IB Spanish to seniors so the potential for cheating as above has now been mitigated. Whether that happened as a result of the complaints and this investigation is unknown. I attempted to interview Sanchez, but an interview was declined at the objection of Barry Dubin, union counsel.



Sanchez/Little/Minar

- No new complaints
- ineffective investigation resulting in non-action
- Compromised integrity + culture

B. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST CHAD SMITH

(1) APPLICABLE POLICIES

CHAPTER 6.00 - HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL ETHICS 6.27

An effective educational program requires the services of personnel of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. All employees shall be expected to maintain and promote these qualities. The Board shall also expect all administrative, instructional and support staff members to adhere to the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida. Administrative and instructional personnel, as defined by Florida Statute, shall be required to complete training on these ethical standards. All other employees shall be encouraged to participate in training related to professional ethics.

EXHIBIT A, 001.

CHAPTER 2.00 – SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION BULLYING AND HARASSMENT 2.70*

II. Definitions

Bullying includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It includes unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to (1) create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; (2) cause discomfort or humiliation; or (3) unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, or workplace environment. Bullying and harassment may involve but is not limited to the following behavior:

- teasing;
- social exclusion;
- threats;
- intimidation;
- stalking;
- physical violence;
- theft;
- harassment based protected classification
- public or private humiliation; or
- destruction of property.

III. Behavior Standards

A. The Sarasota County School District expects students and employees to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

B. The District believes that standards for student and employee behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for District and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment.

V. Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment

A. At each school, the principal or designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy.

B. All school district employees who become aware of a potential violation of this policy are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or cost center head, or his/her designee.

C. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the principal or principal's designee.

E. The victim of bullying or harassment, anyone who witnessed or is aware of the bullying or harassment, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying or harassment has taken place shall report the act of bullying or harassment to the principal or designee of each school, a teacher, or school district employee.

F. A school district employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the District policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident.

G. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments.

VI. No Retaliation

A. Retaliation against any individual who has, in good faith, complained of any act of bullying or harassment in violation of this policy, assisted in the reporting of such a violation, served as a witness or advocate for the person aggrieved, or who has otherwise taken any reasonable action to stop an act of bullying or harassment is strictly prohibited. Any individual who believes he or she has been the victim of retaliation shall report the matter immediately to the principal of each school, or his/her designee, the assigned investigator, or any other school official.

EXHIBIT A-00003 through 00027

(2) APPLICABLE EXHIBITS

**HR INVESTIGATION INTO CHAD SMITH –
INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR/HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS, DATED _____**

1. FER Student

On 2/4/22, I made contact with FER, student at Riverview High School. She advised her teacher, Chad Smith, is very friendly and "maybe flirty" with people.

2. FERP Student

I made contact with FERP, student at Riverview High School. She advised her teacher, Chad Smith, is very "liked" by admin and she feels like every complaint about him is 'swept under the rug'. She advised he treats students unfairly - especially the "pretty girls" as he is extra nice to them. She advised he is very disrespectful to her...

She advised he has never personally made any sexual or inappropriate comments to her, but she has heard of it done to other people. She advised there is a student named FER one day he said to her "I know why your parents named you FER, because you're hot like a sauna". She advised there is another girl, FER, who he has said he "wants to break her back" in a sexual manner. She is advised- is definitely his favorite student.

She advised students call him ("Chaddy Daddy").

She stated another teacher, Dena Sturm, would have more information as they "gossip with her" because she is their school mom". She advised Ms. Sturm does not like Mr. Smith and knows more things.

3. FER Student.

I made contact with FER, student at Riverview High School. She advised she has heard that Mr. Smith has been disrespectful to others in way of his comments. She advised she heard he has made a comment to the effect of wanting to "break her back" in a sexual way. She advised in reference to the rumor about him making a comment about her being "hot like a sauna", that this wasn't entirely accurate. She advised he did say something about "Oh I know where your name comes from, you know what a sauna is right?"

She advised she doesn't think he favors "pretty" girls but just girls in general. She advised he is a lot nicer to the girls than the boys and jokes/interacts with girls a lot more. She advised a lot of people talk about how friendly/flirty he is.

4. FER Student.

On 2/7/22 I made contact with- student at Riverview High School. She advised that he hasn't made any overt comments towards her, but he does say things that bother her. She advised all his comments to her are regarding her size, as she is FERP. She advised "every single day" his comments are directed at her size or how FERPA she is.

She advised he just picks on her a lot and she is used to it essentially, but it still bothers her. She advised in addition to this, she found it weird that he was gossiping to other staff about who she is dating, especially since her boyfriend isn't one of his students. She advised he found out who she was dating and went and told another teacher about it. She advised she found out when this other teacher mentioned it to her one day in class after she coincidentally made the seating arrangement with them sitting next to each other.

FER advised Mr. Smith "definitely" favors females over males and talks to them a lot more, especially the cheerleaders. She advised though that if they don't flirt back) then he doesn't like you. She advised this happened with her boyfriend's sister, who she described as 'really pretty" but wouldn't flirt back so he didn't treat her well.

HR Investigation Conclusion:

It is reported that Chad Smith made inappropriate comments to student(s) while acting in a professional capacity as a School Board Employee. Through investigation and interviews, it was found that the statements provided do not support the allegations against Mr. Smith. **EXHIBIT B-0001-0016; SEE ALSO EXHIBIT F-0083-0086, COMPLAINT BY STUDENT/PARENT RE. SMITH**

(3)(a) ISSUE: DID SMITH DISPLAY SD POLICY-COMPLIANT PROFESSIONALISM AND CARE IN HIS VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH RHS STUDENTS AND/OR STAFF?

No. Based on District HR's own investigation, again, I am flabbergasted. It is, indeed, rather disturbing that the above students' testimony confirmed in a written investigation report by District HR led to an exoneration. These are students who testified about rather vile comments.

Even if there was some exaggeration, or a couple of students were unable later to fully corroborate certain comments, I am not sure how Human Resources could absolve. Perhaps not the same, or perceptions were different, but based on these findings, it is HR 101 to at least take some actions to ensure the complainants are protected and to ensure the behavior – even if there is some mixed messaging – is reinforced by discipline or counseling to not recur. Indeed, to dismiss the students' reports in light of what they all seemed to convey in the report and in my interviews --- common knowledge that Smith can be, let's say, different in how he communicates --- the failure of HR to act placed the District at substantial risk of supporting/condoning a hostile working/learning environment in violation of applicable laws and regulations³.

Indeed, given the inappropriate comments by the RHS teacher (who held at that time, and still holds multiple roles/titles), it is unfathomable that no action was rendered against Mr. Smith at that time. Nothing was provided to me in the PRR either that would establish such. Even if for some plausible reason the school and/or District HR found no reason to discipline, there was nothing provided to me that established Mr. Smith was at least counseled or coached about these inappropriate comments. To say this, again, would have been HR 101 involving hostile environment/harassment/bullying behavior would be an understatement. The abject failure to do anything, considering those students' comments – who were able to be vulnerable enough to disclose difficult personal feelings to the HR investigator – is a black mark against RHS and the School District HR at that time.

