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SERVING SCHOOLS IN CLINTON, MARION & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

November 20, 2019

On behalf of Kaskaskia Special Education District #801, I would like to make the following responses to the article published yesterday, November 19, 2019.

First, I cannot comment on matters pertaining to individual students, and based on the reporting in the publication, any comments by KSED would be inappropriate as it may provide information that alone or in combination, is linked to a specific student that will likely allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to individually identify an individual student, in violation of State and Federal law.

The use of isolated time-out and restraint are behavior interventions that can be legal, safe, and appropriate, as specifically recognized by the Department of Education, the Illinois State Board of Education, and various court decisions on the matter. These interventions are necessary in order to meet our obligations to maintain safety of students and staff when there is a behavioral crisis. I can assure the general public that the staff at KSED, and in particular, the staff in our programs are dedicated individuals who devote their professional lives to serving the most extensive needs of the students entrusted to our care.

Whether it is from our school support staff to mental health professionals we employ, all work towards supporting the needs of the students placed with us. Our staff has and continues to go above and beyond to develop positive relationships with all of our students and to create a positive learning environment. These are positives that are not openly portrayed in social media, and are being actively overlooked in the current news cycle that is vilifying our staff unjustly.

KSED strongly believes in the guidance and principles articulated by the Federal Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education regulations, which make clear that restraint or seclusion should never be used except in situations where a child's behavior poses an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, and restraint and seclusion should be avoided to the greatest extent possible without endangering the safety of students and staff.



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While the recent publication has made arbitrary decisions about when restraint or timeout is used, KSED trains all staff who may be required to utilize restraint or isolated timeout in its safe and appropriate use and these measures are used as a means of keeping students safe when they are putting themselves or others at risk. Staff is to never use restraint and/or timeout as a form of discipline, but once again only in times of safety. KSED provides communication and documentation to parents in these situations consistent with the law, often the same day.

KSED remains dedicated to serving the needs of all children entrusted to our care.


Cassie Clark, Director