

Greece bias report delayed

School board's consultant requires more time for inquiry

VICTORIA E. FREILE
STAFF WRITER

GREECE — Today's the day many Greece residents have been waiting for.

But they'll have to wait a little longer for an independent report investigat-

ing claims of teacher discrimination in the Greece Central School District.

The report, which school board members had hoped would be finished by Dec. 1, could take another week to 10 days, said school

board President Ken Walsh.

Allan Berry, an educational consultant who is compiling the report, needs more time to interview some district employees, Walsh said.

A completion date is dependent on those interviews.

Board members opted to investigate the claims after the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission determined earlier this

year that the district had discriminated against five Greece teachers.

In September, the Board of Education authorized an independent investigation, slated to conclude by Dec. 1, and placed Superintend-

ent Margaret Keller-Cogan and two other top administrators on paid leave for the duration of the inquiry.

Since then, Berry and his consulting team have

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reviewed district files and interviewed Greece employees.

"The entire community awaits the release of the Berry company's findings," said Kim Bellavia, the district's chief communications officer. "We hope that the board will move quickly to share this highly anticipated information. Community members need a forum to discuss these findings and the appropriate next steps with the board."

Berry will turn his report over to the school board's attorney, David Kresock, a partner at Harter, Secrest and Emery. Kresock will review it and the two will then share it with the nine-member board in executive session, Walsh said.

Walsh said he expects the board to discuss the findings on Dec. 13, but does not anticipate that the board will take action that night. He said he's not certain when the three administrators will return to the district office.

"Board members will need time to consider the report, the EEOC determinations and to seek advice from the board's attorney," he said.

"We want to have all of the information in front of us before making an important decision," Walsh said.

He has repeatedly declined to comment on what action the board might take.

The board may hold a special board meeting this month on the issue.

Background

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission determined earlier this year that Greece Central School District didn't act properly in its treatment of five teachers. Greece's school board hired an educational consultant to do its own review of the cases and determine whether the district acted improperly. The board also placed Superintendent Margaret Keller-Cogan and two other top administrators on paid leave. The consultant's report is expected this month and board President Ken Walsh expects the board will act by year's end.

Greece parent Jennifer Shanley said she was concerned about how much time the investigation is taking and what will happen once the board has the report in hand. She also wants to know if stakeholders will be involved in discussing the findings.

"I agree that they need to be thorough about the process, but they need to be open as well," she said.

Walsh said the board cannot talk about personnel matters in public. But he noted that if the board were to discuss the district's process for evaluating teachers, then the discussion would take place in an open meeting.

The district office has not yet received bills from Berry Consulting Services regarding the investigation, but invoices are expected after the investigation is completed, officials said, a

VFREILE@DemocratandChronicle.com