

BLANCHESTER LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Principal Rick Hosler

Investigation Report

12/31/2015

Background

Mr. Rick Hosler is currently the Blanchester High School Principal in the Blanchester Local School District (BLS D) in Blanchester, Ohio. He was hired into the District as a science teacher and Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA) instructor in 2002. Mr. Hosler then coordinated the District's Virtual Learning Academy (VLA), an online instruction program, from 2003 through 2008. From 2008 through 2010 he became the Blanchester High School Assistant Principal and was appointed to Principal's position beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Hosler also owned his own company, Rick Hosler Homes, from 1988 through 2012.

Mr. Hosler was an applicant for the Blanchester Local School District Superintendent's position in the fall of 2013. Mr. Hosler was not selected as the Superintendent. The Blanchester Board of Education chose the current superintendent, Dean Lynch, to lead the District in January of 2014.

Allegations

Superintendent Lynch issued a letter to Mr. Hosler dated November 24, 2015 placing him on paid administrative leave from the High School Principal's position as a result of allegations of Principal Hosler's unprofessional conduct involving his having a 'meltdown,' during which time Mr. Hosler allegedly threw things, screamed/yelled, and made statements (to the Director of Student Services) such as "no one is running my building or telling my teachers what to do, I'm the principal. Don't you dare talk to my teachers. Dean and Bridgid are trying to run my building; I'm the principal of this building!" Superintendent Lynch's letter also stated, "This is in addition to other complaints of unprofessional behavior by staff and parents this school year and last."

In Mr. Hosler's Administrative Leave Letter he was informed that his actions will be investigated by an outside investigator, and Mr. Hosler was cautioned to "refrain from communicating with any witnesses or potential witnesses and from any action or inaction that could be perceived by a witness as retaliation for their participation in the investigation. Any retaliatory behavior would constitute grounds for discipline, up to and including termination of your employment." He was instructed not to access school equipment, computers or networks unless (he) had advanced written permission from the Superintendent to do so. Mr. Hosler was directed that upon receipt of the letter dated November 24, 2015, he was not to communicate in any manner whatsoever (in person, cell or other phone, email, text or any other means or through any other person) with any students, parents, employees or Board members of the School District.

While Mr. Hosler was assigned to home, and during the period of administrative leave, he was to perform work there if requested to do so, and until further written notice he was not to be on school grounds, and he was not to attend any function of the District, whether on District property or at any other location.

Superintendent Lynch had previously issued a Letter of Reprimand to Principal Hosler dated February 13, 2015 for the following:

- Responding inappropriately to a report of sexual harassment during the 2014-2015 school year
- Intimidating the Blanchester High School kitchen staff after the Clinton Massie game in the fall of 2014
- Behaving inappropriately and unprofessionally at a Clinton County Juvenile Probation Administrators meeting in August of 2014
- Behaving unprofessionally and inappropriately at a spring track meet at another school district during the 2013-2014 school year by taking a scoring clipboard from student judges and heckling the building principal and student judges on their ability to measure the distance of the shot

As a result of Mr. Hosler's alleged actions, this outside investigator is charged with looking into these matters to determine the extent of Mr. Hosler's behaviors. In addition this investigator will review Mr. Hosler's behaviors while he is on the leave to determine his adherence to the Superintendent's directives as outlined in the Leave of Absence Letter.

Investigation

In conducting the investigation this investigator interviewed four (4) administrators, twenty (20) staff members, four (4) outside witnesses, and one (1) former student. Some staff members were very reluctant to answer this investigator's questions. Some were very forthcoming. In order to protect their anonymity witnesses were assigned a number as they are quoted throughout the report. However, there is no guarantee of anonymity as the witnesses' testimony may be used to determine the outcome of Mr. Hosler's alleged behaviors.

This investigator's questions are based on the above mentioned allegations of unprofessional behavior as Superintendent Lynch listed in Mr. Hosler's Administrative Leave Letter (November 24, 2015) and from his Letter of Reprimand (February 13, 2015).

