



SHAWNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

326 North Union • Shawnee, Oklahoma • 74801-7099 • (405)273-0653

April Grace, Ed. D.
Superintendent

August 19, 2021

The following response is issued for several reasons. First, as a district administration and as the leader of the district, we do not condone the alleged behavior by Mr. Arthur or any school employee entrusted with student well-being. We remain committed to assisting law enforcement with their investigation while also conducting our own internal investigation. Second, transparency in the case of personnel matters is difficult. While we would welcome the opportunity to provide an in-depth response to the allegations and insinuations that there is wrongdoing at the district level, we cannot comment on the specifics as it is against the law. What we can provide is an outline of the processes and what information could be included in any employee's record. Third, we will always make ourselves available to assist law enforcement with the interpretation of records, so that information is used correctly prior to releasing it publicly.

The following timeline outlines the steps and processes we followed pertaining to Mr. Arthur:

- July 24, 2021:
 - I was notified by the High School Principal that the Pottawatomie County Sheriff's Office took Ron Arthur, Assistant Athletic Director, into custody from the high school campus.
 - I notified the Board of Education president that an employee was taken into custody by the sheriff's department.
 - Mr. Arthur called me after he was returned to the high school campus by the Sheriff's office. He stated that he refused to answer questions without an attorney present. I instructed him to not return to the high school campus and report to the Administration building on Monday morning.
 - I notified the District's legal counsel of the above situation.
- July 26, 2021: Mr. Arthur reported to the administration building to discuss with me the events of July 24th. When asked, Mr. Arthur said he had no knowledge of the reason he was taken into custody. I instructed him to continue reporting to the Administration building until we had more information.
- July 27, 2021: Based on the lack of information, the District's Legal Counsel contacted Deputy Soule of the Pottawatomie County Sheriff's Office to inquire about the reasons for taking Mr. Arthur into custody. Deputy Soule refused to provide any information to District's Legal Counsel about possible allegations.
- July 29, 2021:
 - I reached out to Brad Clark, legal counsel for the State Department of Education, for assistance with trying to obtain information regarding any pending investigation by the Sheriff's Office.
 - Later that evening, I sent a summary communication without naming the employee to the Board of Education outlining the events to date.

- July 30, 2021: Mr. Arthur accompanied Athletic Director Todd Boyer at SHS to meet with a family regarding an athletic hardship
- August 2, 2021:
 - Deputy Soule provided the district's legal counsel with information that there were allegations Mr. Arthur had engaged in inappropriate conduct with a student within the last year. I then immediately suspended Mr. Arthur. The suspension was with pay as required by law.
 - The Board of Education was notified that an employee was suspended with pay.
- August 4, 2021: Deputy Soule served a search warrant on the District to obtain Mr. Arthur's personnel records, including any disciplinary records. The District complied with the search warrant.
- August 11, 2021:
 - I notified Mr. Arthur that the suspension would remain ongoing due to the continuing investigation by the Sheriff's Office.
 - An Affidavit of Probable Cause to issue an arrest warrant for Mr. Arthur was issued by the court. The District was neither notified of or provided with a copy of the Affidavit which identified the alleged victim's initials and details of the alleged conduct so the District could initiate its own investigation.
- August 16, 2021:
 - The District was made aware of and obtained a copy of the Affidavit filed on August 11th from the Pottawatomie County Court Clerk's office. With the information in the Affidavit, the District was finally able to identify the potential victim and initiate our own investigation.
 - I sent an email with information regarding the arrest and the list of pending charges concerning Mr. Arthur, including his certification number, to Brad Clark the legal counsel for the State Department of Education.
- Currently Mr. Arthur is on paid suspension, as required by law, pending the outcome of our internal investigation and/or the outcome of the legal case against him.

Mr. Arthur was hired in 2004 as a teacher and basketball coach. In 2015, he began serving as the Assistant Athletic Director as well as a basketball coach. In 2020, he resigned as the basketball coach and continued to serve as the Assistant Athletic Director.

SPS has cooperated fully with the Pottawatomie County Sheriff's Office throughout its investigation, when requested. Shawnee Public Schools will always investigate any issue reported. Unfortunately, some of the information shared publicly from Mr. Arthur's employment record by the sheriff's department was shared without contacting the district for assistance in understanding the content.

While the district cannot clear up the information taken out of context from Mr. Arthur's records as this would be a violation of employment law, the following process is used in any investigation the district completes on an employee:

1. Allegation made or complaint filed
2. Depending on the allegation or complaint, the Superintendent may suspend the employee with pay according to state law. This helps prevent any undue influence on the outcome of the internal investigation
3. Internal investigation is conducted by the district administration in cooperation with building or department administrators as directed by board policy

4. All or some of the following letters may be included in one incident in an employee file: Letter of Suspension, Letter of Expectations, Reprimand, and Admonishment and Plan of Improvement. If the employee satisfactorily complies with the Plan of Improvement, there may also be a letter regarding such compliance or noncompliance
5. If the investigation is inconclusive or not founded, standard practice includes reinstating the employee with a letter outlining expectations of job performance relative to the employee
6. Depending on the nature of the allegation and whether substantiated through an internal investigation, termination may be recommended
7. If the employee is recommended for termination, the employee will be provided due process as required by law

Shawnee Public Schools fully supports the legal due process afforded to anyone accused of inappropriate behavior with minors and the punishment enforced through the courts. We do not tolerate the behavior that is alleged and have acted swiftly to provide documents and full cooperation and will continue to do so throughout the investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "April Grace". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with a large loop at the end.

April Grace, Ed.D.
Superintendent