



August 8, 2023

Cassandra and Rick Stefanik
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Playground Incident on April 24, 2023

Dear Rick and Cassie:

I am writing in response to your letter of July 26, 2023. The allegations made in your letter have been investigated, including interviews of administrators and review of written materials and security camera footage, by members of the Board of Trustees. This is a clearly complicated situation, and we understand that you feel strongly about it, but, after a thorough review, we have concluded that the O'Neal administration handled this matter in a responsible and appropriate manner.

We will respond to your five requested actions, but, in the interest of clarity, our decision not to address the other allegations and statements in your letter does not constitute or indicate agreement or acquiescence.

1. As you advised us that you have asked the Southern Pines Police Department to investigate your allegations, you have opted for adjudication of this matter in the criminal justice system, and O'Neal will thus refrain from further action until the conclusion of the judicial process. We will, at that point, revisit the incident and determine whether disciplinary or other action is warranted.
2. O'Neal will, of course, welcome [REDACTED] as we welcome all students, to campus for the upcoming academic year and will advise new Middle School employees of the incident.
3. O'Neal will, of course, provide support and, as necessary and appropriate, reasonable accommodations to [REDACTED] as we provide to all students.
4. O'Neal maintains security cameras in appropriate locations, including the addition of several cameras over the summer, and O'Neal provides appropriate administrative oversight as we balance safety with privacy concerns and maintenance of a culture of trust.
5. O'Neal manages student discipline matters through specific written protocols that incorporate accountability and respect for all parties. These procedures have evolved over a number of years and have been consistently implemented for the benefit of the community.

We look forward to [REDACTED] return to school and to a productive and enriching academic year.

Yours truly,

Lynda Malmrose Acker, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees