

Press Clippings 11-21-20 to 11-23-20

---Press Clippings---11/23/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Daily Herald--- 11/22/2020

U-46 teacher fired after accusations of improper relationships

By: Eric Peterson



Former Bartlett High School teacher Gary Lorber, seen here on the first day of the 2013-14 school year, was fired by Elgin Area School District U-46 Monday following accusations of inappropriate relationships with three students who'd graduated between 2002 and 2009.

A tenured Bartlett High School teacher has been fired after accusations of inappropriate relationships with three students who graduated during the 2000s, according to documents released by the school district.

The reasons for Gary Lorber's dismissal were not publicly disclosed at the time of the Elgin Area School District U-46 board of education's unanimous termination vote Monday.

But a Freedom of Information request filed by the Daily Herald led to the release Friday of a Notice of Charges and Bill of Particulars that detailed 20 professional charges against Lorber relating to his conduct with the three students.

The document details a gradual progression from notes and attention, to gifts, and eventually in two cases paid trips to New York.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services officials said Friday they are investigating Lorber, but would not disclose any details.

Lorber, 51, of Wheaton has not been charged with any crime.

Lorber, who taught at the school for 25 years, could not be reached for comment. The document released by the district said he apologized to school officials for his behavior.

According to the school district document, U-46 began learning of the inappropriate relationships when it received notice on Sept. 27 from a 2009 graduate who said Lorber had used his position to foster an unprofessional teacher-student relationship with her while she still attended Bartlett High School and then established an inappropriate personal relationship with her after she'd graduated.

A similar scenario regarding a 2003 graduate was also detailed in the district's document. It included kissing and touching during private practice sessions for a performance, notes saying "my love," emails, phone calls, meetings in a forest preserve and visits to his home, according to the document.

The document states "your grooming of Person B" resulted in "an intimate, personal and sexual relationship with Person B while Person B was student at Bartlett High School." After graduation, the former student moved into Lorber's home as his girlfriend for a time, according to the document.

But a third, earlier student who'd received preferential treatment from Lorber, including regular 30-minute morning meetings before school during her junior year, avoided him during the second half of her senior year before her 2002 graduation because his conduct made her very uncomfortable, according to the document.

The document says that Lorber denied all allegations related to Student A during an initial interview Sept. 30 and refused to answer questions about allegations related to Student B. But after another interview on Oct. 20, he contacted the district.

"On November 5, 2020, you emailed Superintendent Tony Sanders stating that you were 'ashamed and deeply sorry' for your actions as it related to the district's investigation of your actions. You further stated that you wanted Superintendent Sanders to know that you were, 'completely at fault and blame no one but (yourself),' " the document states.

Sanders said in a statement Saturday that the district has sent its finding to the DuPage County state's attorney's office and has asked the state board of education to revoke Lorber's teaching license.

Sanders pointed to the district's current policies and training regarding reporting and preventing of sexual abuse, but added: "We are developing another layer to our professional development to more explicitly address the issue of professional boundaries as well as the requirements to report suspected cases of inappropriate behavior."

Lorber was a popular teacher at the school, serving at one time as the Elgin Teachers' Association's building representative.

When he was briefly placed on administrative leave with pay in November 2013, students took to Twitter, using the hashtag #freelorber to express their disappointment. Some said Lorber was one of their favorite teachers, while others said they felt he was being punished for speaking his mind.

Lorber had said the suspension was because of his vocal opposition to a new grading scale using numbers rather than letters. School officials declined at the time to comment on what was described as a personnel matter.

Ex-student says work with children led her to speak out against teacher

By: Eric Peterson

The former Bartlett High School student who first approached Elgin Area School District U-46 in September with allegations of grooming against Gary Lorber, which led to his dismissal last week, says she was moved to come forward because she now works with children and is aware of how vulnerable they can be.

“He was an excellent teacher and he was a predator, and he can be both at once, and that’s something that’s eye-opening,” she said in an interview Friday. “We tend to demonize people in our society. I know this is going to be a big loss for a lot of people whom he affected positively.”

Lorber has not been charged with a crime. He is under investigation by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. He couldn’t be reached for comment.

The Notice of Charges and Bill of Particulars for Termination Recommendation released by U-46 in response to a Freedom of Information Act request says that she told the district “you used your position of power to foster an unprofessional teacher student relationship with her while she was a student and then exploiting that relationship to establish an inappropriate personal relationship after she graduated.”

The teacher’s conduct before graduation included hugging, exchanging personal notes, sharing music CDs, buying her alcohol, giving her a book of poetry and taking her to lunch on her 17th birthday without her parents’ knowledge, according to the document.

