

# North Branch Area Schools

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James D. Fish  
Superintendent

January 30, 2023

Dear North Branch Area School District Parents and Community,

I am responding to multiple concerns raised on social media over the past two days regarding a disturbing YouTube video concerning a former employee and his alleged inappropriate contact with a minor in the State of Florida. On Saturday evening at 5:44 p.m., I received a text of the YouTube video for the first time. This was the first I had become aware of this video, or the allegations concerning this former employee. Due to the misinformation currently being shared on local social media, it has become clear that I need to share the facts as I know them:

- In June 2000, this former employee was hired by North Branch Area Schools as a high school counselor. He later moved to the classroom for instructional reasons. In June 2020, he retired and moved to Florida. He has had no contact with the district that I am aware of since his retirement in 2020;
- During this former employee's tenure at North Branch Area Schools, the district never received a complaint that he engaged in any inappropriate relations with any student;
- In review of his personnel file, he previously received two written reprimands. The first occurred in 2008 as disciplinary action for his insubordinate conduct and disregard for job duties in failing to follow a directive to conduct extracurricular activities outside of the school day relating to district Forensics and Model UN clubs. The second occurred in 2014 for inappropriate conduct and was a complaint filed by a student "for putting your hand on his head and giving it a gentle push". The former employee confirmed that he did indeed put his hand on the student's head in a way to get the student's attention. The former employee was informed during both reprimands that he had an opportunity to correct his improper conduct or he would face further disciplinary action up to and including possible termination. Neither reprimand concerned any allegations of any sexual conduct toward students.
- The district encourages anyone with any allegations of inappropriate conduct by this former employee while employed at North Branch Area Schools to immediately contact local law enforcement.

In closing, at no time did any individual contact me or to my knowledge any district administrators regarding inappropriate conduct by this former employee with the exception of the two reprimands listed in the third bullet above. North Branch Area Schools will always thoroughly investigate every report of misconduct brought to the district's attention.

Sincerely,



James D. Fish  
Superintendent