(3)(b). CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILURE TO TAKE ACTION

Moreover, just as with the Sanchez failure, here, the lack of any action taken against Mr. Smith had consequences. A number of students informed me that Mr. Smith, who can be friendly, can also be quite petty if others turn on him or don't go along. Students informed their perception that they were retaliated against in grading, removed from his classroom for raising concerns over him and were made to feel like lesser students. One of the students subject to the comments investigated by District HR informed she was afraid of Mr. Smith; that he clearly had an ax to grind against her for speaking up, and that she was

³ It is my understanding that the HR investigator was rather new at the time. Grace can be afforded under those circumstances where things are missed or not addressed in compliance with law; however, the District HR Director at that time should have independently reviewed these matters to ensure for lawful compliance for accuracy. The lack of HR Director involvement on this situation is another poor reflection of the District at that time.

removed from his classroom without reason given just near her graduation all in retaliation for complaints being raised against him.

Students from subsequent years stated they did not feel comfortable raising concerns due to “rumors” of Mr. Smith’s behavior against those who do. Staff members also shared a few examples of Mr. Smith’s gossiping behavior⁴ that would belittle other staff members or demean them in front of others. One former RHS administrative (non-teacher) staff member said Mr. Smith’s reputation at RHS among staff members is that he is a “dick.” I spoke with several staff members, current and formerly of RHS, who gave examples over the years of Mr. Smith’s alleged condescending or insulting methods of communication with other staff members, including one who was subject to comments relating to her pregnancy. The types of allegations will not be repeated, as it would not be fair to Mr. Smith to identify here. But it seems apparent that Mr. Smith’s reputation at the school – personality wise (not his professional capabilities etc.) – is not necessarily endearing to many. When HR and School leadership fail to act/coach/counsel and fail to close the loop in communicating about the complaints/investigations like happened in the 2022 complaint, the ensuing harm to morale and reputational damage is unsurprising.

As an aside, it is important to note Mr. Smith did not agree to submit for an interview with me. Barry Dubin, union counsel, objected. Mr. Smith did send a few brief emails to me. Interestingly, this is the same approach used by Mr. Smith (perhaps at Mr. Dubin’s counsel) when interviewed by District HR with respect to a complaint lodged by a few RHS administrators against another RHS staff member in November 2021. **EXHIBIT E, 0001-0017** District HR asked him for an interview, but Mr. Smith rested only on his e-mailed statement.

Students and staff members interviewed claimed to me that Mr. Smith would not be a good witness, would be easily enraged or activated, so they surmised this was the reason no verbal interview was given. In any event, I was unable to test the evidence/testimony with Mr. Smith; thus, it is entirely reasonable for an investigator to take the evidence/testimony presented in the light most favorable to them and make an adverse inference where a witness chooses to not participate.

All that said, it cannot be discounted that HR’s failure to act and to correct behavior in 2022 may have contributed to Smith’s allegedly difficult personality coming out in ways that continued to hurt other staff and/or students.

⁴ What is ironic is that District HR and/or RHS administrators filed and/or investigated cross complaints against some of the individuals who raised concerns relating to Sanchez and/or Smith – one of the gripes was alleged gossiping amongst staff about another staff member’s alleged conduct. There, the complainants were effectively found guilty in part for gossiping or spreading alleged rumors but, here, the HR report and others told me Smith similarly engaged in gossiping about others – yet no counseling or discipline. The inconsistency in HR management here cannot be overlooked – led to lingering morale issues for sure amongst the staff interviewed. Compare findings of Ex. B with Ex. E, for example, and the allegations of gossiping.

3(c). RETALIATION AGAINST THE COMPLAINANTS

Just as with the Sanchez complainant, the Smith complainant was faced with complaints and investigations after reporting Smith's conduct internally to AP Little and to DCF. She had never been subject to a complaint or investigation in her then-11 plus years at the District, until after she lodged the Smith complaint. Again, it is certainly reasonable for this complainant to believe she was being targeted and retaliated against given the volume and vitriol being utilized in those matters.

Students involved at that time also felt adverse impact per my conversations. There was sense that no one could speak up directly to Mr. Smith, and if they did, there would be grade repercussions, class removals, etc. One such student who was subjected to the offensive comments and who had participated in the process back in 2022 was removed from Mr. Smith's class just prior to end of the school year without any reason given. Even if the school may have removed the student from class – hypothetically speaking – to protect the student, it would appear that a discussion about the matter, options to address/correct situation and the student's own input would be considered before taking such drastic action against a student whose school year was coming to close soon.

Again, the lack of emotionally intelligent communication ended up harming humans as well as helped foment an unhealthy environment for many. The impact of this is discussed further in Section IV below.

C. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST JAMES MINOR

(1) APPLICABLE POLICIES

**CHAPTER 6.00 - HUMAN RESOURCES
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS 6.27***

An effective educational program requires the services of personnel of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. All employees shall be expected to maintain and promote these qualities. The Board shall also expect all administrative, instructional and support staff members to adhere to the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida. Ill. Administrative and instructional personnel, as defined by Florida Statute, shall be required to complete training on these ethical standards. All other employees shall be encouraged to participate in training related to professional ethics.

EXHIBIT A, 0001

**CHAPTER 6.00 – HUMAN RESOURCES
PERSONAL BUSINESS ON SCHOOL TIME 6.301.1**

No employee of the School Board may conduct personal business on schooltime except for emergencies approved by the principal, cost center head, or the Superintendent. School board equipment or supplies shall not be used to conduct personal business or any other activity not connected with the school system. Violation of this rule shall be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal.

EXHIBIT A, 00029

**CHAPTER 9.00 – SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS
USE OF FACILITIES 9.30**

As a matter of policy, ...the principal may approve the use of school property, facilities and equipment for any group provided herein adhering to the approved rental fee schedule. The principal shall be responsible for ... executing proper forms and collecting payments.

II. Use of Facilities with a Charge. The principal may permit the use of school facilities by a civic, religious, Supplemental Education Service Provider or other organization for non-school sponsored activities[.] The following conditions shall apply:

A. The payment of the fee shall be in accordance with the rate schedule adopted by the School Board. Fees shall be paid in advance for use of facilities, equipment, or furnishings to include utilities, custodial, supervisory, and other required services or damages.

D. Before and after school activities provided by a school district employee operating as a private business shall be required to pay, at a minimum, a fee equal to the facilities cost of providing utilities and custodial services.

IX. Appeals to the Superintendent. A person who feels his/her organization was [assessed] an improper charge or fee may file a written appeal.

EXHIBIT A, 0044-0046

(2) APPLICABLE EXHIBITS

SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY FLORIDA HUMAN RESOURCES

Memorandum 2020-2021 HR/ER

From Robert Boney

To Al Harayda

September 8, 2020

From: Martin Ventura Manuel <Manuel.MartinVentura@sarasotacountyschools.net>

Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 3:45 PM

To: Hannabass Carrie <Carrie.Hannabass@sarasotacountyschools.net; Maggi

Valerie <Valeri.Mggie@sarasotacountyschools.net

Subject: FW:-Riverview High School Rental Refund

It looks like the total amount of \$360 was sent to the address below, This address agrees to the address listed on BSD for James Minor _____. I compared the amounts she mentioned to the reports pulled by Janice (attached) showing possible rental receipts processed by RHS internally and couldn't find a matching receipt. Based on this information, funds have been collected on behalf of the district, sent to a personal address and at this point we don't have a record that those funds were submitted to the school. Let me know how we should follow up. I think the Facilitron amounts are correct and we can still send them the funds they collected.