- Principal Hosler was placed on paid administrative leave on November 24, 2015. In the letter Superintendent Lynch writes, *"I am writing to notify you that a report has been made against you alleging in appropriate and/or unprofessional behavior. Specifically, you allegedly called the Student Service Coordinator into a meeting and proceeded to have a 'meltdown,' threw things, screamed/yelled and made statements such as 'no one is running my building or telling my teachers what to do. I'm the principal. Don't you dare talk to my teachers. Dean and Bridgid are trying to run my building. I'm the principal of this building.' This is in addition to other complaints of unprofessional behavior by staff and parents this school year and last."*

In an interview with the Student Services Coordinator and in a written statement she provided to the investigator, the Student Services Coordinator stated that she was leaving at the end of

the school day on November 10, 2015. Mr. Hosler called her into his office. He was upset about the Achieve 3000 Program and not knowing the contracted Achieve 3000 Trainer was scheduled to work with students that day. The Student Services Coordinator explained that he'd received an email about the Achieve 3000 Trainer being scheduled at Blanchester High School on that date. He said that his teachers were being forced to do something they did not want to do. She told him that was not the feeling she'd gotten from them, and she would talk with them. She stated that Mr. Hosler raised his voice then threw a wad of paper to the floor and stated that she did not need to talk to his teachers. She told him to calm down. She felt that he was not yelling at her but out of frustration. The Student Services Coordinator stated that other people could have heard him yelling. She felt he was extremely stressed out. When leaving the meeting with Mr. Hosler the Student Services Coordinator told one teacher sitting in the front office that Mr. Hosler needed to calm down.

On the way home in the car the Student Services Coordinator phoned another administrator (Witness #8) about Mr. Hosler's outburst. Witness #8 stated the Student Services Coordinator shared that Mr. Hosler called the Student Services Coordinator into his office, and he was screaming and throwing things. He was upset about the Achieve 3000 Program and making changes to the curriculum (at the high school). Witness #8 also said the Student Services Coordinator reported there were others in the high school office for a student's IEP meeting, and the people in the front office could hear the whole thing. The Student Services Coordinator reported to Witness #8 that Mr. Hosler needed to calm down and left the room (his office). Witness #8 shared that the Student Services Coordinator was too upset to return to the IEP meeting and left the building. While passing through the office Witness #8 stated that the Student Services Coordinator shared with two teachers who were in the office that Mr. Hosler needed to calm down. Witness #8 also told the investigator that the Student Services Coordinator would not return to the high school until Mr. Hosler apologized.

The Achieve 3000 Consultant, also reported to Witness #8 that Mr. Hosler was upset with the Consultant because of not knowing about her visit to Blanchester High School. Witness #8 assured Consultant that Mr. Hosler had known about her being at the High School on November 10th, and she shouldn't be upset about it.

In an email to Superintendent Lynch on November 18, 2015 the Student Services Coordinator stated that Mr. Hosler had a "meltdown," such as often occurs when she works with students who are frustrated. She feels that Mr. Hosler is frustrated and thought that talking with the Superintendent was a means to help Mr. Hosler, not hang him.

Witness #12 stated that Witness #12 was in the office at the end of the school day waiting for the secretary. Witness #12 heard Mr. Hosler raise his voice, then Witness #12 saw the Student Services Coordinator come down the hallway into the office area. Witness #12 stated the Student Services Coordinator said she needed to calm down. Witness #12 heard Mr. Hosler's voice at the tail-end of the conversation with the Student Services Coordinator.

Witness #14 participated in the IEP meeting across the hall from Mr. Hosler's office on the day of the incident. The Student Services Coordinator and Mr. Hosler went into his office. Witness #14 heard Mr. Hosler say in a loud voice that he was the Principal, and no one is running his building.

In the interview with this investigator Witness #16 shared that Witness #16 was in the IEP meeting across the hall from Principal Hosler's office when she heard raised voices across the hall.

Witness #21 stated that Witness #21 has seen Mr. Hosler lose his temper. He threw a newspaper across the desk at Witness #21 once because he was angry. When the investigator asked if Witness #21 had heard Mr. Hosler get angry with the Student Services Coordinator, Witness #21 stated that he could be heard screaming at the Student Services Coordinator. Witness #21 heard the Student Services Coordinator ask Mr. Hosler if he was okay. Witness #21 stated that Mr. Hosler told Witness #21 that how he treated the Student Services Coordinator was wrong, and if he'd done it to anyone else he would be fired.

