

## BoEE launches probe of Linn-Mar complaints

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 14 March 2016 19:52 -

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The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has decided to investigate a series of complaints that five Linn-Mar families have filed against the Linn-Mar football program, coaches and administrators.

The families received confirmation letters from the BoEE on Monday.

The families have filed complaints against assistant football coach Matt Casebolt, head football coach Bob Forsyth, athletic director Scott Mahmens and principal Jeff Gustason.

The five families who have filed the official complaints with the BoEE are the Jordan family, the Henrichs family, the Jones family, the Martenson family and the Rstom family. Their allegations include verbal abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse and emotional abuse, including allegations of taunting, bullying, harassment and physical injury. They also claim that Linn-Mar administrators failed to stop the abuse and did not investigate their claims in a proper manner.

Linn-Mar administrators conducted an in-house investigation and dismissed all of the allegations, citing insufficient evidence. The Linn-Mar Board of Education has issued a blanket endorsement of the Linn-Mar administration and their investigation.

The Linn-Mar families took their complaints to the BoEE several weeks ago. The BoEE has reviewed the complaints and decided to launch its own investigation, which could result in charges being brought against Casebolt, Forsyth, Mahmens and Gustason for ethical violations of state rules.

Case numbers have been assigned to the complaints. Bob Jordan, one of the Linn-Mar parents who has filed a complaint against Casebolt, received one of the letters from the BoEE on Monday.

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The letter reads in part:

"This letter is in regard to the complaint you filed with the Board of Educational Examiners against Matthew Casebolt. This complaint has been assigned case number 16-46.

"The Legislature enacted legislation giving additional guidance to the Board of Educational Examiners in dealing with matters of professional practice. The Board is guided in its work with all complaints by virtue of this code language.

"This legislation requires that the jurisdictional requirements as set by Board in administrative rule be met on the face of the complaint before initiating an investigation of allegations. It appears from the preliminary analysis of this complaint that this statutory requirement has been met.

"All complaints meeting jurisdictional requirements are analyzed and a decision is reached by the Board as to whether a hearing is indicated. In order to determine if probable cause exists, an investigation of the allegations in this complaint will take place."

The letter was signed by Darcy Hathaway, an investigator with the BoEE.

Mark Henrichs has filed complaints with the BoEE against Casebolt, Forsyth, Mahmens and Gustason. Henrichs received a letter from the BoEE on Monday, confirming that his complaints against all four individuals will be investigated.

"It looks like a fair process and they're doing what needs to be done," said Henrichs. "We'll see how it turns out."