

L-M board supports administration

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Linn-Mar Board of Education fully supports Linn-Mar administrators in the way they've handled complaints from unhappy Linn-Mar football families and does not plan to take any action in the matter.

"We fully support the administration's investigation," Tim Isenberg, the board president, told the Metro Sports Report Friday morning. "Do we trust the administration? Yes. Did they do the right job? Yes."

The Linn-Mar families, who call themselves the Concerned Parent Group, have filed serious allegations against assistant football coach Matt Casebolt in terms of verbal, mental, emotional and physical abuse. They have accused Casebolt of taunting, harassment and bullying and also have accused him of physically harming a player by shoving a 45-pound weight into his face.

The parents also have complained about head football coach Bob Forsyth, athletic director Scott Mahmens and principal Jeff Gustason, complaining they have allowed the abuse to occur and continue.

Linn-Mar administrators conducted an in-house investigation and dismissed all complaints due to "insufficient evidence," according to letters Gustason sent to the parents.

The families aired their grievances at the Board of Education meeting Monday night, but Isenberg said Friday the board will take no action and will not investigate on its own.

"They did a thorough investigation," he said. "At this time, we don't disagree. If something else comes up, we'll take a look at it differently."

The six other Board of Education members are Tina Patterson, Rene Gadelha, Todd

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Hutcheson, George Abouassaly, Sondra Nelson and Clark Weaver. They are elected public officials, but they all declined comment and directed all questions to Isenberg.

"We really trust the administration in doing a thorough and accurate job," said Isenberg. "The board takes any student safety issue very seriously. Their well-being is paramount to us."

The Linn-Mar families have filed formal complaints with the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners against Casebolt, Forsyth, Mahmens and Gustason. The families are waiting for a response from the BOEE.

The BOEE investigated complaints against former Cedar Rapids Washington football coach Tony Lombardi a few years ago and stripped Lombardi of his coaching license for a year.