

INVESTIGATION

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teachers with calling parents, rather than doing it herself.

Some staff members stopped sending students to the office all-together, except in the most extreme situations, due to her disciplinary style.

A small number of staff members shared that Swanson prioritized de-escalation and relationship-based strategies, though those members also shared that the overall staff perception was that “discipline responses were inconsistent, parent contact was not dependable and outcomes were not predictable for repeat behaviors.”

Staff Meetings and Evaluations

It was also alleged that sometimes staff meetings would go beyond 4 p.m., the contractual end of the workday.

Teachers expressed frustration about the short-notice scheduling of meetings or the rescheduling of meetings.

In response, Swanson acknowledged that some meetings would go beyond 4 p.m. and said that she allowed early departure the following day to provide flexibility. The authority of a principal to modify contracted work hours was questioned by staff.

Concerns about staff evaluations and walk-through supervision were raised in the report.

Several shared that the expectations for certified staff, especially teachers

within their first three-years of teaching, is to receive multiple classroom walkthroughs per semester and that the evaluations be completed along with meaningful observation and discussion.

Staff members stated they only received one or two walkthroughs per semester, as opposed to the number they expected.

One teacher shared their experience with an evaluation that occurred in December 2025.

They reported that after they received an evaluation from the high school principal, they realized they had not received an evaluation from Swanson. The following evening the teacher received a text message from Swanson stating that the evaluation was complete and they should come in before school the next morning to review it.

They reported confusion while reviewing the evaluation because the ratings contrasted with the verbal feedback they received during the meeting. Verbally, Swanson spoke to the teacher’s strengths and included positive statements, while the written document contained multiple “2” ratings.

Furthermore, the teacher reported that Swanson asked them to sign and date the evaluation as the prior day (Dec. 15, 2025), even though the signing and discussion of the evaluation happened on Dec. 16, 2025.

Some staff members were told that they could not leave their desks to use the restroom when needed, because they could not leave their desks unattended. A staff member reported being told they first had to find coverage before leaving the office area.

No staff member reported being “categorically prohibited from using the restroom.” The concern was that staff first needed to find someone to

cover for them before they left their desk and availability for relief coverage was limited.

In response to this, Swanson stated that “the front office must be supervised at all times for safety reasons” and she denied preventing people from using the restroom, saying that the expectation was “coverage be arranged first.”

Several people shared their discomfort hearing comments made by Swanson about the Beach School District superintendent.

Many shared that the comments made were “complaints about decisions made at the district level, expressions of frustrations about oversight” or “statements implying disagreement with administrative direction.”

A few shared that these comments would be made during staff meetings or one-on-one conversations with Swanson. A few indicated that these comments contributed to division between the elementary school and the district administration.

July 2025 Investigation

It should be mentioned that in July 2025 an investigation was completed by the president of the Beach School Board.

Swanson filed a complaint the previous month against the superintendent, alleging that the superintendent “micromanages” her, placed her on a Performance Improvement Plan that contained inaccurate information, unfairly disciplined her without a thorough investigation, treats her differently than the high school principal and does not provide enough resources for her and that the superintendent provided incorrect information to the school board.

The outcome of the July 2025 investigation showed that the allegations were proven to be not substantial.

In the Feb. 20 investigation, the superintendent reported having difficulty in establishing consistent communication with Swanson, describing occasions in which district-level directives were not consistently implemented at the elementary school without follow-up discus-

sion.

She also reported concerns about incomplete consultation prior to decisions affecting staffing or school operations.

In response to this, Swanson denied intentionally undermining the district administration, stating she “may have expressed frustration regarding certain decisions but did not intend to be disrespectful or divisive. She characterized her comments as situational and not reflective of a broader lack of disrespect.”

Commenting on the investigation report, Swanson shared this with *Golden Valley News*:

“In any leadership position, it is difficult to make everyone happy with every decision, all the time. Every decision I made was done keeping the best interests of the students at heart. Their safety, both emotional and physical, are what has always guided me.

“It is unfortunate that the issues in the investigation weren’t brought to my attention when they happened, which should occur if following the correct chain of command. There are certainly several inaccuracies within the investigation report, things that were taken out of context and misinterpreted.”

Report conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the investigation apply the policies stated in the policy manual for the Beach School Board, the teacher handbook and applicable federal and state law, which were used to determine whether or not the allegations are substantial and whether Swanson’s conduct violates policy, contract terms and legal obligations.

Addressing the allegations, excerpts from the conclusion of the report reads as follows:

Workplace Climate and Morale

“The evidence supports that workplace climate at the elementary building has been strained during the Respondent’s tenure. While not every staff member described the environment negatively, a consistent and credible group of witnesses reported tension, diminished morale and

anxiety related to the lack of leadership, communication style, tone, and unpredictability...”

Group Messaging and Sharing of Student Information

“The evidence substantiates concerns regarding the use of group messaging to disseminate student information. Documentary evidence confirms that identifiable student information, including behavioral matters, was shared in broad staff messaging threads without clear limitation to those with legitimate educational interest...”

