



Parish of Natchitoches

OCS Head Start

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Dr. April Wade, Head Start Director



April 17, 2017

Dear Governing Board:

I am writing to report an incident that occurred on Tuesday, April 11 at the Head Start MLK site. Michelle Helmke, Head Start's Program Specialist, scheduled her yearly visit and requested meeting with Mr. Nowlin, the governing board, and Policy Council members.

At the climax of the meeting, a disturbing altercation involving Sheryl Frederick and a Policy Council member occurred. Miss Frederick publically displayed the following actions:

- She displayed her anger toward the Policy Council member with verbal threats in a disturbingly loud manner.
- She raised her fist into the member's face, invaded her personal space, and threatened bodily harm.
- She used profanity while addressing the Policy Council member.
- Parish employees helped to physically restrain her to prevent a physical attack.

During the meeting, Ms. Frederick put her head on the shoulder of another individual and closed her eyes, a nonverbal gesture of boredom and disrespect while Mrs. Helmke addressed the group. The behavior displayed by Ms. Frederick was unprofessional and unacceptable in any meeting, specifically, during the visitation of Head Start's program specialist, a key person required in the functioning of Head Start. The incident could have threatened the program and resulted in further actions of the federal government. Moreover, children and additional parents may have been traveling through the building and exposed to the physical threats and profanity. Meetings that involve all vested stakeholders are platforms that generate efforts to build mutual relationships in which the mission of Head Start remains the focus.

The behavior was inappropriate, and the issue should be addressed immediately. I would like a written response within 2 weeks informing me on how you resolved this situation.

Thank you,

Dr. April Wade