

Greece inquiry begins

Consultants review 5 teachers' complaints

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GREECE — An educational consultant was chosen Tuesday by attorneys for the Greece Central School District's Board of Education to investigate the complaints of five teachers pending with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Allan Berry of Brockport and four members of his firm, Berry Consulting Services, started reviewing documents and related legal files Tuesday at the downtown Rochester office of Harter, Secrest and Emery LLP, the firm representing the school board.

The team first will review comprehensive legal files, then interview district employees and review district documents.

Dave Kresock, a partner with Harter, Secrest and Emery, said he's not certain how long the study will take.

The EEOC's Buffalo office determined that the district did not act properly in its treatment of the teachers, three of whom no longer work for the district. Berry is going to investigate how and why that happened, and will limit his review of district practices to those five cases, Kresock said.

Berry has 14 years of teaching experience and 16 years of administrative experience in Monroe County, but has never worked for or lived in the Greece Central School District, Kresock said.

Conversations continue over whether District Superintendent Margaret Keller-Cogan should be allowed on district property during the investigation. It was thought that her presence could influence the outcome.

To date, the nine-member board has not voted on the matter. But that could

On the Web

To see the EEOC's determinations on the complaints of five Greece teachers, click on this story at DemocratandChronicle.com.

change by week's end.

Keller-Cogan still plans to return to the office on Monday. She is out of town this week on previously scheduled business.

While these five cases are not the only complaints of unfair treatment among district teachers, they are the only ones currently supported by the EEOC.

Greece Teachers Association President Don Pallozzi said the union has seen a steady increase in teacher complaints in the past seven years. Some have been resolved through a problem-solving process, involving the teacher's union and district officials. However, 26 grievances have required arbitration in the past three years, he said.

According to EEOC documents, teachers in four of the five cases were not treated the same as younger colleagues. In three of those cases, the EEOC found that the district created a hostile work environment and pushed the teachers into early retirement.

In one case, EEOC investigators determined the district created a hostile work environment for a disabled teacher.

The administration denied the charges in all five cases, saying the teachers "were not meeting district standards."

The next step in settlement of the cases is forced mediation between the district and the teachers. According to board members, no such meetings have been scheduled, a

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