Porzio, Bromberg & Newman: Board of Education and Top School Officials Accused of Negligence and Failure to Protect Suicide Victim Adriana Kuch from Brutal New Jersey School Attack, New Lawsuit Claims

January 29, 2024

By: William Krais

Lawsuit filed before first anniversary of teen's death also accuses school superintendent of defamation and invasion of privacy.

New Jersey's Central Regional Board of Education, school superintendent, school principal, an anti-bullying specialist, and other school officials were aware of a culture of violence at Central Regional High School in Berkeley Township and failed to adequately protect 14-year-old freshman Adriana Kuch from a physical assault that led to her public humiliation and ultimate suicide, according to a civil lawsuit filed this week in Ocean County, New Jersey. The filing also accuses the school superintendent of defamation and violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in the days following Adriana's death.

The suit, brought by Adriana's father, Michael Kuch, Sr., and stepmother Sarah Kuch, on their behalf and on behalf of Adriana's estate and her brother Ethan Kuch, alleges that the defendants were not only aware of harassment, intimidation, and bullying within the school's halls – and the video recordings and social media posts showing the attacks – they also failed to appropriately and adequately address threats posed by students in compliance with the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Statute. The defendants also failed to investigate these threats in a timely and appropriate manner, according to the complaint.

Adriana Kuch died by suicide on February 3, 2023, following a brutal attack in the school hallway on February 1, which was recorded and subsequently posted on various social media sites. She was hit in the face with a water bottle, punched, and kicked by a group of students who allegedly conspired to commit the attack. The incident gained international attention when school superintendent Triantafillos Parlapanides publicly stated school officials didn't pursue criminal charges against the students who assaulted Adriana because they didn't want the kids to face a “double whammy” – potential discipline from the school and from law enforcement.

Then, on the day of Adriana's funeral, Superintendent Parlapanides publicly and falsely attributed Adriana's death to her father having an affair (which the superintendent fabricated) that led to Adriana's mother's suicide, and he commented that her father now had to eat a “shit sandwich” given the circumstances he was facing. Parlapanides violated federal law

by revealing Adriana's history of mental health issues, and his resignation was accepted soon after his comments were made.

“Michael Kuch and his family have experienced so much heartache and tragedy already, and the gross negligence of school officials – followed by the superintendent's cruel, insensitive, and defamatory remarks – only compound their pain,” said William Krais, Kuch family counsel and a Porzio, Bromberg & Newman principal. “It is the defendants' job to provide a safe and secure environment for the students at Central Regional High School. They catastrophically failed Adriana, leading to the emotional distress, humiliation, and embarrassment that ultimately caused her to take her own life. It's high time the school and those involved are held accountable for their actions.”

“Adriana was the light of our lives, and one year after her horrific and needless death, we are still waiting for justice,” said Michael Kuch. “It's clear this school has a serious bullying problem that none of the school administrators care to admit or address. But what's more troublesome and hurtful are the incredibly rude and insensitive comments from Superintendent Parlapanides when our family was at its lowest point. How someone could make such false and careless remarks when our daughter had just died is beyond me.”

The case is *Michael Kuch, Sr., et al v. Central Regional Board of Education et al* filed in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Ocean County, case number OCN-L-000252-24.

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