

Appendix 4



Amy Ray, Fire Marshall
1001 E. 9th Street, Bldg. D,
2nd Floor,
Reno, NV 89512

December 11, 2012

RE: State and federal fire code violations

Dear Ms. Ray,

I am working on a subcommittee that is investigating the presence and use of seclusion rooms in the Washoe County School District. Seclusion of children with disabilities is prohibited by state law (NRS 388.5265). We have been investigating this issue since March of 2012. We have met with the school planning department and the head of special education to talk about the rooms. We realized during this meeting that the district is not aware of the existence and location of some of the rooms that have been reported to us. Although the district has removed doors from the rooms they know about, it was explained to us that at times schools have built these rooms without going through the planning department. Planning raised concerns about whether the unauthorized rooms have proper air exchange, and further shared that they have found children being placed in such rooms, and advised administrators to stop using them. It has come to our attention that there are at least two seclusion rooms in two different schools that the district is unaware of. There was little interest or feedback from the special education administrator about these rooms.

In our committee meeting today, we became concerned that the unauthorized rooms may still have doors on them, and could be being used. Because the doors may lock or may be barred with other mechanisms preventing student's release from the rooms, we are concerned about fire code violations. We reviewed a document where in the Texas state Fire Marshal testified to the Texas legislature that locked seclusion would be a violation of state and federal fire codes.

We would like to report our concerns to you so that you may conduct inspections of the two rooms we know are not on the district's master list.

One room is located at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School in the B hall in a classroom on the left side of the hallway. The parent reports that it may be room B6 or B7, but she cannot be certain. Attached are pictures of the room. Although staff claim the room is used to store a TV, we have documentation and student report that the room has been used for seclusion.

The second room is at Bud Beasley elementary school. It will be located in a special education classroom, but we are unaware of the location exactly only that it has been used on students with disabilities.

Our concern is that the doors have not been removed from these rooms, and they may still be in use. We would appreciate anything you could do to inspect and report back to our committee via letter, and/or provide us with a letter stating that use of the rooms to prevent children from leaving the area would be a violation of fire codes.

We are going to ask the school district to remove the rooms, because there use is illegal. Although they have taken the doors off, there is a very simple process for schools to use to have doors put back on the rooms. We would like to put your information in our report to the School Board of Trustees when we are done investigating.

Sincerely,


Chris Ripke

PF Subcommittee Secretary

355 Kirman Ave. Apt 212

Reno NV 89502-1763

David Cochran, Fire Marshall
Reno City Hall
1 E. First Street
Fourth Floor
Reno, NV 89501

March 12, 2013

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I am working on a subcommittee this is investigating the presence and use of seclusion rooms in the Washoe County School District. Seclusions of children with disabilities are prohibited by state law (NRS 388.5265). We have been investigating this problem since March 2012. We have met with the School planning department and the head of Special education to talk about the rooms. We realize during this meeting that the School district is not aware of the existence and location of some of the rooms that have been reported to us. Although the District has removed doors from the rooms they know about, it was explained to us that at times schools have built these rooms without going through the planning department. Planning raised concerns about weather unauthorized rooms have proper air exchange, and further shared that they have found children being placed in such rooms, and advised administrators to stop using them. It has come to our attention that there are at least two seclusion rooms in two different schools that the district is unaware of. There was little interest or feedback from the special education administrator about these rooms.

In our committee, we became concerned that the unauthorized rooms may still have doors on them, and still could be being used. Because they may lock or may be barred with other mechanisms preventing student's release from the rooms, we are concerned about the fire code violations. We reviewed a document where in the state of Texas a fire Marshall testified to a Texas Legislature that a locked seclusion would be a violation of state and Federal Fire codes

We would like to report our concerns to you so that you may conduct inspections of the two rooms we know are not on the Districts master list.

One room is located at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School in the B Hall in a Classroom on the left side of the hallway. The parents report it may be in B6 or B7, but she cannot be certain. Attached are pictures of the room. Although staff claims the room is used to store a TV, we have documentation and student report that the room has been used for seclusion.

The Second room is at Bud Beasley Elementary School. It will be location in a Special Education Classroom, but we are unaware of its location. Only that it has been used on people with disabilities.

Our concern is that the doors have not been removed from these rooms, and they may still be in use. We would appreciate anything you could do to inspect and report back our committee via letter, and/or provide us with a letter stating that that use of these rooms to prevent children from leaving the area would be a violation of fire codes. We are going to ask the School District to remove the rooms, because their use is illegal. Although they have taken the doors off, there is a very simple process for schools to use to have the doors put back on the rooms. We would like to put your information in the report to the School Board of Trustees when we are done investigating.

Sincerely,

Christopher Ripke
People First President
355 Kirman Ave Ste 212
Reno, NV 89502-1763

From: Tray Palmer <palmert@reno.gov>
To: helpfulboy4u@yahoo.com; David Cochran <cochrand@reno.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2013 10:22 AM
Subject: Complaint regarding Caughlin Ranch Elementary School

Dear Mr. Ripke;

On Tuesday, March 12, 2013, the Reno Fire Department received a complaint from you in regards to children being placed in a seclusion room at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School, specifically in room B-6 or B-7.

Wednesday morning, March 13, 2013, I inspected Caughlin Ranch Elementary School. I made contact with the principle and toured the facility. Room B-6 did not have any closet or spare rooms of any kind. B-7 did not exist. I did find a small storage closet in A-7, but it had no door and was strictly being used for the storage of educational supplies. The principle and staff that was interviewed did not have any knowledge of any areas or rooms being used for seclusion purposes.

We have closed this complaint as unfounded.

The complaint for Bud Beasley Elementary School has been forwarded to Sparks Fire Department, who is the authority having jurisdiction.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Thank you.

Tray Palmer, Captain
Fire Prevention Bureau
Reno Fire Department
775-334-2377