From: Nancy Henry <nhenry@thepattersonfoundation.org

Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 3:22 PM

Martin Ventura Manuel Manuel.MartinVentura@sarasotacountyschools.net

Subject: FW:-Riverview High School Rental Refund

Hi Martin, We paid via checks (one for \$320 and the other for \$40) sent to:

IEC 4001 Tampico Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34235
EXHIBIT D-00010-00011

SEPTEMBER 2020, HR INVESTIGATOR BONEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

Carrie Hannabass

Carrie Hannabass explained that it is believed that James Minor and his brother, Daniel Minor have been using their business (IEC) to bill and receive payments from Facilitron clients by charging additional fees for audio/visual services and technical services outside of Facilitron's cost of RPAC rentals. Ms. Hannabass provided the HR Investigator with supporting documentation justifying their concerns.

Manuel Martin

Manuel Martin provided additional documentation obtained from Facilitron clients that scheduled events at RPAC through Facilitron. In addition to Facilitron cost, these clients also received an invoice from James Minor (IEC) for RPAC Technical Services with a payment address of 4001 Tampico Drive, Sarasota, FL 34235, which is the home address listed for James Minor. The below invoices were received from actual Facilitron clients and were paid in full by the clients to James Minor at IEC RPAC Tech Services, 4001 Tampico Drive, Sarasota, FL 34235.

HR Investigator reviewed and recovered the following items as evidence.

Daniel Minor W-9 Form - (IEC) International Entertainment Consultants, LLC

James Minor 0145 RHS contract dated: 08/01/2019- 06/30/2020

James Minor 0145 RHS contract dated: 08/01/2020- 06/30/2021

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 765-Sun Event - \$1440.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 732- Sun Event - \$1800.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice # 819- Sun Event \$1600.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 578 -D-Rmedia & Investments - \$1660.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 733 - Patterson Foundation- \$320.00 + \$40.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice # 734 - One Day University - \$1656.00

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice # 735m Snatam Kaur Live - \$800.00

JBC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 801-Sarasota Chorus of the Keys - \$1120.00

w/cancelled check

IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice# 790 - Phillippi Shores - \$2880.00 w/cancelled check

Christina MyNatt

Christina MyNatt, Bookkeeper, Riverview High School explained that she was aware that James Minor is a Teacher, Special Assignment, Riverview High School, and owner/operator of (IEC) International Entertainment Consultants, LLC, and handles AV and Technical Services events for RPAC. Ms. MyNatt sent the HR Investigator James Minor's 2019-2020, 0145 contract# 42469 totaling \$8,038.00, 300.00 hours at \$29.46 an hour. The contract is an account to be used by James Minor for his

payment to cover service descriptions of work, manage RPAC audio/lights/theater from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm, during school-based events. Ms. MyNatt also sent the HR Investigator James Minor's 2020-2021, 0145 contract# 45264 totaling \$7,070.40, total hours 240.00 hours at \$29.46 an hour. The contract is an account to be used by James Minor for his payment to cover service descriptions of work, RPAC management from 2:30 pm -4:30 pm. Ms. MyNatt advised that Mr. Jay Lorenz, would be the contact person with regards to procedures relative to Facilitron scheduled events at RPAC. Ms. MyNatt also advised that all A/V and Technical Services for RPAC/RHS events must be provided by an internal provider, and not an outside provider. Example internal provider: A staff member contracted by the school to provide these services, identified as James Minor.

Findings:

I find that James Minor with the assistance of Daniel Minor, has violated, Sarasota County School Board Policy-Chapter 6.00 Anti-Fraud 6.28 (B-7), which states that educators/staff members shall not engage in. "Use of School Board School District, or school equipment or work time for any outside private or personal business activity," by utilizing James Minor's employment position with the Sarasota County School Board for personal gain by employing me, their limited liability consultant companies, to perform duties and receive payment, while utilizing School Board, School District, and/or school equipment and/or work time for their outside private and/or personal business activity.

I find that James Minor with the assistance of David Minor, has violated, Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code (B)-(3), which states, "Obligation to the public requires that the individual, shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage," by utilizing James Minor's institutional privileges, as an employee with the Sarasota County School Board for personal gain, by employing me, their limited liability consultant companies to perform duties and receive payment, while utilizing School Board, School District, and/or school equipment and/or work time for their outside private and/or personal business activity.

I recommend that the allegations made against James Minor for violating, Sarasota School Board Policy-Chapter 6.00 Anti-Fraud 6.28 (B-7), be SUSTAINED.
I recommend that the allegations made against James Minor for violating Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code (B)(3), **be SUSTAINED.**
EXHIBIT D-00001-00021

DECEMBER 2020 EMAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN JAMES MINOR AND BARRY DUBIN

From: Barry Dubin <unionguy@comcast.net>
Sent: 12/11/2020 at 01:06 PM
To: Minor James <James.Minor@sarasotacountyschools.net>External Email - Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information

Yep. As long as its your LLC and not Jim Minor its cool.

Barry

P. S. You were his daughter's all time favorite teacher. She is a teacher now.

On Dec 11, 2020, at 11:56 AM, Minor James
<James.Minor@sarasotacountyschools.net>
wrote:

Hi Barry,
Just wondering if you caught up with Mr. Hardy today?
Thanks,
Jim
Dr. James Minor
IB Coordinator
Riverview High School
EXHIBIT F _____

JANUARY 2026 E-MAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN INVESTIGATOR AND JAMES MINOR

Hi Nik,
I've provided everything I was able to locate through the Archive Manager. The email thread contained there reflects my inquiry to Barry asking whether he had connected with Mr. Hardy, which, as I recall, Barry indicated he would do following the Weingarten meeting with Mr. Boney on December 9, 2020. Barry was present at that meeting and noted at the conclusion that he intended to speak directly with Mr. Hardy regarding the issue.
As you'll see, my message asking, "Hi Barry, just wondering if you caught up with Mr. Hardy today?" was sent two days after the Weingarten meeting and was part of that follow-up process.
In addition, I separately forwarded you an email in which Ms. Haughey contacted Jody Dumas and Allison Foster, then Director of HR, noting that these arrangements had been reviewed and cleared by both Art Hardy and Jody Dumas. I want to confirm that you received that correspondence as well.
At this point, I am concerned that the lack of documented disposition following review by the School Board Attorney has resulted in this same matter being

repeatedly reopened despite prior clearance. The recurring reexamination of an issue that has already been reviewed and resolved multiple times has created an ongoing administrative burden and, from my perspective, has begun to take on a harassing effect rather than serving any legitimate investigatory or compliance purpose.

I raise this not to be adversarial, but to underscore the importance of finality and consistency where legal clearance has already been provided and relied upon. Please let me know if you need anything further from me.