Witness #28 stated that Witness #28 heard the 'dispute' between Mr. Hosler and the Student Services Coordinator. They were having a loud conversation in his office.

Note: In his interview with this investigator Mr. Hosler admitted that he spoke with the Student Services Coordinator in a 'stern' voice. Mr. Hosler said that he was pretty pumped up about the Veteran's Day ceremony from earlier in the day. He admitted to closing his door and having a discussion. He felt the high school staff has to have ownership in what they do, and their ownership was being infringed upon. Mr. Hosler again admitted to using a stern voice. The Student Services Director asked if he was having a meltdown. Mr. Hosler reported that his AD, who was in the hallway, stepped into the doorway asking if everything was okay. Mr. Hosler admitted to saying that he is the Principal of the High School. Mr. Hosler stated that he is a passionate individual, and there is a sense of respect when he is stern. Mr. Hosler stated that the Student Services Coordinator was venting to him about the environment in the District. However, no other witness shared with this investigator that the Student Services Coordinator was venting. They only heard Mr. Hosler's voice. Note: Mr. Hosler conveyed to this investigator that a day or two later he apologized to The Student Services Coordinator. They hugged, and all is well.

- *First, you responded inappropriately to a teacher who reported a non-teaching supervisor who had harassed one of his subordinates. This teacher witnessed what he believed to be male-on-male sexual harassment in the fall of 2014. The teacher appropriately followed the chain of command and reported the incident to the assistant principal. Upon receiving this information, you failed to report the matter to me (the Superintendent). You also failed to investigate the incident consistent with the Board of Education's policy on Sexual Harassment. Instead you approached the teacher who reported the incident, pointed your finger at the teacher, and said in a stern voice, "the*

issue with Dave Fangmeyer yesterday is a done issue and it stops here. It will go no further and stops here.

Witness #22 reported what he believed to be sexual harassment by Witness #11 to a subordinate, Witness #26. Witness #22 stated that in August of 2014 Witness #11 was on the dock at the High School. Witness #26 was working on a door. Then Witness #11 allegedly unzipped his fly (but did not expose himself) and asked Witness #26 if he 'wanted some.' Witness #22 felt that Witness #26 was uncomfortable, and as a result Witness #22 reported the incident to the High School Assistant Principal. Mr. Hosler later asked Witness #22 to repeat what happened, which Witness #22 did. The next morning Witness #22 stated that Mr. Hosler went to Witness #22's office and said that Witness #11 will apologize to Witness #22, and it is a done issue. Mr. Hosler said in a stern voice it will go no farther and stops here. Witness #22 felt intimidated.

In the same incident Witness #26, the recipient of the inappropriate advance, stated that Witness #11 walked up to him and unzipped his pants (but did not expose himself). Witness #26 said that Witness #26 did not feel harassed, but it would have been embarrassing if the cooks (female) would have seen it. Later on Witness #26 said that Mr. Hosler approached Witness #11 and Witness #26 out on the football field when they were on the gator. Mr. Hosler told Witness #11 and Witness #26 and said he understood it was just horseplay; Witness #11 didn't mean any harm, but it would have to stop here. He told Witness #11 to apologize to Witness #22, which he did. Mr. Hosler also told Witness #11 and #26 that he'd been in the construction business and had seen guys horseplay. Mr. Hosler never asked if Witness #26 (the recipient of the action) if Witness #26 wanted to file a sexual harassment complaint.

Witness #20 stated that he saw Witness #11 asked Witness #26 to "get on this." Witness #20 stated that he walked away from the situation. Witness #20 said that Mr. Hosler talked to him about it, and then later talked to the other witnesses. That's all Witness #20 said he knew.

