

# Appendix 5

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

Dear Mr. Cochran,

May 09, 2013

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 the B hall, 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.

We have also talked to a permit place downtown at the city of Reno and they said that one of the seclusion rooms at Bud Beasley Elementary was built without a proper use permit.

Sincerely,

Christopher Ripke  
People First President  
800 Nichols Blvd Apt 227

Sparks, NV 89434

**From:** Tray Palmer <palmert@reno.gov>;  
**To:** chris ripke <helpfulboy4u@yahoo.com>;  
**Cc:** David Cochran <cochrand@reno.gov>; Alex Woodley <woodleya@reno.gov>; Joe Henry <henryj@reno.gov>; Matthew Harney <harneym@reno.gov>;  
**Subject:** Complaint at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School  
**Sent:** Wed, May 29, 2013 9:17:31 PM

Dear Mr. Ripke;

Per your complaint submitted Tuesday, May 28th, 2013, an Inspection was made at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School regarding a "scream isolation room" in B-5.

The finding of the above complaint is unfounded. B-5 is an operating classroom with no closet or "isolation" room to lock. Furthermore, a secondary inspection was performed on the entire school and no such room was found.

This is the second unfounded complaint we have had regarding an isolation room at Caughlin Ranch Elementary School by your organization. Please be advised that this complaint is closed with no violations found.

If you have any further complaints or concerns with any other properties located within the City of Reno, please call Reno Direct at 334-INFO (334-4636).

Thank You.

Sincerely,

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

[Reno.gov/engage](http://Reno.gov/engage)



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