After the student graduated in 2009, Lorber consistently spoke to her over the phone, invited her to his home, provided alcohol to her though she was underage and paid for a joint trip to New York, according to the document.

In her interview with the Daily Herald, she said in retrospect, she believes she was vulnerable because “I was an extremely bright kid who came from a very broken home.”

The woman, who asked to remain anonymous, said it was her current work with children that led her to reassess this chapter of her past. It made her realize how much power and authority an adult has over a child.

She said she long felt that no one would believe her, but her fear proved unfounded.

“U-46’s handling of this was prompt and filled with compassion,” she said, explaining that the superintendent and assistant superintendent cried during her conversation with them. The district investigated and found two other former students who had similar experiences.

She said it feels good to have her experience validated.

“I’ve had such an inability to trust others,” she said of her struggle with the legacy of her experience.

“I guess for me it doesn’t ever feel good to see stuff like this happen. But it is something that shaped me to do better for the next generation of children,” she said. “I work with children and I’m really good at what I do.”

---ABC7--- 11/22/2020

Improper Relationship With Student

Bartlett Hs Teacher Fired After Alleged Inappropriate Relationships With Students, School District U-46 Says

By: ABC 7 Chicago Digital Team

BARTLETT, Ill. (WLS) -- A Bartlett teacher has been fired after allegedly having inappropriate relationships with students.

The teacher had been at Bartlett High School for 25 years.

The allegations against him date back to 2008.

In a statement posted to Facebook Saturday, School District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said the district's investigation revealed the former educator engaged in "inappropriate conduct" with female students on several occasions.

The situation is under investigation, but it was not immediately clear if any criminal charges were pending.

Sanders said the teacher was placed on administrative leave after the allegations were made, and they were reported to the Department of Children and Family Services, DuPage County State's Attorney's Office and Illinois State Board of Education.

The U-46 school board unanimously approved the termination Nov. 16 and recommended the educator's teaching license be revoked.

"As a district, we have continuously implemented ongoing professional training for all district employees regarding sexual abuse, requirements to report suspected abuse or neglect and other topics that address the relationship boundaries expected between teachers and students," Sanders said. "We are developing another layer to our professional development to more explicitly address the issue of professional boundaries as well as the requirements to report suspected cases of inappropriate behavior."

Resources for staff members at Bartlett High School were available last week and will continue to be available, Sanders said. Students who may need support will have them made available by contacting the school.

---Press Clippings---11/21/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

SPORTS

---Daily Herald--- 11/22/2020

Bartlett's Palella picks Central Michigan

By: John Lemon



Bartlett senior Alec Palella will play college football at Central Michigan.



Bartlett senior Alec Palella will play college football at Central Michigan.

For all his athletic accolades and success, which includes playing three sports at Bartlett and a football scholarship to Central Michigan, Alec Palella might be most proud of his academic honors.

Palella, a senior, is a two-time academic all-state selection and a regular member of the Upstate Eight's all-conference teams. He's improved from getting As and Bs his first two years in high school to As in every subject except one as a senior.

He credits his parents Mike and Laura and also his older siblings.

"I would like to thank my parents because they are always on top of me," Palella said. "Their biggest thing is academics, academics, academics. Academics always comes before sports which is how it should be. My brother and sister were good students, and they are the biggest reason I have the grades. They really push me to be the student-athlete I can be."

Palella plans on a business major at Central Michigan with physical therapy as his backup plan.

The 6-foot-4, 232-pound Palella has played all over the football field at Bartlett. His coach Matt Erlenbaugh called him "very versatile."

He'll play tight end at Central Michigan, a school he selected over runner-up Ball State.

"I started to grow my relationship with the tight end coach and head coach and some of the players on the team," Palella said. "I think that started to secure my decision."

Palella said it wasn't until his freshman season at Bartlett that he began to think of playing Division I football. He was pulled up to the varsity as a sophomore, and he said he began to take football even more seriously going to speed training and various camps.

Also as a sophomore, Palella slimmed down and moved from right tackle to tight end. Defensively he has seen time everywhere from strong safety to middle linebacker to defensive end.

During his junior year Palella finished with 81 tackles, 18 tackles for a loss, 3 sacks and 2 interceptions. He also caught 8 passes for 192 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Palella also has played baseball and basketball at Bartlett. Right now, his senior basketball season is on hold, and if it gets pushed back into the spring he will miss it while getting back on the football field.

Palella said he's been getting his quarterback and wide receivers together a couple times a week to keep their route running sharp. He and a few friends also work out each morning at 6:30.

"That's how I've been staying in a football mindset," Palella said. "It's definitely frustrating but all you can really do is keep your head up and hope for the best. A lot of people don't get this opportunity to play college football. I'm definitely grateful for it and it gives me motivation to keep working and keep my head up."