

Mifflin High principal fired

Official should have called police after sexual assault on student, board says

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The Columbus Board of Education fired a high-school principal last night who failed to call police after learning that a female student had been sexually assaulted by four male students last month in the school auditorium.

The board voted unanimously to place Regina Crenshaw on unpaid leave from her \$95,300-a-year post at Mifflin High School starting today and to begin terminating her contract.

Crenshaw could not be reached after the meeting.

Three assistant principals — Vincent Clarno, Suzie Retterer-Helfrich and Richard Watson — were given 10-day, unpaid suspensions and will be assigned to other schools when they return.

"We were very concerned about the actions that were taken — or lack of actions that were taken — by the administrative team, and particularly the principal," Superintendent Gene Harris said.

The parents, police, Franklin County Children Services and district administrators should have been notified immediately, Harris said, with the order depending on the situation.

"Our administrators must use some common sense," Harris said. "There are some situations where the first entity that would be notified would be the lawenforcement agency."

On March 9, a 16-year-old girl told school officials she had been sexually assaulted by four male students in the Mifflin auditorium. The girl's father had to call the police himself and take his daughter, who is developmentally disabled, to Grant Medical Center.

Police said that the assault occurred about 1:15 p.m., and that her father was at the Northeast Side school, 3245 Oak Spring St., by about 2:30 p.m.

Detective Mary Harrison, of the Columbus police sex-abuse squad, said an investigative report will be turned over to prosecutors within two weeks.

In other business yesterday:

- The board closed the public meeting apparently to review an audit of the district's selfinsurance fund, which district officials revealed last year had a deficit of almost \$16 million.

District legal counsel Karin Riley said the report was a confidential, attorney-client communication because the district hired the Squire, Sanders and Dempsey law firm, which hired accounting firm Ernst & Young as a subcontractor.

Reached on his cell phone during the closed meeting and asked whether the board had received the accounting report, board member Jeff Cabot said, "No comment."

The Dispatch has repeatedly requested to see the report under the Ohio Public Records Act but was told it didn't exist.

- The board approved \$12,000 worth of federal "No Child Left Behind" money intended for poor students to hold a fivehour meeting for 300 parents and staff members at the Concourse Hotel and Conference Center at Port Columbus.

About 300 people are expected to attend the meeting on May 10.

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