Witness #11 stated that he did not unzip his pants. Mr. Hosler called Witness #11 into his office and told him to apologize to Witness #22, which he did. Witness #11 wrote a statement for this investigator. In his statement Witness #11 stated that "As I walked by him, I made the motion like I was going to unzip my zipper and laughed and kept walking by. Nothing was unzipped and nothing was exposed. Witness #26 was in no way offended by it. Witness #20 and Witness #23 were present. Later I got a phone call from Mr. Hosler saying that Witness #22 was upset. I went and talked to Mr. Hosler and told him what happened. He told me I should go and talk to Witness #22 and apologize. I agreed and did immediately. I went to Witness #22 and told Witness #22 I was sorry if I offended Witness #22, and by no way was it toward Witness #22. It was just me and Witness #26 goofing off. Witness #22 thanked me for coming and apologizing and told me that Witness #22 had been shocked. Witness #11 assured Witness #22 it would never happen again and everything was fine." (The other witnesses, however, gave contrary testimony that Witness #11 had indeed unzipped his zipper).

During his interview this investigator asked Mr. Hosler to define sexual harassment. Mr. Hosler replied that sexual harassment was someone giving sexual innuendos, a come on, or placing oneself in a position that is inappropriate. It is probably a statement like a guy saying "Hey, what are you doing tonight?" In the situation with Witness #11, Mr. Hosler stated that Witness #22 reported the incident to the then Assistant Principal, Mr. Apt. Mr. Apt reported that Witness #11 performed a lewd gesture. Witness #22 and others reported that Witness #11 unzipped his pants, but Witness #11 said he did not unzip his pants. Mr. Hosler said he subsequently went to the high school dock to find Witness #11 and Witness #26, but they were on the football field. Mr. Hosler went to the football field and told Witness #11 to apologize to Witness #22, which he did. Mr. Hosler reported to this investigator that he'd been in the construction business, and he's seen a lot of this type of behavior.

When this investigator asked Mr. Hosler what he would have done had a male employee unzipped his pants to Mr. Hosler's secretary, even if the secretary was not offended, Mr. Hosler's response was that he was always taught that a lady was to be revered. He would have done more than make him apologize; he would "write him up." Or if the employee reported to the Superintendent, he would inform the Superintendent. In this case Witness #11 did indeed report directly to the Superintendent and not Mr. Hosler. However, Mr. Hosler did not report the incident involving Witness #11 and Witness #26 to Superintendent Lynch. Mr. Hosler chose to handle the situation on his own. Principal Hosler's negligence in reporting this situation to the Superintendent and managing it on his own placed the District in jeopardy. He also failed to support an employee who was the victim of sexual harassment by minimizing a violation of the District's Anti-Harassment Policy.

When this investigator asked Mr. Hosler if he knew the name of Blanchester's Harassment Compliance Officer, he replied he did not.

- *Second, I recently became aware of you intimidating members of the kitchen staff following the Keg Game against Clinton Massie. An individual made a comment that the kitchen staff was not included among those specifically thanked for working this function. Shortly thereafter, you confronted two kitchen employees about this individual's comment. Both said you were very agitated. Both individuals stated you asked them, "do we have a problem." Both replied "no" to your question. Both individuals stated that you angrily directed them, "we won't have any more problems."*

Witness #25 stated that Mr. Hosler went into the kitchen the same morning an email had been sent thanking others for their help with the Clinton Massie event. A cook had made a comment to someone other than Mr. Hosler about not being included in the group of people who helped with the preparation. Mr. Hosler somehow heard about the cook's comment, went to the kitchen and asked, "Do we have a problem?" The cook responded that she did not, and that the criticism wasn't directed at him but of the email because the kitchen staff had been left out. Mr. Hosler, clearly agitated, went to talk with Witness #25. He told Witness #25 that he didn't know we had a problem. Witness #25 responded there was no problem. Not understanding why Mr. Hosler was so upset, Witness #25 asked Mr. Hosler to sit down and talk

about it. He declined and left the kitchen. Later that day Witness #25 stated that Mr. Hosler asked for the bill for the tailgate, and Witness #25 provided it. Witness #25 related that Mr. Hosler often went into the kitchen area to buy his lunch and talk with the cooks and Witness #25 when she was present. However, after this incident Witness #25 stated that Principal Hosler avoided the area for about a week, then returned to his usual relationship with the cooks and Witness #25 like nothing happened, avoiding the issue altogether.

