



# CONFIDENTIAL

**TO:** O'DELL HENDERSON, DIRECTOR  
LABOR MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

**FROM:** KRISHA BYRON, COMPLIANCE INVESTIGATOR *KB*  
COMPLIANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

**SUBJECT:** DUAN WRIGHT, PRINCIPAL, [REDACTED] STUDENT  
HARTSTERN ELEMENTARY

**DATE:** APRIL 2, 2018

**Allegation:** On March 15, 2018, the office of Compliance and Investigations received a request for an investigation from Child Protective Services (CPS). According to the request, on March 12, 2018, RS (reporting source) is concerned with the actions of the principal at Hartstern Elementary School, Duan Wright. On Monday, [REDACTED] reported to a teacher that he had been called to Mr. Wright's office. While in the office, Mr. Wright hit [REDACTED]. RS does not know what "hit" specifically means or where [REDACTED] was struck. [REDACTED] reports Mr. Wright then grabbed him by the collar and dragged him back to class. RS reports seeing Mr. Wright drag students by their collar on multiple occasions. Teachers have been told not to report these kinds of things so they are afraid to call. Mr. Wright will keep students in his office for hours at a time. He will make them hunch down in the floor and hold something over their head as if they are in a storm drill position. Teachers will ask about the student and Mr. Wright will say that they are practicing for a drill, and ignore them. Mr. Wright uses this as punishment. Mr. Wright will call students out of class and yell at them "you are going to straighten up." When teachers bring up concerns with Mr. Wright's actions, he says they can "always request a transfer."

**Findings:** On March 28, 2018, this investigator arrived at Hartstern Elementary School to speak with all parties involved in the investigation as well as any witnesses. This investigator first spoke with student, [REDACTED]. Present for this interview was Jessica McQueary, Child Protective Services (CPS) representative and the parents of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] reported that he never told a teacher that happened. [REDACTED] reported

that Mr. Wright did not grab him by his shirt collar and drag him down the hallway.

██████████ appeared nervous throughout the interview, despite his parents attempting to comfort him. ██████████ reported that Mr. Wright did "yell at him" last year when he was in Kindergarten because he confused him with "another ██████████ continued to deny all allegations. ██████████ reported that Mr. Wright has spoken with him before but denied that Mr. Wright yelled at him.

The investigator next spoke with ██████████ and ██████████ after ██████████ was sent back to class. ██████████ reported that she has heard Mr. Wright yell and raise his voice at students in the building when she has been present at Hartstern Elementary School. ██████████ reported that she does not know why her son was apprehensive about talking about the allegations and she was concerned something had happened.

██████████ reported that she was very upset that no one from Hartstern Elementary School called and informed her of the allegations ██████████ had made. ██████████ reported that even after calling and requesting information on this situation, she was only told to come to the scheduled interview and no further information was given to her. ██████████ reported that she has four other children in the building and has always liked Hartstern Elementary School prior to these allegations.

This investigator, along with Jessie McQueary (CPS), next placed a phone call to former Hartstern Elementary School teacher, Tammy Crowder. Ms. Crowder reported that she was no longer a teacher at Hartstern Elementary School but was still teaching in Jefferson County Public Schools district (JCPS). Ms. Crowder reported that she is still in contact with some of the teachers at Hartstern Elementary School and received a text stating, "Mr. Wright is still abusing these kids." Ms. Crowder reported that the teachers are scared and fear that they will lose their job for reporting.

Ms. Crowder reported that based off the text she received, she spoke with Kristen Bell, who is currently ██████████ teacher. Ms. Crowder reported that Ms. Bell told her that ██████████ had reported that Mr. Wright grabbed him by the collar and dragged him back to class. Ms. Crowder reported that she has seen Mr. Wright do this to numerous students before. Ms. Crowder reported that Mr. Wright always yells at students and "gets in their faces."

Ms. Crowder reported that all the teachers at Hartstern Elementary School are scared to have their names involved and that is why she reported the allegations. Ms. Crowder reported that Mr. Wright has instructed his staff to only report allegations after going through him first.

