

United States Senate

August 1, 2023

Mr. Mike Burke
Superintendent
Palm Beach County School District
3300 Forest Hill Boulevard
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

Dear Superintendent Burke:

I write with grave alarm following recent reports of five administrators and educators within your school district who have been charged with felonies for failing to report an alleged sexual assault in 2021 of a 15-year-old student under their care. If the reports prove true, these individuals repeatedly failed the child for nearly two years as they did nothing to report the alleged sexual assault while the traumatized girl apparently engaged in known acts of self-harm.

What I find particularly alarming is that these five individuals, who now rightly face criminal prosecution for their misconduct, remain employed by the Palm Beach County School District. These five criminal defendants not only failed to fulfill one of the most fundamental duties of their jobs as educators and administrators, but they failed this child, a victim, as they shielded those accused of sexual assault from accountability. And as U.S. Senator, I am concerned that the alleged misconduct by these individuals could be a violation of federal education laws, such as Title IX.

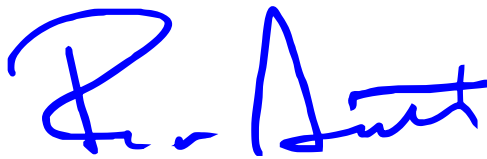
The most obvious question is: why should they be permitted to remain employed by your school district? Do you agree they should continue to be paid with taxpayer money after failing to fulfill the basic functions of their positions as caretakers for our children?

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While the criminal defendants await a felony trial to be decided by a jury of their peers, these individuals do not deserve to remain employed by the school district they so clearly failed by refusing to protect the child from being re-victimized by their negligent decisions not to report the claims they received two years ago. I would hope that the American Federation of Teachers would agree.

I urge you to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator

CC Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers