

April 21, 2015

Dear South Gibson School Board,

We, the teachers and staff of Owensville Community School, have submitted this letter in order to show our full and unwavering support for our Principal, Mr. Mike Woods and our Superintendent, Dr. Stacey Humbaugh. As teachers and staff at Owensville Community School, we also want to assure the media in attendance that our integrity remains steadfast and true.

Recently, at Owensville Community School, an unfortunate incident occurred between a few of our middle school students. Granted, those particular students made some bad decisions at that very moment. However, none of those particular students are habitual "trouble-makers." Actually, all of the students who were involved in the incident are good kids, but they made a sporadic, bad decision. (Everyone has done that at one time, or another) The incident has been called "bullying" by Tony and Karen Bullock and the media several times. The definition of "bullying" by the Indiana Department of Education is defined as... overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures including verbal or written communications, a physical act committed, aggression or behaviors that are repeated... **The behavior has to be repeated, or has been repeated over time....** This recent incident does **not** meet the requirements for bullying in any way. We teachers, who work with these particular students every day, have **never** (over the past three years) heard from any parents concerning the alleged bullying. There was no bullying report filed from the school website. That form is readily available to everyone on the school's website.

Nevertheless, we feel that our Principal, OCS Staff, our Superintendent, and the entire South Gibson School Corporation has been misrepresented by the media, social media, and those making accusations and assumptions concerning this incident. We, at Owensville Community School, have been portrayed as a totally uncaring, negative, and unknowledgeable group of nonprofessionals.

In truth, the staff, at Owensville Community School, is exactly the opposite of that portrayal. We are a small, caring staff, who know the students in our classroom fairly well. Quite often, our students share their life's joys and sorrows with us. They tell us when there is a new baby in their family or when their grandma has passed away. Students tell us when their dog has died. The students tell us about their birthday parties and the fun things they do on snow days. The point is, the teachers and staff care about our students at Owensville Community School. They come to us when there is a problem or concern. When it comes down to it, our students **trust us**. Often, the students ask to talk directly to Mr. Woods, because they view **their** principal as trustworthy and fair. Mr. Woods is always quick to investigate a situation and resolve it in a fair and just manner.

At Owensville Community School, we have several programs in place which address the issue of bullying. Those programs include, but are not limited to Bully Blocker and Positive Peers. We have had at least three special presentations come in to the school this year alone. Our students know how to report bullying. None of the students involved in the recent incident had reported or complained of being bullied immediately prior to this incident. Additionally, teachers or staff had not witnessed any type of bullying that involved these particular students.

In conclusion, we realize that The South Gibson School Corporation Board of Directors know what a great school we have, because they are closely involved in our operations. The South Gibson School Board is also quite aware of the great and effective leadership we have in our Principal, Mr. Mike Woods and our Superintendent, Dr. Stacey Humbaugh. For the record, Owensville Community School is an excellent, high-achieving school. We have great students, who always strive to do their best. OCS is very fortunate to have supportive parents, families, and community members who **far** outnumber those that are **not** supportive. Those supportive parents are extremely proud of their children's achievements. Finally, the entire staff at Owensville Community School are professionals, who care deeply concerning the welfare of our students. **Anyone** who says otherwise is simply wrong, and they absolutely are **not** authorized to represent or speak for others in the Owensville School community. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

With Kind Regards,

Gail Dailey

Becky Merrill

Kasey Kutzler

Annamarie Henning

Joim Aust

Karin Hurt

~~ANNY. WONG~~

Christal Viehe

Beeli Pesser

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Sarah Spindler

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