Thank you,
Dr. James Minor
IB Coordinator
Riverview High School

From: Minor James <James.Minor@sarasotacountyschools.net>
Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 7:36 PM
To: Nik Joshi <nik@hultmanjoshi.com>; Barry Dubin <unionguy@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Request for Documentation

Nik,

Please find attached the December 11, 2020 email from Barry confirming clearance by the School Board Attorney.

Regarding the 2023–2024 AV vendor list: I was not made aware of any new exclusive vendor requirement. Furthermore, I would guarantee that not a single one of the groups that rent our facility (over 100 rentals this year) would want to hire anyone but might team as the prices are WAY lower than the norm, my team designed the audio and lighting in the space, and are the most proficient professionals in the area (including engineers for groups like Los Lobos, Magdalena Bay, TV Girl, Billy Bob Thornton's band) etc....

In addition, I would still have to be onsite as RPAC manager which would then compound the cost to outside groups, so that makes zero sense for any of our many local non-profits and community group that rent the space for their events. We would be asking them to rent our facility, hire an outside company that does not know the space, which they have not worked with, and will charge (at minimum 2 to 3 times) what we charge, and then on top of that would need a school-base manager to watch over the whole thing (an additional charge).

In fact, just this week Jody emailed me and Jay regarding a Sarasota County event in the RPAC on April 11th asking if were ready to host the county. When asked with Mr. Dumas copied whether they will bring in their own lighting and sound, they said "no" and asked me to arrange it.

Let me know if you need anything else.
Dr. James Minor

From: Nik Joshi <nik@hultmanjoshi.com>
Date: Friday, 9 January 2026 18:55
To: Minor James <james.minor@sarasotacountyschools.net>, Barry Dubin <unionguy@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Request for Documentation
External Email - Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information

Jim, yes please provide the Hardy email you refer to. Were you made aware that the school district approved a list of AV vendors in 2023-2024 that are to be exclusively used at school facilities? From my understanding per Administration, your company is not on that list.

Nikhil N. Joshi, Esq.
Board Certified Specialist,
Labor & Employment Law
Hultman + Joshi PA
941-218-2800 (O)
813-205-8069 (C)

From: Minor James <James.Minor@sarasotacountyschools.net>
Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 5:41:03 PM
To: Nik Joshi <nik@hultmanjoshi.com>; Barry Dubin <unionguy@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Request for Documentation

Nik,
Thank you for your message.
My operation of the RPAC has existed continuously since the facility opened in the 2009–2010 school year and has been conducted with the knowledge and approval of school administration throughout that period.
That said, there is written confirmation following the HR review and Weingarten meeting that addressed this issue directly. After the Weingarten meeting on December 9, 2020, I received an email from Mr. Dubin dated December 11, 2020 confirming that School Board Attorney Art Hardy had reviewed the matter and cleared the arrangement. The email states, in substance, “As long as it’s your LLC and not Jim Minor, it’s cool.” That email, which is available via public records request, represents the primary written confirmation of the post-Weingarten clearance by the School Board Attorney.
By way of background, HR initiated its inquiry on November 4, 2020, with a formal interview conducted on December 9, 2020 by Robert Boney with Barry Dubin

Art Handy denied this conversation

present. The investigation concluded with no findings of concern. Mr. Hardy subsequently confirmed clearance to continue operating, which was communicated to both Mr. Dubin and Mr. Dumas. HR records should reflect the conclusion of that review. If HR did not sufficiently document the finding and discussion with Mr. Hardy, that would be most concerning.

Following that clearance, the issue was later revisited by the finance department, and outside vendors were contacted in a manner that unfortunately cast me in a negative light. This occurred after the matter had already been cleared. When a subsequent CFO was hired, the issue was raised again, at which point Ms. Haughey, Mr. Dumas, and Ms. Penner met, and Mr. Dumas reiterated that the arrangement had already been cleared by the School Board Attorney. This represented at least the third instance in which the same issue was reexamined despite prior resolution. Most recently, on February 1, 2024, after another discussion with Ms. Penner, I contacted you, Mr. Joshi, by text and a subsequent phone call on February 2, 2024 regarding the continued reappearance of this issue. During our phone conversation, you advised me that I was within my rights to accept work from outside organizations that hire me after my duty day to run lighting, audio, and show operations, consistent with long-standing district practices.⁵

For outside rentals, I am hired directly by external organizations to provide audio and lighting services for their events. This has historically been treated consistently with other district-recognized practices, such as testing organizations hiring district staff to proctor exams or external athletic organizations hiring district personnel to operate camps at district facilities. By way of context only, I note that you have also personally engaged my team to provide audio and lighting services for a private event, which further reflects the shared understanding that such outside engagements are permissible when contracted independently and outside my district duty day.

⁵ For full disclosure, I rented out the RPAC in June 2023 for my daughter's dance performance. I worked closely with Mr. Minor. I respected his role for the school and especially IB as my children also attended IB schools in a different school district. I did not know at the time when I paid the Facilitron and A/V payments that the latter were going to **Mr. Minor's** company. I did issue a check to the name of the company and address listed in Mr. Minor's e-mail – the same process he uses for the hundreds of renters he has worked with. I accepted that arrangement as-is. I do recall Mr. Minor asked me to call him in early 2024 to discuss a matter. I do not recall the specifics of the phone conversation, but I can state unequivocally I did not have knowledge in 2024 of the District policies, state ethics rules, the 2020 District HR investigation findings, or anything else to review before speaking with Mr. Minor. If I had reviewed all that I now have seen as part of this investigation, including all the invoices, e-mails, etc. to/from Minor's school email account and third-parties, I would have recommended he hire private counsel to give him formal counsel and representation. For the record, I am not his attorney and had never been engaged as his private counsel– he asked me off the cuff for an opinion (i.e. free), with incomplete information – which happens often when people realize I am an attorney. Without the full and complete story, such “opinions” are just that – no different than when a doctor gets asked for an opinion at a social gathering without having conducted a full patient examination.

If you would like me to provide the December 11, 2020, email or identify any additional categories of documentation you would like me to search for, I am happy to cooperate. Otherwise, my understanding is that this matter has been reviewed and cleared multiple times, including by the School Board Attorney.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed.

Regards,

Jim

EXHIBIT D, 0092-0093, EXHIBIT F-0018-0019,

(3)(a) ISSUE: DID MINOR EXHIBIT SD POLICY-COMPLIANT AND STATE ETHICS LAW-COMPLIANT CONDUCT BY OPERATING A PRIVATELY OWNED BUSINESS THAT PROFITTED OFF OF PUBLIC ASSETS?

Out of fairness to Mr. Minor, though there are significant questions regarding the propriety of the current arrangement, it must be noted at the outset, based on the above e-mail representations, it is apparent that Mr. Minor has been under the impression that he has been authorized by RHS and/or School District to operate his own private A/V business, IEC Consultants, Inc. to perform A/V and related house manager, lighting services at Riverview Performing Arts Center (RPAC) outside of the regular school day.

For matters during the school day (and for a few hours beyond), Minor receives a stipend from the School District to manage the RPAC during school hours, to cover school and/or School District-related RPAC usage. **EXHIBIT D, 0001-0008**. This stipend does not extend to A/V work relating to off-duty RPAC hours. **EXHIBIT D, 0018-0019, MyNatt testimony**.

