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January 21, 2021

To whom it may concern:

My name is Dr. Thomas Alan Cox. I am the Assistant Superintendent for K-12 School Management for Leon County Schools. On January 7th I received a packet containing written complaints against football coaches that work at Lawton Chiles High School. The complaints were anonymous and the packet consisted of a cover letter that was copied to Superintendent Hanna, Assistant Superintendent Gayle, County Activities Director Hansen, and all five school board members. The packet also contained what appears to be five separate letters with various dates, also anonymous. Anonymous complaints and allegations can be problematic in the area of getting witness statements, however, I treat all allegations very serious and immediately sent a copy of the packet to the Chiles Principal, Joe Burgess to start an immediate investigation. Mr. Burgess, Assistant Principal JP Swope and Athletic Director Eto immediately started their investigation. On Monday, January 11, 2021 I received results of that investigation from the Chiles administration. Allegations listed below:

- Cussing at practices and games to include the words such as "pussy", "slap-dick", "motherfucker" and others.
- Verbal abuse aimed at coaches, players, managers and trainer
- Attacking an athlete's perceived sexual preference
- Inequity of equipment or perks to athletes based on meeting fundraising goals
- Allowing physical and verbal fights between players at practice and camp
- Misuse/misappropriation of funds
- Not exhibiting the characteristics identified by the code of ethics of the coaching profession
- Told Coach Ragans to get the "F" off the fields in front of the team
- Fat shaming a player. Singing a song in the locker room "Fat boy, fat boy, why are you so fat". Student flipped you off, you made him do up downs in front of your desk. Someone videoed the up downs and sent it out on social media

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Building the Future Together

- Told a story about a gay couple at a school where you worked. The couple dissed in front of you and you were furious. Said you didn't understand why they could go to Hell, but couldn't be suspended
- Discussing the sexuality of a specific player in front of the entire team
- Name calling, shaming, badgering, obscenities, sexual innuendos, teasing and players told they are not being rewarded after accomplishing goals
- Explicit music played in locker room and at practice field
- Telling Trey Pettis that he is "motherfucking fat" in front of the team
- Perform concussion protocols on quarterback after he took a hit
- Harassing and bullying athletes
- Coaches cussing each other out causing disruptions and chaos

On Friday January 8th, Assistant Principal JP Swope sent an email to Coach Trey Pettis and Coach Bill Ragans listing the allegations and asked for a written statement of their accounts of the allegations. On January 8th, a letter was sent to Coach Kevin Pettis asking for a written statement of his accounts of the allegations. Please see attached responses regarding the allegations.

In addition to the attached responses from the coaches, Assistant Principal JP Swope conducted a random sampling survey of athletes from all grade levels. Students were given a 10 question survey asking about the allegations from their perspective. The surveys and results are also attached. The Chiles administration also sent me statements from other adults that work in and around the football program. Those statements are attached as well.

The results from the randomly sampled players as administered by Mr. Swope universally contradict the accusation in the cover letter. Statements were obtained from Coach Hernández. Coach Hernández states that he does not recall during the season where he felt language of any kind/or behavior towards athletes was an issue. He further states that relationships built with athletes are based on the foundation of trust, respect, and hard work. A statement was obtained from Pete Mabry. Mr. Mabry has been associated with the program for three years and states that if any of the allegations were taking place he would not be associated with the program. A statement was also obtained from Adolph Isom. Adolph is an assistant coach and security monitor at Chiles. He simply states that he is not aware of any of the allegations.

One final statement was given by Kaydi Blackstock. Ms. Blackstock is the athletic trainer for many of the athletic programs at Chiles. Ms. Blackstock mentions in her statement that Coach Pettis would change the music if it was inappropriate. She also stated that she did not witness any harassing or bullying of athletes. Ms Blackstock did have a conflict with Coach Pettis regarding concussion protocol. Both the Chiles administration and athletic director are familiar with this incident and have handled it at the school level.

Recommendation of Actions

After review of the documents and statements I would strongly encourage anyone with additional information to come forward. I would also ask that any individual that has knowledge of, or witnesses abhorrent behavior of a coach to please report it to the administration as soon as possible. I will give a copy of this letter and documentation to Superintendent Hanna, County Athletic Director Hansen, Employee Relation Assistant Superintendent McAllister, Principal

Burgess, and LCS Security Chief Hunkiar. The influence of coaches upon the behavior and attitudes of his/her players, students and community is unequalled. It is essential that the coach subscribes to the values of sportsmanship and teaches its principles by exemplifying proper conduct at all times. My recommendation is that all coaches receive a copy of the Code of Ethics as presented by the National Council of State High School Coaches and the Florida Athletic Coaches Association. All coaches should read and sign that they have done so. All coaches should also receive a copy of Leon County Schools Civility policy, Leon County Schools Bullying policy, and the Leon County Schools Sexual Harassment policy. They should read and sign that they have done so as well. I will ask Principal Burgess to speak to all coaches and verify that the recommended actions take place. I will direct the Leon County Schools Athletic Director to offer further resources for the coaches to review in the area of Ethics. These recommendations of Action in no way assign blame on any of the coaches named on the allegations. In fact, the recommendation represent a practice that should be conducted annually.

As stated previously, Leon County Schools takes all allegations seriously. I have instructed the Principal and Athletic Director to please keep me informed of any future allegation.

Sincerely,

T. Alan Cox
Assistant Superintendent
Leon County Schools

Cc:
Deana McAllister
Rocky Hanna
Scott Hansen
John Hunkier
Joe Burgess