In his interview with this investigator Mr. Hosler stated that he was not the person who sent the email; the AD sent it. Mr. Hosler hadn't read it when it went out, and he didn't realize the cooks were not included in the thank you. Mr. Hosler stated that he asked the cooks what the problem was. There was an issue with Witness #22 and the students in Witness #22's classes who always helped with the event by cleaning up. Mr. Hosler said that Witness #25 felt the issue was blown out of proportion. Mr. Hosler says that the cooks are the best, and they take care of the students. However, Mr. Hosler did not say why he did not want to talk with Witness #25 to clear up the matter.

- *Third, I recently received reports from those in attendance at the August 6, 2014 Clinton County Juvenile Probation Administrators' meeting that you behaved inappropriately and unprofessionally. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the staff of the Juvenile Court, Children's Services and other social service agencies available to assist public schools in the area. You chose this forum to publically criticize Judge Gano, the County Prosecutor's Office and to express your opinions that the Juvenile court did not support the school administration. Those in attendance reported that you addressed these individuals in a disrespectful tone, and that it was not the appropriate forum to express these opinions. IN a recent call to Judge Gano, I confirmed the inappropriate manner in which you behaved that day. Judge Gano told me that he had to "step in because it was escalating to the point of getting out of hand."*

Witness #15 was present at the meeting both in 2014 and 2015. Witness #15 stated that "everybody in Clinton County was there—about fifty people. When it came to a Question and Answer period during the meeting Witness #15 stated that Mr. Hosler went on a tangent about how dollars should be used for juvenile detention. He asked about why they (Clinton County Officials) don't do certain things for juveniles. No one understood what Mr. Hosler was talking about.

Witness #21 was not present at the 2014 meeting, but the Prosecuting Attorney made a joke about Mr. Hosler's previous behavior at the 2015 meeting where Witness #21 was present.

Witness #23 did not know Mr. Hosler before the August 2014 meeting. Witness #23 was in attendance in August 2014 when the Clinton County Administrators were present at the Clinton County Juvenile Probation Administrators' meeting when the administrators were introduced to the various agencies including the Juvenile Judge, the Prosecutor, Children's Services, and other agencies. The meeting was held in a large room with approximately fifty to sixty school administrators and counselors present. When the Introductions were going on Witness #23

stated that Mr. Hosler stood up and remarked that the Juvenile Court wanted the administrators' support, but the administrators were not getting it back. Witness #23 stated that Mr. Hosler became loud. His actions changed the tone of the meeting. The room became very quiet, and the attendees could feel the tension. Witness #23 contacted Superintendent Lynch and said that everyone in the county now knew who the Blanchester High School Principal is. Witness #23 said that Principal Hosler came across as a hothead. The Assistant Prosecutor was at the podium, and Judge Gano had to settle Mr. Hosler down. Witness #23 stated that Mr. Hosler was dressed professionally, and the first impression of Mr. Hosler was that he is a gentleman. However, Mr. Hosler was frustrated and became quite upset at the meeting. Witness #23 felt that Mr. Hosler did not act professionally, and it wasn't the time and place for Mr. Hosler to air his frustrations. Witness #23 stated that Principal Hosler apologized for his 2014 behaviors at the 2015 meeting.

In his interview with this investigator, Mr. Hosler stated that he attended the meeting on behalf of Superintendent Lynch, and that Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Hosler to make a statement for the District (There is no indication that Superintendent Lynch assigned this task to Mr. Hosler as the District's representative to speak at the meeting). Mr. Hosler admitted to talking about the lack of support from the Clinton County Courts regarding truancy and juvenile issues. Mr. Hosler related to this investigator that Dee Ann Whalen, the Chief Probation Officer, allegedly asked him to say something about the lack of services from the County. Mr. Hosler conveyed to this investigator that he spoke for three to four minutes in a very distinct tone. He stated the room was silent, and everyone was listening to him. Mr. Hosler then congratulated Jude Gano on his retirement.