Upon reviewing invoices and e-mails relating thereto, for years, Minor has been open and notorious about sending e-mails to private renters of the RPAC for non-school day events during school working hours while using his Sarasota County School District e-mail address asking for his private A/V business invoices to be paid by check made out to his business for shipment to his home address; or, by Zelle to his cell phone. See examples of emails/invoices @ **EXHIBIT D, 0025-00157**. In reading those e-mails, there is nothing that provides any options to the private renters relating to A/V services. Stated differently, the impression given is one must use IEC Consultants (Minor's company) for A/V.⁶ It cannot be

⁶ Recently, I reviewed Facilitron for RPAC bookings. In the booking fields, there is a question now presented – not before – asking whether the renter will be needing A/V and if so, using an external provider or using School A/V. It is unclear what the process is if a renter chooses external or outside vendor. But, again, if the private renter chooses the school A/V option, then is that “school” option Minor’s company? And if the school option is chosen and that is, in fact, Minor’s company, then one would expect the private renter to pay Facilitron for the A/V services so that payment would go directly to the school, not a separate A/V company as directed to by Minor’s emails. So, why do the latest Minor e-mails reviewed (February 2026) continue to ask private renters to send payment to his private company at his home address?

disputed that Minor has been working on private business-related RPAC A/V services during his schoolwork day.

The School District has been aware of this issue of Minor running the RPAC, with his private business getting paid for A/V services that, if provided during the workday or per the stipend contracts, would get paid to the School District but, outside of the workday/outside of the stipend contracts, payment for those same services have been pocketed (fully?) by Mr. Minor's private business.

Some in School District Finance have called out Mr. Minor for inappropriately funneling money intended for the School District instead to his private business all because of his school duties/relationship as RPAC manager. **EXHIBIT D, 0027-0032; EXHIBIT F, 0021-0023**

In 2023/2024, to try to rectify the concerns over Minor's private business making money from other Sarasota County Schools for their usage of RPAC during the school year, the School Board approved a new policy with A/V vendors to be used by schools. **EXHIBIT F, 25-27**

This new policy, however, was not communicated by School District administration to RHS Principal or to Minor according to the records. Minor was notified in writing to cease and desist from billing schools for RPAC usage through his company. **EXHIBIT F, 0031**

However, in speaking with RHS Principal Haughey early this year, she had no idea of the 2024 approved A/V vendors list. Jody Dumas could not answer questions about how or whether such A/V vendor list was communicated to school-based administrators, other than Dumas stating in an email to me that Dumas believed the "principal at the time" should have communicated to Minor. **EXHIBIT F, 0028-0030**

3(b)(i) MINOR'S ACTIONS RE. PRIVATE A/V BUSINESS AND RPAC RESOURCES EQUIPMENT USED FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL PROFIT?

Left unaddressed despite significant concern from many at and outside of RHS within the School District is this huge question: how has Minor been allowed to run a private business off a public resource while on school time and while outside of school time? Based on my interviews and the documents shared, it appears this organically evolved from Minor overseeing the RPAC into Minor's RPAC A/V business over time. As often happens in life, when things become normalized, they become accepted and unquestioned. However, it does not take much to discern a substantial appearance of impropriety and potential conflict of interest here, between private gain and public resources.

Parties acting with the intention of ensuring integrity by avoiding any appearance of a conflict of interest could have decided that the whole thing feels and looks uncomfortable, and that a clear line of demarcation needed to be set. That did not happen.

On the contrary, in reading Minor's emails, it is evident that he was trying instead to protect/defend himself/his business and his financial interests. No one -- other than some in School District Finance -- seemed to focus on the big picture in how it violates the letter and spirit of District policies and Florida ethics rules, and how it all looks and feels off to others inside and outside of RHS.

Based on the e-mails above, effectively stating *I've been told its ok, I've been told it's ok, I've been told it's ok*, and using informal behind-the-scene channels to attempt to validate the relationship, taken together, do not create the impression that one feels totally confident about the wholeness of the situation. It seems defensive. That alone speaks volumes.

Why would one take any chances to endanger one's integrity?⁷ One will likely do that only if they feel it was normalized and supported. I don't believe Mr. Minor is necessarily without integrity, but his actions here do call that into question. I respect that he has a challenging role as IB Coordinator and has done a lot for the school community. It would be disingenuous, however, to claim that his own personal financial interest was not at play here; it appears money and greed became the sin clouding judgment, impacting the credibility and integrity of the school and the school district.

3(b)(ii) EXAMPLE OF INVOICING FOR REVIEW

On that point, it is interesting to note that Minor's private business charges a higher hourly rate to the public than the approved School Board rates for A/V services. For an example, I started a Facilitron booking for a hypothetical 1-hour event at RPAC for May 3, 2026. **EXHIBIT F, 0033.**

Per that "reservation," the cost for A/V hourly fee as well as lighting, site supervisor is \$45/hour, in compliance with the School Board-approved a \$45/hourly rate. **EXHIBIT F, 00033.** It appears Minor is charging far more to outsiders. **EXHIBIT F, 00035.** There, for a 4-hour window between 11:00 – 3:00 for 2 staff, the charge should have been \$45/hour x 2 = \$90/hour. \$90/hour (2 staff) x 4 hours = \$360.00. See the "Friday Load" example on the IEC RPAC Tech Services Invoice dated February 17, 2026. **EXHIBIT F, 00035.** Instead, per EXHIBIT F, 00035, Minor's business charged \$600.00 for this 4-hour block.

Is he paying the School District the minimum rate of \$360.00 and keeping the \$240.00 overage? Or is he pocketing all \$600.00? This pattern is seen in all invoices where his private business charges are higher than the School Board-approved charges.

⁷ Another fact speaks volumes unfortunately. Mr. Minor is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator for a World IB School at RHS. One core IB value is that of integrity. Integrity is a core IB value centered on being principled, requiring all to act with honesty, fairness, and high moral standards in all academic and personal actions. It mandates creating authentic work, respecting intellectual property, and accepting responsibility for actions, ensuring trust in education.

A public employee entrusted with the stewardship of school district resources occupies a position of profound responsibility. That responsibility is fundamentally incompatible with any scheme, whether direct or indirect, that converts public assets into private profit. When an individual establishes or uses a private business entity to generate revenue from publicly funded equipment or facilities, **the key question is not the form of the arrangement, but its substance.** Creating a corporate entity does not cleanse conduct that would otherwise violate policies prohibiting private gain from public resources. If anything, using a corporate structure as a shield while continuing to personally receive payments, whether through direct transfers, personal accounts, or home-delivered checks, undermines any claim that the activity is meaningfully separate from the individual.

3(c) SUPPORT (OR ALLOWANCE) FOR MINOR'S PRIVATE A/V BUSINESS DESPITE SEPTEMBER 2020 VIOLATIONS FOUND RE. PRIVATE A/V BUSINESS

What is fascinating is how Mr. Minor believed he was supported in maintaining this arrangement. Though it seems evident that Mr. Minor should be held accountable, he cannot be held solely responsible. To wit, in reading the District HR investigation report from September 2020, as reproduced above, District HR investigator Boney clearly found Minor **violated** District policies and ethics rules. **EXHIBIT D, 0009-00071.**

Sustained violations.