This investigator next spoke with Kristen Bell. Ms. Bell reported that about two weeks ago, at the end of the day, [REDACTED] was in the classroom waiting for the second bus run. Ms. Bell reported that [REDACTED] told her that Mr. Wright gets in other students' faces and had just pulled his shirt. Ms. Bell reported that [REDACTED] had not seen Mr. Wright that day.

Ms. Bell reported that [REDACTED] has made up some stories in the past and he has also stolen from her. Ms. Bell reported that she told Mr. Wright what [REDACTED] had alleged. Ms. Bell reported that she has never seen Mr. Wright grab any of the students by their clothing. Ms. Bell reported that Mr. Wright has raised his voice before while speaking with a student, "but nothing aggressive."

Ms. Bell reported that a few days later, she and [REDACTED] met with Mr. Wright. Ms. Bell reported that Mr. Wright asked [REDACTED] to tell him when he put his hands on him, and [REDACTED] reported "last year." Ms. Bell reported that [REDACTED] never told her he was talking about an incident from last year as she believed the child to be talking about the present time.

Ms. Bell reported that [REDACTED] then stated that Mr. Wright had confused him with another [REDACTED] in his class and it was "cleared up" with no problems. Ms. Bell reported that she has no concerns with Mr. Wright. Ms. Bell denied that she is scared to report concerns due to fear of Mr. Wright retaliating.

This investigator next spoke with principal, Duan Wright. Warren Shelton, Jefferson County Association of School Administrators (JCASA) was also present. Mr. Wright reported that he feels that this has reached a level of harassment. Mr. Wright reported that he is well aware of who made these allegations. Mr. Wright reported that Ms. Crowder is out to "get him" and has made other allegations this 2017-2018 school year. Mr. Wright reported that Ms. Crowder has made her attacks on him "very open." Mr. Wright reported that this has impeded him from being able to fully do his job.

Mr. Wright reported that Ms. Bell came to him and made him aware of the allegations made by [REDACTED]. Mr. Wright reported that these allegations are completely false. Mr. Wright reported that the only prior contact he had with [REDACTED] was when [REDACTED] had been acting up and he had called him down to the office. Mr. Wright reported that when [REDACTED] did not report to the office, he began to walk down to the classroom but noticed [REDACTED] was sitting on the bench outside the door.

Mr. Wright reported that [REDACTED] was upset and he asked him what was wrong. Mr. Wright reported that [REDACTED] told him that he was scared that he was going to yell at him. Mr. Wright reported that he talked to [REDACTED] about his behavior; kicking people in the lunchroom, and informed him that he was going to be calling his mother. Mr. Wright reported that he did call home and talked to Ms.

Garlinger about the behaviors. Mr. Wright reported that there was no other incident that took place, everything was fine.

Mr. Wright reported that once Ms. Bell told him what ██████ said, they all had a meeting together with ██████. Mr. Wright reported that he asked ██████ when this allegedly happened and ██████ reported, "last year." Mr. Wright reported that ██████ told him that he had confused him with a different ██████ last school year, who was in trouble. Mr. Wright reported that he vaguely remembers that situation but nothing came out of it. Mr. Wright reported that he has never grabbed a student by the collar of their shirt or dragged a student down a hall.

Mr. Wright reported that he has never instructed his staff to only make reports to him. Mr. Wright reported that his staff has been instructed to make any report that they feel is necessary but can come to him with any issues or questions.

**Conclusion:**

This investigator finds the following allegations unsubstantiated:

- Duan Wright hit ██████ then grabbed him by the collar and dragged him back to class.
- Mr. Wright has dragged children by their collar on multiple occasions.
- Teachers have been told not to report these kinds of things so they are afraid to call.
- Mr. Wright will keep students in his office for hours at a time. He will make them hunch down in the floor and hold something over their head like they are in a storm drill position.
- Teachers will ask about the student and Mr. Wright will say that they are practicing for a drill, ignore them. Mr. Wright uses this as punishment. Mr. Wright will call students out of class and yell at them "you are going to straighten up."
- When teachers bring up concerns with Mr. Wright's actions, he says they can always "request a transfer."

This finding is based on the interviews conducted and the statements obtained.

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