- *Finally I recently was notified of your inappropriate behavior during a spring track meet held during the 2013-2014 school year. It is reported that you took a scoring clipboard from student judges who were overseeing a shot put competition. A principal from another school district was forced to intercede because you were disrupting the progress of the competition. After relinquishing the clipboard, you proceeded to 'heckle' this building principal and student judges on their ability to measure the distance of the shot. Your behaviors caused _____ (who was also competing in the event) to become upset to the point of crying. This prompted the aforementioned building principal to tell you "you are a principal, you should act like it" and that if you would not be quiet, you would be escorted away from the area by police.*

Witness #28 was told about Mr. Hosler's actions at the track meet by Witness #13 who worked at the school where the track meet was held. Witness #13 stated that he had to intervene. Witness #13 stated that Mr. Hosler's daughter was a participant in the meet.

Witness #12 heard about Principal Hosler's actions at the track meet from Witness #2 who was at the track meet.

Witness #2 was aware of the situation at the track meet held at Goshen High School. Witness #13 was running the event. Witness #2 was present, and Witness #2 stated there was an

altercation between Mr. Hosler and Witness #13. Witness #2 was in the stands and did not intervene.

Witness #13 stated that the student who was crying was Principal Hosler's daughter. Witness #13 was measuring the shot along with students who were doing community service. Witness #13 shared that Mr. Hosler took the clipboard from the student and was looking through the pages. Witness #13 told Principal Hosler that he could not do this. Principal Hosler then moved about twenty-five feet away from the shot and yelled how incompetent Witness #13 and the students who were measuring were. Mr. Hosler's daughter was embarrassed and crying.

In his interview with this investigator, Mr. Hosler admitted that he attended the track meet, and the student who was crying was his daughter. She participated in the shot and several other track events. Mr. Hosler asked Witness #13 if he could look at the sheets on the clipboard and wanted to write down the scores. Witness #13 told Mr. Hosler it was time to relinquish the clipboard. His daughter cried, as reported by Mr. Hosler, because Witness #13 was allegedly inappropriate. Mr. Hosler then said he was shouting at Witness #13 because Witness #13 was measuring wrongly. Principal Hosler says that he understands measuring various track events because his brother is the best track official in Ohio.

- In Mr. Hosler's administrative leave letter he was informed that his actions will be investigated by an outside investigator, and Mr. Hosler was cautioned to "refrain from communicating with any witnesses or potential witnesses and from any action or inaction that could be perceived by a witness as retaliation for their participation in the investigation. Any retaliatory behavior would constitute grounds for discipline, up to and including termination of your employment." He was instructed not to access school equipment, computers or networks unless (he) had advanced written permission from the Superintendent to do so. Mr. Hosler was directed that upon receipt of the letter dated November 24, 2015, he was not to communicate in any manner whatsoever (in person, cell or other phone, email, text or any other means or through any other person) with any students, parents, employees or Board members of the School District.

Although Mr. Hosler was directed to refrain from communicating with any witnesses or potential witnesses, Principal Hosler admitted to this investigator to communicating with the following community members and witnesses:

- Two parents named by the investigator texted him, and he texted back
- Witness #7—Texted Mr. Hosler, and Mr. Hosler texted back
- Witness #17—took food to Mr. Hosler's home
- Witness #24—took food to Mr. Hosler's home
- Witness #27—took food to Mr. Hosler's home
- Witness #28—Mr. Hosler texted Witness #28 regarding an athletic victory
- A parent emailed Mr. Hosler on November 25, 2015, the day after he received the letter placing him on leave directing him not to utilize the District's network

for communications. Mr. Hosler responded to her email on his iPhone through his District email account

- Mr. Hosler also admitted that a relative designed a Team Hosler webpage. On this site, Mr. Hosler published a statement, complete with his signature and photograph, thanking everyone for supporting him during his time of administrative leave

While Mr. Hosler was assigned to home, and during the period of administrative leave, he was to perform work there if requested to do so, and until further written notice he was not to be on school grounds, and he was not to attend any function of the District, whether on District property or at any other location.

- Mr. Hosler attended the Blanchester Local School District Board of Education Meeting, a function of the District, on December 21, 2015

Conclusion

During the interview with the investigator, Mr. Hosler conveyed his understanding of the District's policy and organizational chart concerning Board-Staff Communications and which employees reported to whom. He understood and verbalized that the following staff members reported to the Superintendent:

- Director of Student Services
- Director of Instruction
- Building Principals
- Transportation Supervisor
- Buildings/Grounds/HVAC Supervisor
- Cafeteria Supervisor
- Director of Technology

Mr. Hosler stated that he reported directly to the Superintendent.