Guilty of District policies and state regulations, September 2020.

Despite this School District HR finding in September 2020 that Minor violated policies and ethics rules by running his own A/V business from the RPAC, nothing happened. Nothing documented. No exoneration that can be seen. Also, neither any disciplinary action, nor any counseling is on file.

This support or tacit authorization for Minor's private A/V business seems to have been voiced and/or authorized through back channels, i.e. what some told me is the "good ole boy network." Sadly, I can only concur because I asked HR Investigator Boney, HR Investigation Manager Harayda, Jody Dumas and former District legal counsel, Art Hardy about this topic on multiple occasions. No one could explain why the HR finding led to no action. And, no one could explain how this ended up absolving him (supposedly per Minor) other than HR Investigator Boney telling me that there was a written comment to the HR file after Boney's 2020 investigation that Jody Dumas gave "instructions." That's it. No one, not even Dumas, could recall anything about what those "instructions" were about. So, the private A/V business continued unabated. Perhaps those "instructions" were to allow it to go forward contrary to District HR findings of a policy violation? Who knows since no one could tell me what was actually discussed, but the business continues, so it is reasonable to conclude someone, wink-wink, nod-nod, said its ok, drop the investigation, etc.

3(d). WHY WOULD DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRICT HR APPROVE AN ARRANGEMENT FOUND TO BE AN ETHICAL/POLICY VIOLATION BY DISTRICT HR INVESTIGATOR?

Who knows. But it seemed to be a pattern back then. Clear evidence is being ignored; or investigation facts and/or findings are being ignored. Either way, just as with Sanchez and Smith situations above, it is hard to ignore the sense of many folks that individuals at RHS and/or the School District level are **protecting** each other given the paucity of any real documentation about how a clear finding of violation can remain unaddressed in writing and uncorrected at all.⁸

3(e). CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO ACT: FUTILITY TO RAISE CONCERNS: FEAR OF RETALIATION

Critically, an objective observer can understand why many interviewed feel/felt **intimidated** as they do not feel they could/can question much that Minor – or anyone associated with the “clique” called by many (Principal, Smith, Minor, Athletic Director and other APs). Hence, the perception (or reality) that Minor is able to get away with something unethical and inappropriate (or something so on the gray) further cements the belief that the RHS administrative leadership protects each other to the detriment of true authenticity, clarity, transparency and policy compliance.

Stated differently, when one openly and notoriously has access to, oversees and manages A/V at the largest revenue generating asset at Riverview High School in a manner that so many have openly questioned the ethics of the same, it is not difficult to see how staff members and/or students who may – may – have supervisory and/or teaching concerns relating to Mr. Minor would feel intimidated from raising their voices or filing complaints. They perceived someone who has been effectively deemed untouchable.

⁸ The December 2020 e-mail between Union counsel Dubin and Minor is fascinating. There is a paucity of any specific language present from Minor. He did not put in the e-mail – which would be a public record – anything specific. He only asks Dubin did the latter speak with District counsel Hardy. Dubin responded with yes, effectively representing via e-mail that District legal counsel had approved Minor’s privately run business at the RPAC. In speaking with Hardy in January 2026 as well as more recently, Hardy denies ever giving a legal opinion as he said he would have been prohibited from doing so relating to a District employee. Hardy does recall there being a lot of conversations with Dumas but no recollection about the content of them regarding Minor and his business.

3(f). ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO ACT

The allowance of Minor's private RPAC-driven A/V business raises several serious concerns that can create strong perceptions of favoritism, inequitable policy enforcement, "good ole boy network," etc. They also provide opportunities for current RHS employees to try the same obfuscation:⁹ For example:

***An RHS food-service/cafeteria worker** could use Riverview High School's kitchen to run a private catering business

***An RHS custodian worker** could use Riverview High School cleaning supplies, equipment etc. to run a private janitorial services business at RHS events

***An RHS chemistry teacher** could use Riverview High School school lab equipment and materials to run paid private tutoring or experiments for outside clients

***An RHS biology instructor** could monetize access to RHS microscopes, specimens, or lab space for private personal consulting

***An RHS athletics coach** could charge students or external groups for access to RHS school fields, courts, equipment, or training programs

***An RHS media or TV program instructor** could operate a private production business using RHS school studios, equipment and gear

In each case, the pattern would match that of Minor's: public resources being converted into private revenue streams, while the institution, and by extension, taxpayers, absorb the costs of acquisition, maintenance, and replacement. Public trust depends on clear boundaries. When those boundaries are blurred, especially after concerns have been formally raised, the issue is no longer a misunderstanding of policy, but a question of accountability and, yes, the IB value of integrity.

4. QUESTIONS FOR RHS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS RE. MINOR

1. Is there any contract signed by RHS/School District and Minor's private business giving him the exclusive right to provide A/V services for all events at the RPAC? Nothing was shared with me.
2. If there is no contract, then why is Minor allowed to use School District e-mail during school working hours to convey messages to outsiders/private parties that creates the

⁹ The Florida Ethics Code may be germane for further analysis to the extent the School District chooses to continue to allow Minor to operate his personal business at the RPAC.

clear impression of him having exclusive A/V rights at RPAC? There is nothing in Minor's emails that indicate any option for A/V services, or that inform the public that IEC Consultants is his private A/V company.

3. If Minor's business is authorized to manage/operate RPAC after school hours (and outside of contract stipends), then is there any evidence that Minor's private business agreed in writing to indemnify and hold harmless the School District and/or RHS from any liability that may arise from the A/V or related operations, including liability insurance? Is this in any file?

4. If one of Minor's private business's employees or contractors injures or harms a guest on RHS property during a non-school show managed by Minor's business, is the School District held responsible for that, or Minor's private business? Is there anything in writing to this effect?

5. If Minor falls and injures himself at the RPAC while running an A/V operation through his private business, is that injury covered by School District worker's compensation coverage? If it is, then that means Minor is being treated as an employee – to be covered by worker's compensation, must be employed – yet the actual time spent when he would hypothetically get injured "on the job" would be compensated through his private business? Does Minor's business have a worker's compensation certificate of insurance covering himself and his employees?

6. Pursuant to School Board policy, given that the minimum hourly \$ fees set by School District are intended to reimburse School District for \$ costs associated with those services being rendered, is Minor's private business authorized to charge a higher hourly fee to others/private renters for the same services rendered to schools for using the same public building and public equipment he oversees?

7. If Minor's business is authorized to charge higher fees beyond that approved by the School District as it is doing now, does Minor reimburse the portion charged by the School District (the minimum fee set by School Board) to RHS and/or the School District?

8. Or, does Minor currently pocket all fees?

9. Does Minor pay the minimum required fees to the School District as outlined in School District Policy 9.30 for using school facilities to run his private A/V business?

EXHIBIT 00044-45, See II.D.

10. If RPAC equipment needs to be repaired or replaced, given that Minor's private business – through himself and his A/V team -- operates and utilizes RPAC equipment (including projectors, etc.), and retain all A/V revenues, who is responsible for the costs associated with repairing, updating and/or replacing?

