

Response from Dr. Mike Aytes, Superintendent of the Richmond R-XVI School District.

It is impossible to think that in a small community such as ours, that it would take nearly two years for an incident of this nature to come to light. No such incident was ever reported to the district administration, then or now.

The fact that the incident was never reported should be enough to question its credibility. In addition, it defies logic (and common sense) to think that such an incident would not have immediately been brought to the attention of the district administration, the Board of Education, and the community by parents, friends, and Facebook.

I would suggest that the real reason the allegation is being made now is that it is yet another attempt at character assassination by someone wanting to tarnish the reputation of the school district, the high school, and a good administrator.

This is the third article attacking the high school and the high school principal in a matter of a few weeks. It appears that the writer of this article and the managing editor of the newspaper have joined forces with someone's personal campaign to damage the reputation of High School Principal John Parker.

Making this spurious allegation would seem to indicate that those involved in the campaign have had a difficult time finding any facts to support their dislike of Mr. Parker, so, they have chosen to make things up, and their newspaper compatriots have chosen to print this outright falsehood.

High School Principal John Parker is a good, solid administrator. He is a man with a good heart and a great family. In all of the years I have known him, he has never been accused of any licentious behavior. He is a man for whom I have great respect and who I trust completely.

As a high-ranking member of the Missouri National Guard and as a veteran for more than 30 years, with five deployments in-state, in-country, and overseas, he is someone far more deserving of feature articles than another malicious attack.

Each week the members of the Richmond Rotary Club close their meeting by reciting the Rotary Code of Ethics. That code has four tenets. The three articles attacking the school district, the high school, and John Parker, fail all four tests. They do not state the truth. They are not fair to all concerned. They will not build good will and better friendships. They will not be beneficial to all concerned.

This allegation should never have been given any credence and should never have been published in the newspaper. Our community deserves better, our schools deserve better, and John Parker deserves better.