Yet in his dealings with the personnel outlined in his Administrative Leave Letter and in his Letter of Reprimand, specifically the Director of Student Services and Mr. Hosler's response to the Achieve 3000 Program, the Supervisor of Buildings/Grounds/HVAC Supervisor and sexual harassment, and the Cafeteria Supervisor who wanted to talk about the cooks, Principal Hosler neglected to contact Superintendent Lynch regarding these three situations. Instead he took matters into his own hands and behaved unprofessionally (yelling, using a stern voice, and displaying agitation) in dealing with these staff members.

Board Policy GBD specifically states, *"The Board wishes to maintain open channels of communication with staff. The basic line of communication between the Board and the staff is through the Superintendent. Staff members should utilize the Superintendent to communicate to the Board or its subcommittees. All official communications, policies and directives of staff*

Interest and concern are communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent develops appropriate methods to keep staff members informed of the Board's issues, concerns and actions.

Because he understood the chain of command within the District Principal Hosler should have referred each of the above-mentioned situations to the Superintendent.

As for each of the charges outlined in Principal Hosler's Administrative Leave Letter and his Letter of Reprimand, witnesses' statements and Mr. Hosler's interview responses corroborated the following:

- Witnesses confirmed that on November 10, 2015, Principal Hosler called the Student Services Director into his office and shouted at her loudly enough for people in the adjoining meeting rooms and offices to hear. Mr. Hosler disclosed that another staff member stepped into the doorway of his office asking if everything was alright after hearing the shouts. Mr. Hosler admitted that he used the phrase, 'I'm the principal of this building, and no one is going to tell me how to run it.' Mr. Hosler confirmed his apology to the Student Services Director a day or two after the incident.
- With regard to the sexual harassment charge, Principal Hosler portrayed a "boys will be boys" attitude in what was a very serious offense. His response to the investigator was that he'd been in the construction business and had seen a lot of this type of behavior. However had the male employee done the same thing to his secretary, for example, Principal Hosler stated he would have "written him up" or reported him to the Superintendent. There is an obvious double standard in how Principal Hosler deals with sexual harassment. Even though Principal Hosler's written rebuttal to the sexual harassment charge stated that the person who felt s/he was harassed did not report it, the situation required, not only for Principal Hosler to report the incident to the Superintendent because it involved someone who reported directly to the Superintendent, Mr. Hosler should have referred the recipient (victim) of the alleged conduct to the District's Compliance Officer. Instead, Principal Hosler made the determination that the incident should "stop here." Mr. Hosler is not the District's Compliance Officer. As a matter of fact Mr. Hosler was not able to name the Blanchester Local School District's Compliance Officer in his interview with this investigator. Principal Hosler's negligence in reporting this situation to the Superintendent and managing it on his own placed the District in jeopardy in terms of legal liability. He also failed to support an employee who was the victim of sexual harassment by minimizing an obvious violation of the District's Anti-Harassment Policy. Principal Hosler's continued reaction in future situations could place, not only the District, but future victims in harm's way.
- In his dealings with the cooks and Witness #25 after the Clinton Massie game, Witness #25 attempted to calm Principal Hosler down by asking him to sit down and discuss the situation. Although Witness #25 and Mr. Hosler were the only two people present

when this discussion occurred, Witness #25's portrayal of Mr. Hosler's behavior was in line with other instances when Mr. Hosler became agitated and stern, leaving the situation, then later acting as if nothing happened

