

Roxanne Maher

From: William Jamieson Jr <williamjamiesonjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 1:42 PM
To: Jay Hartling; Fred Allyn, III; Town Council Group; My Beautiful Wife; Alyssa.Taglia@wtnh.com; Heidi.Voight@nbcuni.com; Mark Westkott; Caitlin McCarthy
Subject: Bullying in Ledyard School
Attachments: 20250120_193511.jpg; 20250120_193725.jpg

Good Morning All,

Sorry to send this to all, but as individuals involved in our town in various positions, I feel it is warranted considering the level of concern and residents effected.

We have had ongoing issues with our childs school, particularly JWL, that we have tried to resolve through the proper channels over the last several months and frankly years to no avail. And we have had multiple conversations with many citizens in our town with similar experiences, some that have come forward, some that have not as of yet. And I think it's time we put it out there for everyone to address before we have a situation with a bullied child hurting themselves or worse that could have been prevented occur.

Bullying is a leading cause of child suicide and depression in our country, and I believe in my heart that Noone wants to lose a child to such a preventable cause because of an adults failure to take steps necessary to prevent it.

For some reason, the staff at JWL continually turns over. There is barely any faculty in the building with tenure, and I believe this is a reflection of a bigger issue. There is not the appropriate staff with the proper special education certifications to ensure students receive the services they are legally due and required. Children consistently experience bullying, lack of intervention by adults in those tough situations, and failed attempts of intervention and appropriate handling of the situations that occur in the school environment. Parents trust the district with their children's education and more importantly safety, and the school is and has for years been falling short under the direction of Principal Mark Westkott and Superintendent Jay Hartling. When children are begging and crying to not go to school for fear of being excluded, bullied, and embarrassed, there is clearly an issue that requires prompt addressing.

As I read through the Ledyard School Climate Plan, (https://gfsjwl.ledyard.net/school_climate_plan), I become frustrated that those responsible know what is needed yet do not implement these bullet points to make it a reality for our children. I see bulletin boards and plenty of words that would seem they want to foster that type of environment, but little to no effort to make that happen at JWL in particular.

Our child has an IEP, which the school has failed to follow since the end of last school year. Staff quit that were named in her IEP and we were not notified. She does not receive the services outlined in her IEP, and the staff is not in place to assure she does. Her daily reflection sheets continually come home incomplete and partially filled out by the wrong people, and she continues to be made fun of and excluded by classmates for being different.

In one of the attachments, it is called out by the school themselves that a teacher was wearing inappropriate footwear which inconvenienced them to provide necessary intervention to a student. It also points out how my child fell, was injured and laughed at by classmates, and then was "written up" for being embarrassed as a result of this unacceptable occurrence.

I have countless emails and correspondence with school staff and administration that documents our attempts over the years to have this addressed and rectified, and yet here we are. It seems some significant change is needed, and sometimes that change needs to start from the top down to change the current situation.

While I am requesting and will except nothing less than an immediate transfer for my children, this will keep them safe but not the rest of the students who suffer this environment on a consistent basis. I am requesting a full review of administration, policies, faculty and staff that allow this type of behavior and environment to continue over the years. It is common knowledge to many in our community, and it is time to address it and make a change.

As of the writing of this email, I have failed to receive the promised phone call from Superintendent Hartling to address my concerns, although he is already aware of these situations from past encounters and already failed to remedy them so I am not confident the result will be different this time.

As elected/appointed an otherwise employed or volunteers of our community, I ask for your support in protecting our communities children and future by addressing this ongoing situation and take the necessary steps to provide a more nurturing, welcoming and safe learning environment for our children.