11. Should Minor's private business help reimburse the School District for any RPAC A/V equipment-related maintenance, repairs, updating or replacing given the volume of RPAC A/V work exclusively run/operated/managed by Minor and his private business? **EXHIBIT D, 00109-00110 (pages inverted)**

12. Said differently, why should taxpayers bear the cost of repairs/replacement of RPAC-related A/V equipment in order to support a private A/V business?

13. When the School Board approved the new A/V vendor list in 2023/2024 for SCD schools use of RPAC, and when Tracy Brizendine sent the February 2023 letter to Minor regarding the need to cease/desist from charging schools to use RPAC A/V, did the School District seek any reimbursement from Minor's private business for the fees wrongfully charged by Minor's business to other public schools in violation of Florida ethics rules¹⁰? If not, why not?

14. To correct prior regime lack of oversight, what steps will School District leadership take to affirm ethical stewardship of District resources at all times, not only at RHS but district-wide, including but not limited to any accounting review/auditing, to restore integrity and avoid any appearance of impropriety/conflict of interest? See below recommendation as a potential option.

5. RECOMMENDATION RE. RPAC A/V HANDLING

The simplest solution to this dilemma seems to already exist. Just apply the same. When outsiders rent the RPAC, the private renters pay for access to the RPAC and related maintenance and custodial services through a third-party booking management company, Facilitron. Per **EXHIBIT F, 0033**, it is evident that a private renter pays fees that offset or help offset those maintenance, custodial costs to the School District.

My understanding is the School District uses that money to pay for and/or offset the wages/overtime of those who perform custodial duties during RPAC events conducted during private, outside-of-school hours events. In speaking with witnesses, for example, Tommy Watts has been a lead custodian at RHS for years. When Mr. Watts works hours to provide janitorial services/custodial services during a private RHS RPAC event, the School District uses the payments made through Facilitron to pay and/or offset the wages and overtime pay to be issued to Mr. Watts. But, the School District continues to pay Mr. Watts – a school district employee – for the same services he renders during the school day, but also now outside the normal school day. **Mr. Watts – who works at RHS – is not running a private custodial business and charging extra fees for cleaning the school for those who rent the RPAC through Facilitron for after-hours events; it is the School District using the private Facilitron payments to then pay wages to Mr. Watts. Bingo.**

¹⁰ Minor was told to cease/desist from charging other schools from his private business. That means School District was aware of these unethical charges. Were those charges repaid by Minor's business?

The School District could apply the same approach to A/V and related items, right? Why is it different? The School District has approved an hourly rate for A/V services/house management services. Once the private renter makes payment, the School District can then issue an equivalent hourly-W-2 wage compensation to Mr. Minor (and any other school workers) for the hours he/they work to provide A/V services outside of school and stipend hours¹¹. Indeed, the School District already pays a stipend to Mr. Minor for a set number of hours where he oversees RPAC management and/or A/V for school-related and/or SCSD schools functions during the school day or as approved. That approach can simply be extended, with an hourly payment made to Minor accordingly, with the School District keeping the remainder of the private funds paid towards A/V etc. for maintenance, replacement and/or repairs, etc. This would make sense as it's school district property where liability rests.

To the extent Minor's A/V team consists of RHS-outsiders (i.e., not school employees) for other roles such as house manager, lighting director etc., the School District could require RHS to advertise these opportunities for extra money etc. to RHS employees first. And if found, then pay Minor and the other school employees the same way as Tommy Watts for custodial.

¹¹ If the others who currently work for Mr. Minor's private business at RPAC are not actual school district employees, then the School District and RHS can open up those "stipend" or "extra work" opportunities to other RHS employees. This is a core complaint re. favoritism from many that RHS administration does not openly advertise opportunities to perform extra duties and make extra money, as will be addressed in the next section of report. This can be such an opportunity to rectify and fix a lot of issues, including the narrative of favoritism.

D. SUBOPTIMAL SCHOOL CULTURE

Considering all of the foregoing, an observation that jumps out after reviewing complaints from 2019 onwards through 2023 and after interviewing staff and students, both current and former through 2025: there was a consistent theme shared, that being a large void in meaningful communication and leadership exhibited to proactively address the variety of conflicts and chaos presented by all parties during that time.

Many say it continues even today to some extent. Whether it was a back and forth between those who accused Sanchez, those who accused Smith, versus Sanchez/Smith and RHS Admin., I can't help but wonder why it all got that far to begin with. What ended up happening with a group of individuals who had never been written up or investigated before complaining, then being subjected to complaints and investigations, all in the aftermath of lodging complaints, is a classic pattern of retaliation. I am not saying it, in fact, was unlawful retaliation. I cannot judge that; however, I have addressed why it cannot be discounted when, rather suddenly, their workplace environment changed. Several students and/or other staff members informed me of what they perceived to be retaliatory macro and/or micro-aggressions taken in response to concerns raised.

It became a tit-for-tat of complaints lodged by administrators or those with various titles to their name such as Smith, versus those who raised concerns against Smith. For those who claimed academic cheating, they similarly were faced with complaints and/or investigations¹². And many of these investigations contained similar allegations going back and forth about the other – gossiping, rumor-mongering etc. – which were used against some staff but not others when it came to counseling and/or disciplinary action. Further, in the case of the staff complainant against Smith, she filed harassment charges against a few employees in 2023 that were never responded to, or for which she was never interviewed and or informed about status of any review. **EXHIBIT F, 0097-100.**

In lieu of proactive leadership becoming present to meet with staff, openly hash out things and see what needs to be done to repair humanely what was becoming a toxic environment, it instead appears then RHS-administrators believed the best course of action was to double down, allow the cycle of complaint and investigation free-for-all, an eye-for-an-eye battle.

¹² Understand that I am not questioning in all cases the validity of any complaints/investigations taken against the complainants. What I am calling out here is the fact that this was all occurring = an eye for an eye = over a compressed period of time relating to complaints first raised by the complainants, that should have raised alarm bells in HR and in administration. Be proactive. Deal with it. Humanely. Communicate. Listen. Address. None of that happened – that's why folks reasonably felt unheard, targeted, retaliated against etc. And that can impact culture. Because rumors, perceptions, and fact all build together to form the reality.

And, yes, there is a role for complaints and investigations. But, they also must be taken seriously, conducted properly and followed through with corrective action in a consistent manner. It was incumbent upon all to ensure fairness of process and consistency in decision making/findings. Even here, unfortunately, the various reports/findings etc. show some facts that led to adverse results against some but similar to more egregious facts led to no fault at all being assessed.

Nothing kills morale more than inconsistent administration/handling of complaints, investigations/discipline, especially when the evidence establishes wrongdoing that then remains uncorrected. As stated earlier in this report, when facts based on evidence on the record such as those involving Smith and Sanchez lead to no consequences against either, trust of administrators and/or School District HR can easily be lost.

However, the individual who complained about Smith – whom AP Little agreed the alleged conduct complained about by the individual about Smith would be “abuse” – faced a barrage of investigations thereafter. In short, the heat lamp was turned onto the reporter of the concerns, but nothing was done to positively impact behavior involving Smith.¹³

Effective leadership could have intervened. It could have turned the situation around; ignoring things, or at best, delegating to others without any intervention/involvement, created an unhealthy culture, not to mention others again feeling Smith was empowered, just like Sanchez, to keep doing what he/they do without fear. And, I have already addressed the same impression created by the hands-off approach taken by RHS and the School District involving Minor.

