

District 35 says it finds no evidence to support sex abuse allegations against former teacher

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Glencoe School District 35 said Thursday it has found no evidence to either support or disprove allegations of sexual abuse leveled by a former student against a retired teacher, and is ending its investigation into the matter.

"Upon completion of a detailed and thorough review, we have found no institutional information or personal knowledge to support or deny these allegations. We have discovered no information to indicate that anything pertaining to the allegations was known to District 35," District 35 President Gary Ruben said in reading from a prepared statement at a school board meeting. "Likewise, we have found nothing to indicate that the alleged conduct occurred at our schools or while any student was in the care of the District."

Former District 35 student David Stroud claimed he was abused in the early 1970s by a teacher who retired more than 20 years ago; the district's statement said the alleged incidents took place in the student's home. That teacher has denied having abused Stroud or any other children.

Pioneer Press is not naming the former teacher, who has not been charged in the matter. On Friday, the former teacher, reached by phone, said he was pleased with the resolution of the district's investigation.

"That is what I would expect them to say," he said. "I did nothing and I didn't expect them to find anything."

The former teacher said he has a faulty memory but doesn't remember teaching David Stroud, though he reviewed class rosters and noticed that he taught Stroud's brothers. He also said he never hired a lawyer, but was questioned by a police officer about a year ago.

The teacher said it has been a "hellish time."

"I just want this to go away and leave me alone," he said. "I just don't know why (Stroud) would do something like this."

As part of its investigation, the district examined documents including the teacher's personnel file, school board meeting minutes and students records, and contacted former employees and board members who might have known about the teacher during his tenure at District 35, according to the statement.

The board "also made a decision to release the teacher's personnel file and related documents to any interested member of the public, with the hope such documents might be helpful," it added.

"This is a very difficult situation and the board is deeply concerned," it said. "We have worked diligently to respectfully and compassionately listen and respond to all who have contacted the District, directly or indirectly, with information or opinions to share."

Stroud, 55, who lives in Durango, Colo., said Friday that he "did not expect anything different" from the board.

"I'm disappointed, without a doubt," Stroud added.

Stroud said he will continue to pursue the matter and hopes others come forward.

"We are reaching out and waiting for someone to go to the Glencoe police, which is essential, because the school board is not doing anything," he said.

District 35 said earlier this year it had received two anonymous calls and some emails with similar claims against the teacher. It also said that previous allegations by Stroud had been reported to the Glencoe Public Safety Department, which includes police, in 2012 and 2014, but no charges were filed.

Glencoe Public Safety Director Cary Lewandowski said last month that no charges had been made against the former teacher following an investigation.

On Friday, he said he could not comment further about the matter because of a pending [Freedom of Information Act](#) request that involves non-releasable information.

However, Lewandowski added, "We also have concerns about this issue and continue to encourage people to contact us if they have any information."

The district's statement also encouraged anyone with information about the matter to contact Glencoe public safety officials, and said it would reconsider "as appropriate" its decision to end its investigation if new information surfaces.

Daniel I. Dorfman is a freelancer for Pioneer Press.

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