Staff Meetings and Contracted Hours

“The evidence supports concerns regarding meetings extending beyond the defined contractual workday for certified staff. While occasional minimal coverage may fall within professional expectations, repeated extensions beyond defined work hours without formal contractual authority present potential contractual and labor-related risk...”

Student Discipline and 504 Concerns

“With respect to student discipline and Section 504-related matters, the investigation does not find evidence of denial of FAPE or a formal violation. However, it does find that communication and documentation practices surrounding 504 issues lacked clarity and consistency...”

Student Discipline Support, Parent Contact and Challenging Behaviors

“The investigation also substantiates concerns that staff did not consistently receive adequate administrative support with challenging student behaviors. Multiple witnesses described that office referrals often resulted in outcomes perceived as rewarding to students, which undermined classroom authority and reduced confidence that misconduct would be addressed in a way that discouraged repeat

behavior...”

Teacher Evaluations/Supervision

“The investigation also substantiates in part concerns about evaluation practices, particularly where staff described deadline-driven completion, questions about dating of evaluation documents, limited observations supporting ratings and evaluation delivery without meaningful conferencing, all of which contributed to diminished staff confidence in the evaluation process.”

Restroom Access Concerns

“The evidence supports that expectations regarding office coverage before leaving the front desk were implemented strictly and caused frustration among classified staff. The investigation does not find that restroom access was categorically denied...”

Professional Relationship with District Administration

“The investigation finds that the Respondent’s professional relationship with district administration, particularly the superintendent, has been strained. Multiple witnesses described comments made by the Respondent that were critical of district leadership...”

The last conclusion in the report reads as follows:

“The investigation finds that several of the concerns raised in the complaints are substantiated, particularly those involving workplace climate and dissemination of student information.

“Other concerns are substantiated in part, particularly those relating to evaluation tone, meeting scheduling, restroom coverage practices, and professional collaboration.

“The investigation does not find clear statutory violations of IDEA, Section 504, or the Fair Labor Standards Act based on the evidence reviewed, nor does it substantiate bullying under district policy.”

Notice of Hearing

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY, STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
In the Matter of the Estate of Geraldine M. Arneson, Deceased.
Court File No. 17-2026-PR-00005

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Eric Arneson has filed herein a Petition for Formal Probate of Will and Appointment of Personal Representative.

The hearing will be held on the 23rd day of April, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. (MT), at the Courtroom of said Court at the County Courthouse in the City of Beach, County of Golden Valley, State of North Dakota. Any persons having an interest may file an objection stating why said Petition should not be granted. Such objections, if any, must be in writing, filed with the Court and copies served by mail on all interested persons.

Dated this 11th day of March, 2026.

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ABBREVIATED NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT AND AMEND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES RELATING TO PEACE OFFICER LICENSES

TAKE NOTICE that the Peace Officers Standards and Training Board will hold a public hearing to address proposed changes to the N.D. Admin. Code at 10:00 a.m. on 27th day, April 2026, at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, 1720 Burlington Drive Suite B, Bismarck North Dakota.

A copy of the proposed rules may be obtained by writing the Peace Officers Standards and Training Board or calling 701-328-5504. The proposed rules are also posted at www.post.nd.gov. Written comments may be submitted to 1720 Burlington Drive, Suite B, Bismarck, ND, 58504 until May 12th, 2026. If you plan to attend the public hearing and will need special facilities or assistance relating to a disability, please contact the Peace Officers Standards and Training Board at the above telephone number or address at least two days prior to the public hearing.

Dated this 12th day of March 2026.
Pat Helfrich, Secretary
Peace Officer Standards and Training Board

USPS - 221-280

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A Step Back in Time Troy Tescher

100 Years Ago Sentinel Butte Review March 19, 1926

Golva is to have a dance hall. The Baras building is being fixed up for that purpose and it is surmised by the public that the grand opening will be Easter Monday night.

“A Poor Married Man” is the title of a play which a group of people from the Westerheim vicinity will stage at the hall at that place on Friday.

Sorrow visited the John Hannold home of Sentinel Butte yesterday when death caused by scarlet fever claimed Zane, age two years and eight months.

Auction Sale of 42 head of Poland China bred sows will be held at the Lewis Odland farm

five miles north of Beach on March 20. Free lunch, sale at 1 p.m. C.L. Webb and Art Moyer, auctioneer. T.E. Hudson, clerk.

Mrs. Alma Sullivan plead guilty to the charge of manufacturing intoxicating liquor and was sentenced to serve a period of nine months in jail and pay a fine of \$150 plus cost. She is serving her time in the Mandan jail, this county not being equipped to accommodate women prisoners.

75 Years Ago Golden Valley News March 22, 1951

Marian “Bill” Hudecek is missing in action in Korea, according to a telegram received Tuesday by his mother, Mrs. Martha Hughes. Another brother, Harvey is serving at a Navy submarine base.