Untouchable.

Don't complain.

It would be futile to do so.

The perception created due to this leadership void was that those leaders were above the fray, so don't speak up as the leaders didn't intervene to fix the obvious conflicts that kept recurring.

Others unrelated to the Sanchez, Smith or Minor allegations raised similar concerns about retaliation and/or intimidating treatment. RHS's former long-term bookkeeper was interviewed. Most in administration and otherwise at RHS knew she had cancer and was undergoing treatment. At one point, she was out on leave for two weeks to recuperate from

¹³ I am not inquiring into the validity or not of the multiple complaints lodged against the individual who reported Smith's abuse. I am simply pointing out that effective HR and/or administrative leadership would see something like this arise and would want to figure out what could be done to stop this cycle.

a procedure relating to her cancer. The day before she returned to school she was informed by RHS Administration to report to the Landings. She never came back to RHS. She had been placed on a temporary assignment pending investigation into her bookkeeping. This despite always getting a 100 percent on her audits, etc. Her office was cleaned out in which she had a lot of memories and décor. She claimed to me that she was made to feel like a criminal because of allegations that could have been proven to be without merit simply by discussing with her. Instead, she said there was no dialogue with her or any opportunity to informally discuss prior to being summarily terminated from RHS. All the while no one ever reached out, according to her, after being removed from her office to find out how she was doing, how she was recuperating from cancer, etc. And, ultimately, she was cleared of any wrongdoing except for an unaccounted for twenty dollars. She informed me that she had reported alleged excessive overtime complaints to RHS and to Jody Dumas and was told to ignore it. She had also told me she had raised concerns involving the principal's use of P-Cards back then (which the principal rectified on her own per the bookkeeper). She believes raising these concerns led to this investigation and removal, without any chance to speak beforehand. Even for argument purposes if School District protocol required removal of this bookkeeper from RHS for a review to occur, it cannot be disputed that how this was handled was rather sad, and that it was handled so inhumanely, again, without emotional intelligence.

Another example, this from an RHS student. There was a student who spoke with me who graduated recently, a highly regarded, and highly accomplished individual. This student was accused of cheating with AI and recalled his story in verbatim about how he was intimidated by the RHS IB Coordinator over allegations that the student vehemently defended against. He was fearful of not being able to graduate or other harm would come even though he said he did not use AI for a report that was prepared. He said he couldn't eat well or sleep well out of fear of consequence. One day – long after he was questioned about the alleged use of AI – he met with another teacher at the school who told him rather casually that he had been cleared of any wrongdoing. The individual who was accusing him – or at least in charge of reviewing the matter was the IB Coordinator. According to this student, the IB Coordinator withheld informing the student that he had been cleared for days. This student believed that was intentional. He had felt so traumatized by the whole ordeal but those directly involved felt no need to inform him he was cleared. He told me it felt so unprofessional and childish to treat him this way, causing him to stew in pain, rather than just being upfront that he was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Many also raised ongoing safety/security issues. There are several individuals who claim concerns are emailed about loose or non-existent safety/security management in RHS hallways, restrooms, gates, etc. yet there is a lack of responsiveness and lack of action taken to address even after staff members send e-mail to RHS administrators about such issues. Folks at other high schools in the area communicated stricter attention being given than those who observe security breaches more regularly at RHS.

Lastly, as noted elsewhere in the report, a commonly addressed theme is favoritism, i.e. shown here through lack of open opportunities for extra stipend, extra work, extra off shifts etc., with the allegations that the 0145/310 contracts are afforded only to a select few. Folks at other high schools in the School District communicated an open equal opportunity for such benefits/extra stipends opportunities, which supposedly is not the way they are handed out at RHS.

These examples above are why so many feel, perceive and believe the culture at RHS emboldens a few, disregards the many, and needs improvement.

III. CONCLUSION

Again, good people can make poor choices and act in suboptimal ways for a lot of reasons. All the folks involved in the matters reviewed in this report are working hard, are accomplished in their profession and are serving the public good in many ways. That does not mean they can't be helped in their roles/jobs, or that corrective steps need not be taken. Both can be true at the same time. In closing, it is recommended certain steps be taken considering these findings. I have included those recommended steps below again for ease of review.

1. **SANCHEZ AND MINOR:** reinforcement through meaningful in-person training involving ethics, public trust and academic honesty

Objective: change behavior and/or help rebuild trust.

2. **SMITH:** in-person training in professional conduct/behavior and respectful communication style

Objective: change behavior and/or help rebuild any lingering reputational issues/loss of trust with staff and/or students.

3. **ALL RHS LEADERSHIP** (including Athletics, IB Program, All Department Heads, Supervisors, etc.): in-person training in leadership/emotional intelligence training and effective, respectful, timely and complete communications

Objective: Foster healthy, positive workplace/school culture; improve level and depth of proactive communications (responsiveness, speaking and active listening) at the leadership levels;

Objective: Increase engagement built on mutual respect, active listening and active communications to mitigate against cycle of complaints and concerns;

Objective: Reduce fear amongst staff/students of a retaliatory culture, but rather, increase meaningful participation.

4. **SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND RELATED TRAININGS:** Ensure professionalism in the workplace and with student/staff communications as well as the efficacy of current policy and complaint procedure at the school-based levels. For example, are District HR and all School-Based Administrators working together to ensure full understanding of, as well as implementing/enforcing policies and complaint procedures in a consistent manner, with effective communication throughout the

process, to ensure employees and students **trust the process** – as opposed to believing it would be futile to bring up any concerns

Objective: Ensure School District HR policies/complaint procedures relating to reports of alleged inappropriate or unlawful conduct remain valid and defensible under applicable laws. Combined with emotionally-intelligent, trained leaders, also helps rebuild faith that complaints/concerns will not lead to repercussions for those who raise them.

5. **RPAC A/V MANAGEMENT:** see recommendation on page 36-37 of this report.

Objective: Address the issue in ways respectful of Minor's time, to the extent he remains in that A/V role, while rebuilding public trust

6. **CONSIDER TAKING CORRECTIVE ACTION AND/OR COUNSELING:** Based on findings with respect to each of the individuals at issue, consider action(s) i

Objective: Record/document steps taken with the goal of ensuring repeat violations do not occur.

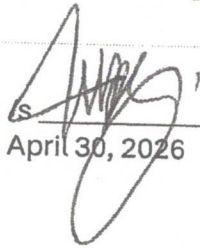
Objective: Rebuild public trust through any remedial steps to be taken with re. Sanchez, Smith and Minor.

7. **SAFETY COMPLIANCE:** Ensure RHS complies with the letter and spirit of the safety/security policies implemented by the School Board

Objective: Self-explanatory

8. **SCHOOL SURVEY:** Conduct School District survey of RHS culture to assess whether any adjustments are needed to help holistically foster improved trust, policy compliance, cross-organizational communication, culture etc.

Objective: Self-explanatory


April 30, 2026