

I am writing this letter to you today as a concerned parent regarding the way that your staff has handled our request for a 504 plan for our son [REDACTED] [REDACTED] currently in Ms. Adamidis' Kindergarten class. Upon arriving at the school for a scheduled meeting today, my wife and I were extremely disappointed to find out that only one staff member was to be present at this meeting. Sra. Nunez informed us that [REDACTED] Kindergarten English teacher, Kristi Adamidis, would not be present due to medical

[REDACTED]

5/6/2014 Not yet. School wrote letter explaining they are in the process of preparing a response to Mr. [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [Carwell John](#)
Subject: Parents concerns requiring immediate attention
Date: Sunday, June 03, 2012 8:39:35 PM
Attachments: [Letter to Dept of Education.docx](#)

Greetings,

My name is [REDACTED] and I have attached a letter with concerns regarding very important encounters with my child at Aspira Academy. You may contact me at [REDACTED] with any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

To Whom It May Concern:

Aspira Academy in Newark. At the beginning of the school year I was so proud and very enthusiastic about the new school. I understand that Aspira is a new school and with the new comes many adjustments. My children have adjusted well considering they encountered some negative situations. They made honor roll during the 1st marking period and have faced some challenges which has set them back a little. They have picked up some negative behavior but with some redirecting they are back on track.

At this point I am really dissatisfied with the way many issues involving my family have been handled. My disappointment starts with the beginning of the school year as noted below:

- My son [REDACTED] felt disrespected by his teacher Ms Laffredo. His teacher's sarcastic remarks and the way she approached him really upset him. I told my son to sit with his teacher one on one and see if he can discuss his concerns with her. After unsuccessful attempts, I called Ms. Laffredo regarding my concerns and she never returned my calls. I spoke with Ms. Rodriguez the school counselor to express my concerns about the inappropriate comments directed at my son and she assured me she would look into it. My opinion is that the issues had no merit for the ASPIRA staff.
- My son arrived home very upset after receiving a demerit regarding a conversation with a female student regarding "likes vs. dislikes". I spoke with Ms. Laffredo regarding the issue and she stated that [REDACTED] is a bully and he needs to respect others. The conversation between [REDACTED] and the other child was childish but the teacher found it to be of no significance because of the way the other child reacted.
- [REDACTED] was approached by a female student on the bus asking him if he wanted to see her private. My child made comments towards her derogative statement and as a result a phone call was made to my home followed by a demerit. There was another incident where both my son and another female were involved and profanity was used, I received a phone call and then a demerit. My son went to Ms. Rodriguez and Mrs. Lopez Waite to address his concerns regarding the bus. My son video tape the incident, but the staff disregarded it by telling him that he can not use the video.
- Later in the month another incident occurred in the boy's bathroom where graffiti was written on the walls. I called to address the situation since my child was apparently being threatened by staff that he could be arrested. Ms. Rodriguez told me my child had nothing to do with it. Even after Ms. Rodriguez confirmed to me that my child was not involved, the staff continued to harass my son by saying to him that they are investigating and that he can be arrested.
- Another incident was when my son [REDACTED] defended his brother [REDACTED] after being threatened by a male student on the bus. The other child was arrested. The next day I went to the school and spoke to the transportation manager. He informed me that the officer that was on duty during the time of the incident gave the same facts as I did. However my child was suspended for one week for offensive touching, and I kept him home since I was unable to provide transportation to and from school. My son completed all the work he was provided and was issued three demerits during the time he was suspended. After a conversation with Margie Lopez Waite my child signed a contract stating that he can return to school after one week of suspension followed by a Parent and Administrator conference. The conference never occurred; my child was out of school for three weeks. My son was emotionally overwhelmed by what had transpired. During this time I tried to enroll him in another school to avoid further distress. Both his father and I along with his grandmother were all in agreement to transfer him to another school. But I found out that I had to complete the contract with ASPIRA.
- At the beginning of April 2012, I was at BJ's loading groceries into my vehicle when I noticed that my children's school bus had stopped. Even though my children's bus stop is on South Lincoln Street, [REDACTED] the student bus helper, upon seeing me told my kids to get out assuming it was OK because I was there. She was also pushing a male child to a gentleman who repeatedly stated he was not taking the child. On the same day my children informed me that they were told to get off the bus to use the bathroom at the YWCA on Kirkwood Hwy. Apparently all of the children were taken off the bus to use the bathroom. I called the school to complain and have yet to receive a phone

call about these two incidents. However, had my children gotten off the bus and the bus driver would have left them, they more than likely would have gotten suspended or received a demerit for not being in compliance with the bus rules.