- Mr. Hosler's Letter of Reprimand charged him with behaving inappropriately and unprofessionally at a Clinton County Juvenile Probation Administrators meeting in August of 2014. Two witnesses, one from within the Blanchester Local School District and one from outside (who didn't know Mr. Hosler previously), both reported that the room felt very uncomfortable while Principal Hosler spoke for what appeared to be a long time. Mr. Hosler evidently "took the floor" from what he said was at the request of the Chief Probation Officer. However, Principal Hosler does not report to the Chief Probation Officer; he reports to the Superintendent. By his own admission, Mr. Hosler said that he spoke for at least three to four minutes. Three to four minutes is a long time when a typical meeting is scheduled for a set period of time. By his own admission Mr. Hosler stated the room became quiet. Both witnesses reported a very uncomfortable feeling in the room during and after Principal Hosler spoke. In addition, there is nothing in Mr. Hosler's job description appointing him the spokesperson for the Blanchester Local School District. That specific function is listed in the *Superintendent's Job Description* as "*Represent(ing) the district in its dealing with other school systems, institutions, and agencies, community organizations, and the general public.*"
- Mr. Hosler was charged with behaving unprofessionally and inappropriately at a spring track meet at another school district during the 2013-2014 school year by taking a scoring clipboard from student judges and heckling the building principal and student judges on their ability to measure the distance of the shot. Witness #2 from Blanchester High School stated there was an altercation between Mr. Hosler and Witness #13. Witness #13, who was running the meet, stated that Witness #13 saw Principal Hosler take a clipboard from a student judge. After Witness #13 asked Mr. Hosler to leave the area, Mr. Hosler criticized the students and Witness #13 who were measuring the events. Mr. Hosler admitted to attending the event. He also conveyed that his daughter was competing in the shot and other track events. His explanation for taking the clipboard from the student judge was to check his daughter's scores. Mr. Hosler stated that after he left the shot area, he berated Witness #13 for not knowing how to measure correctly. If Mr. Hosler had witnessed any irregularities in the measuring or timing of events, he should have communicated those irregularities to the Blanchester High School Coach, or if a track official was present, he should have approached the official. As the Blanchester High School Principal, he needed to set an example of professional behavior for the parents and students who were present. By his own admission, he yelled at Witness #13, the administrator for the hosting school, for not knowing how to measure.

When this investigator asked Mr. Hosler if he ever raises his voice at work, his response was that he speaks in a 'stern' voice to gain respect. He also related that his undergraduate major in college was Speech and Communication, and that communication is the key to dealing with

people. Of the total witnesses interviewed, eighteen (18) stated they had witnessed or had been the recipient of Principal Hosler's anger, which he defined as "sternness." A common behavior for Mr. Hosler is to become stern (lose his temper as described by several of the Blanchester High School staff members and others) and either apologize or avoid the person for a few days, then act as if everything is going well. For example, Witness #6 stated that Mr. Hosler yelled at a kid and went off in his office. Witness #5 reported that Mr. Hosler slammed his hands on the desk in his office when talking with this witness about his son. Witness #10 reported that Mr. Hosler yells and paces, then apologizes. #20 stated that Principal Hosler gets excited and loud. He paces and waves his arms. #21 says Mr. Hosler gets angry at least once a week. He waves his arms and uses a commanding voice. Everyone can hear him yelling. According to Witness #25, Principal Hosler describes himself as passionate, yet he flies off the handle. These witnesses' descriptions of Mr. Hosler's behaviors are in line with the behaviors outlined in the charges brought against him in his Leave of Absence Letter and his Letter of Reprimand.

Several witnesses claimed that Principal Hosler is passionate about caring for his staff, students, and his school. He goes out of his way to help students and staff. Principal Hosler himself became quite emotional at his interview about his care and concern for his students and staff. However, one's care and concern don't excuse outbursts and unprofessional behavior in the workplace.

Principal Hosler verbalized that, as the high school principal, he reports directly to the Superintendent. Mr. Hosler's job description makes this very clear. In witnesses' statements, however, they quoted Mr. Hosler as saying, "This is my school, and no one is going to tell me how to run it."

When this investigator questioned Mr. Hosler about his perspective on what might remedy his situation, he stated, it would be "for (the Superintendent) to allow administrators to do the job. I understand the chain of command, but when something is good, there is no need to change it. If it's not broken, don't fix it." Principal Hosler's statement can be perceived as the "no one is going to tell me how to run my school" attitude.

Therefore, after interviewing numerous witnesses and interviewing Mr. Hosler in the presence of his legal counsel, John Concannon, as the outside investigator to this situation I find there is consistent and sufficient evidence to support the claims brought against Blanchester High School Principal, Rick Hosler, in both his in his Letter of Reprimand dated February 13, 2015 and in his Letter of Administrative Leave dated November 24, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Collette
Third Party Investigator