- In mid April my son [REDACTED] came home very upset because his classmate during group time placed his head on his lap and whispered to him in a vulgar way that his “private” smelled good and asked if he would like to play boyfriend and girlfriend. My son asked with whom and the child stated with him. My son said “no...yuck”. The other children have also stated that he likes my son. My son went and told Ms. Rodriguez and I called and left a message. Since I did not receive a call by the end of day, I called again and Ms. Rodriguez answered. I addressed my concern and stated that I know that they probably see me as a trouble parent but that I am very concerned with what is going on. Ms. Rodriguez stated that she has two witnesses and that my child misunderstood what was said. She said that the child being accused is very affectionate and that he comes from a loving family. I stated that in my household we too are affectionate, and that I also love my children...but we do set boundaries. And that my son should not feel uncomfortable and have to deal with another child making those comments or touching him. Rodriguez stated that she agrees but that the other child was crying when he was approached. My response to her was that my child was also crying when he was informing me of incident, and crying does not mean he did not say or do it. The other child now addresses my son by saying “Hi honey”. I find this to be a very inappropriate comment considering what transpired between them. This can be hard on a child when he is not use to hearing these things from anyone and especially from the same sex. I am trying to help my son deal with this situation by simply ignoring it.
- Another concern of mine is that I believe there was a breach of confidentiality. [REDACTED] a 4th grader informed my son that he was not accepted at ASPIRA for the upcoming school year. How can another student have this type of information? I since found out that this same child has stated that she is related to Ms. Rodriguez. My son said that things that he has shared with his school counselor have been shared with [REDACTED] and that she apparently has thrown this in his face in front of other students, the classroom, the bus and the playground. Also professional staff should not be telling bus monitors that bus # [REDACTED] is a problem because it is the bus where all the city kids come from. Not all city kids are troubled just as not all kids from the suburbs are trouble free.

Overall my children’s well being, education, emotional stability and safety are of much importance. My priority is my children; and as their parent I feel that the staff at ASPIRA has not addressed my concerns in a professional manner. During my child’s suspension the staff never followed up to schedule an appointment for [REDACTED] to return to school or even to see why he had not returned to school. To this day they have not called to say whether my child is doing good or bad. They never sat down with me to discuss problems and solutions, and I feel as though my child has been characterized as a troubled child. In my eyes he has been treated unfairly. During my sons suspension I called to speak with Ms Lopez Waite to again express my concerns about my son’s teacher and she simply stated that time has passed and Ms. Laffredo is no longer there. I am of the opinion that as long as my child is in the care of the ASPIRA staff I should be able to address any concerns regardless of the time, because they were never really solved. I am always being told I will look into it and call you back, but no one follows up. It is unfortunate to feel as if no one is really caring about my child’s well being. The mentioned situations have been an emotional roller coaster for me and my children. I am at this point considering counseling for my child to help him with the damage done to him at school. School staff should be observing visible changes in a child’s behavior and not assume that things are happening at home. On May 17, 2012 my son’s father, grandmother and I went to the school to discuss the ongoing situations. We met with Cathy Rodriguez and George Penzekee. After our meeting they were due to investigate and call me on Monday, the 21st of May. Ms. Rodriguez called me back and stated that an investigation was done and a lot more issues were discovered, and is waiting for Ms. Lopez Waite to get back with her to take disciplinary actions.

In conclusion, with just a few weeks left of school it would be good to know that all of these issues could finally be addressed. It would be nice to think that all of this could be a learning process for the ASPIRA staff to learn how to approach and deal with such matters. But as of May 24th...my son continues to be sexually harassed and was smacked at school by two females. I will be taking the legal approach from now on. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns.