## In the Matter Of:

Lisa and Dennis Herrera

VS.

Hillsborough County School Board

## **CANDY OLSON**

November 20, 2013





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	1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
	2	TAMPA DIVISION
	3 LISA HERRERA AN HERRERA AS CO-I	
	4 REPRESENTATIVES ESTATE OF ISABI	S OF THE
	5 DECEASED,	
	6 Plaintiffs	5,
	7 vs.	Case No.: 8:12-cv-02484-JSM-EAJ
	8 HILLSBOROUGH CO SCHOOL BOARD; A 9 COUNTY SCHOOL I	AND HILLSBOROUGH
1	0 Defendants	5.
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1:	2 DEPOSITION OF:	CANDY OLSON
1:	3 DATE:	November 20, 2013
1.	4 TIME:	2:01 p.m 3:15 p.m.
1	5 TAKEN BY:	The Plaintiffs
1	6 PLACE:	Thompson, Sizemore, Gonzalez & Hearing, P.A.
1	7	One Tampa City Center 201 North Franklin Street
1:	8	Suite 1600 Tampa, Florida 33602
1:	9	± ,
2	0 REPORTED BY:	LINDSEY ASHWORTH, Notary Public, State of Florida
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11	Plaintiff's Exhibit No. 3
12	(Comment Section, Attachment B.)
13	
14	* * * * * * S T I P U L A T I O N S
15	
16	It is hereby stipulated and agreed by and between
17	counsel present for the respective parties, and the
18	deponent, that the reading and signing of the deposition
19	are hereby waived.
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THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Here begins the video 1 taped deposition of Candy Olson taken in the matter of 2 3 case no. 8:12cv-02484-JSM-EAJ. Lisa Herrera, et al versus Hillsborough County School Board, et al. 4 heard in the United States District Court, Middle 5 District of Florida, Tampa Division. This deposition 6 7 is being held at 201 North Franklin Street, Tampa, Florida. Today's date is November 20th, 2013, and the 8 9 time is approximately 2:01 p.m.. The court reporter is Lindsey Ashworth, and the 10 video specialist is Scott E. Hay on behalf of Orange 11 12 Reporting. 13 Would counsel and all present please introduce yourselves, after which the court reporter will swear 14 in the witness. 15 MS. POWERS: Melissa Powers on behalf of the 16 17 Herrera Family. Along with me is Lesly McMorris. MR. GONZALEZ: And Tom Gonzalez for the 18 19 defendant. 20 MR. MURMAN: Jim Murman for the School Board of 21 Hillsborough County Florida. 22 23 24

25

1	PROCEEDINGS	
2	THEREUPON,	
3	CANDY OLSON,	
4	having first been duly sworn, testified under	
5	oath, as follows:	
6	DIRECT EXAMINATION	
7	BY MS. POWERS:	
8	Q. Good afternoon, Ms. Olson.	
9	A. Good afternoon.	
10	Q. I introduced myself earlier, but just for the	
11	record my name is Melissa Powers. And I'm an attorney who	
12	represents the Herrera family in the action brought against	
13	Hillsborough County School Board and the school district	
14	with regard to their daughter Isabella Herrera.	
15	Can you please state your full name for the	
16	record, please?	
17	A. My full name is Anne Sullivan Olson. I'm known	
18	as Candy Olson on the school board.	
19	Q. Okay. And what is your current residence?	
20	A. 610 South Roma Avenue, Tampa.	
21	Q. And how long have you lived there?	
22	A. Probably four years.	
23	Q. Okay. And what is your current employment?	
24	A. I'm a school board member for the Hillsborough	
25	County Public Schools.	

- 1 Q. Any other employment other than --
- 2 A. No.
- Q. Okay. How long have you been employed as a board
- 4 member for Hillsborough County School Board?
- 5 A. Almost 19 years.
- 6 Q. And I understand you've acted as the chief?
- 7 A. The chair --
- 8 Q. Chair.
- 9 A. -- of the school?
- 10 Q. Yes.
- 11 A. I have. I think I've done that three times.
- 12 Q. Okay. What was the most recent period that you
- 13 were the chair?
- 14 A. I'm going to have to count back. Probably about
- 15 four years ago.
- 16 Q. How long is the term for chair?
- 17 A. The term is a year, and we rotate. Each person
- 18 serves one year and then moves on.
- 19 Q. And it's my understanding you were the acting
- 20 chair in 2012; does that sound accurate?
- 21 A. That sounds fair. Likely.
- 22 Q. Okay. And that was the last time you were the
- 23 chair?
- 24 A. Uh-huh.
- 25 Q. Yes?

- 1 A. Yes, I'm sorry.
- MR. GONZALEZ: I'm sorry. Was the question, was
- 3 she the acting chair?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I was serving as chair.
- 5 MS. POWERS: As the chair.
- 6 THE WITNESS: I believe 2012 is the correct year.
- 7 BY MS. POWERS:
- 8 Q. Thank you.
- 9 Have you ever had your deposition taken before?
- 10 A. I've had it taken once before.
- 11 Q. Was that taken as a school board member?
- 12 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Do you recall the name of that case?
- 14 A. I think -- I don't. But it was David Caten
- 15 (phonetic) suing the school board or the school district.
- 16 Q. David Caten?
- 17 A. Uh-huh.
- 18 Q. Was he the plaintiff or the person who brought
- 19 the lawsuit or was he an attorney?
- 20 A. He was, I think, the person -- he's not an
- 21 attorney, so he was the plaintiff.
- Q. Okay. And about -- approximately, how long ago
- 23 was that?
- A. I would quess eight or nine years. Might be
- 25 longer.

- O. What was the nature of that lawsuit?
- A. He sent a group of emails to the school board
- 3 members and the school board blocked them thinking they
- 4 were spam or some kind of attack, and that's pretty much
- 5 what I remember.
- 6 Q. Was he a parent?
- 7 A. No. He's a community activist.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. I don't think he's a parent. I don't know that
- 10 -- I don't know him as a parent.
- 11 Q. Sure. Fair enough.
- 12 You've probably been advised as to generally what
- 13 to expect. I just want to quickly go through some of the
- 14 basic ground rules just to remind you, okay, as we're taken
- 15 the deposition here today.
- As you can see, there's a court reporter sitting
- 17 next to you, and she's taken everything down --
- 18 A. Right.
- 19 Q -- that's being said. All of my questions, all of
- 20 your responses and any objections that other counsel may
- 21 want to put on the record. So it's important, first of
- 22 all, that you answer verbally. Uh-huhs, huh-uhs, shakes,
- 23 nods of the head --
- 24 A. Tunderstand.
- Q. As we sit here, we'll probably understand what



- 1 you're trying to say. It may not be so clear on the
- 2 written record.
- 3 A. Right.
- Q. So if I stop you and say, is that a yes, for
- 5 example, I'm not trying to be rude. I'm just trying to
- 6 keep the record clear, okay?
- 7 A. No problem.
- Q. If you don't her a question that I ask or you
- 9 don't understand a question that I ask, please ask me to
- 10 reask or rephrase the question. I'd be happy to do so,
- 11 okay?
- 12 A. Okay.
- 13 Q. If you answer a question I'm going to assume that
- 14 you heard it, that you understood it, and that you're
- answering it to the best of your ability, fair?
- 16 A. That's fair.
- 17 Q. Okay. If you need to take a break at any time,
- 18 just let me know.
- 19 A. Okay.
- 20 Q. Can you tell me generally what the boards --
- 21 school board's role is with regard to the school district?
- 22 A. We are the governing body. We are essentially
- interested, but not professional people, who are elected to
- 24 represent the community's interest in the education of the
- 25 children.



- 1 By law we hire and fire and evaluate the
- 2 superintendent. And the superintendent is the person
- 3 responsible for the day-to-day operations of the district.
- 4 Q. And what role does the board have with overseeing
- 5 the policies and procedures of the school district?
- A. We vote to approve the policies. As I understand
- 7 it, we approve rules and procedures. I'm not sure what
- 8 exactly that means, but if those are day-to-day things they
- 9 would come under the purview of the superintendent and
- 10 staff.
- 11 Q. So you would agree with me that the district
- 12 employees are expected to follow the school district's
- 13 policies and procedures and rules that are put in place,
- 14 correct?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. And those policies and procedures and rules are
- 17 brought to the school board for review and approval; is
- 18 that accurate?
- 19 A. That is correct.
- 20 Q. The board itself is not making the policies,
- 21 generally speaking, correct?
- 22 A. That is correct. But we sometimes have input and
- 23 we'll have a board member say, I'd like to be sure we
- 24 include this. If we all agree, we'll do that.
- 25 Q. So board members can raise changes to proposed



- 1 policies and then vote on it?
- 2 A. We can.
- Q. Okay. And is it your understanding that the
- 4 district is required to bring any policies and procedures
- 5 or rules to the board for approval before implementing
- 6 them?
- 7 MR. GONZALEZ: Melissa, I'm sorry, could I just
- 8 have a standing objection on form with respect to your
- 9 reference to district? Given the plaintiff's
- 10 contention that there's something different between
- 11 the parties.
- MS. POWERS: Okay.
- MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you.
- 14 A. The board votes on policies, which are known, I
- 15 think, in law as rules. We vote on all of those.
- 16 BY MS. POWERS:
- 17 Q. And before they can be implemented, it's required
- 18 to bring them to the attention of the board, correct?
- 19 A. That's my understanding. And I think there's a
- 20 whole legal thing we have to notice and hear it and --
- 21 O. Okay. And for example -- I will just show you
- 22 this.
- MS. POWERS: Did you want to see it?
- MR. GONZALEZ: No.
- THE WITNESS: That's a lot of paper.



- 1 MS. POWERS: I'm not going to ask you to read.
- THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- MS. POWERS: Just primarily identify.
- 4 BY MS POWERS:
- 5 Q. Can you tell me what that is?
- A. It says it's the Safety, Health and Environmental
- 7 Program of the School Board, approved July 11th, 2006.
- 8 Q. Okay. And contained within -- in there generally
- 9 are policies, procedures and rules as it pertains to safety
- 10 issues, correct?
- MR. GONZALEZ: Object to the form.
- 12 A. Without reading, I couldn't tell you. But if you
- 13 want to --
- 14 BY MS. POWERS:
- 15 O. If you just want to look through it and -- I'm
- 16 not asking for any specific policy. I'm just saying
- 17 generally included in there, are there policies and
- 18 procedures or rules that pertain to safety issues for the
- 19 school district?
- 20 A. I see the word safety used quite often. General
- 21 safety rules, environmental hazard, safety tags, so
- 22 certainly there are some references to safety in here.
- Q. And that's something that, according to the first
- 24 page there, that the school board has approved, correct?
- 25 A. Correct.



- 1 MR. GONZALEZ: Are you going to introduce that?
- MS. POWERS: Sure. We can go ahead and mark it
- as Plaintiff's No. 1. And I'll go ahead and attach
- 4 it.
- 5 (Plaintiff's Exhibit No. 1 was marked for
- 6 identification purposes.)
- 7 BY MS. POWERS:
- 8 Q. And are you aware that Hillsborough County Public
- 9 Schools have policies and procedures with regard to
- 10 incident reporting?
- 11 A. I would assume we do.
- 12 Q. Do you know what those policies and procedures
- 13 are?
- 14 A. Well, I think I have to differentiate between
- 15 policies and procedures. I'm not sure what's in the policy
- 16 manual. You've got a piece of it there, it's huge. And
- 17 without going back and looking it up, I wouldn't want to
- 18 say that -- in terms of procedures we often have procedures
- 19 or practices or way of work that are not board approved
- 20 but that are what staff does to keep board members or
- 21 others informed.
- 22 O. Okay. Let me backtrack a little bit. Can you
- 23 explain to me what your understanding is of the difference
- 24 between a policy and a procedure as it pertains to the
- 25 school system?



- 1 A. A policy, as we tend to use it, is a rule that is
- 2 passed by the board. We have to give public notice. We
- 3 have to have a certain number of days of it being
- 4 advertised. We then have to take public comment, and I
- 5 think we do that twice and then we vote to approve it.
- A procedure would be, the superintendent or
- 7 principal might say, for our students I want to have -- I
- 8 want to review everybody's report card and make sure that
- 9 there aren't anything that we haven't missed. That would
- 10 be -- a principal might say that to her teachers, and that
- 11 would be a procedure. So it's less likely to be district
- 12 wide. And it's not noticed and heard in the -- by the
- 13 board.
- Q. And when you reference rules, how is that
- 15 differentiated from --
- 16 A. Well, my understanding --
- 17 Q. -- other policies or procedure?
- 18 A. It's my understanding that a rule is what the
- 19 legal term is for what we call policies. It's voted on.
- 20 It's in the legal code.
- Q. So to your knowledge, were there specific
- 22 policies in place with regard to the reporting of incidents
- 23 involving students?
- A. Reporting of incidents to whom? To the board?
- 25 Q. Just any sort of policies with regard to how to



- 1 report an incident that involved a student injury in the
- 2 2012 school year?
- 3 A. I would assume there were policies in place for
- 4 that, but I don't know what they are specifically.
- 5 Q. And how about procedures?
- A. Again, I would imagine. I'm sure there are
- 7 procedures in place, but I don't know specifically what
- 8 they are.
- 9 Q. And if I use the term rules, you would be
- 10 referring primarily back to the policies, correct?
- 11 A. I would, yes.
- 12 Q. As a board member of the school system, how often
- 13 do you have an opportunity to actually go to specific
- 14 schools?
- 15 A. I go pretty often. I was actually at two this
- 16 morning. So I'm certainly in schools every month, usually
- 17 every week.
- 18 Q. And how do you decide which schools to go to?
- 19 A. It's not a very organized process. I -- my
- 20 secretary keeps a list of where I've been. If a school
- 21 invites me, I try to qo. If I haven't been to a school in
- 22 my district in a while, a while being six months, a year,
- 23 two years, I try to go to those schools as well.
- Q. So how often do you try to get to each school?
- 25 A. I try to get there probably once a year. It's



- 1 probably not -- I'm probably not very good at keeping that
- 2 aspiration.
- Q. When was the last time you were at Sessums
- 4 Elementary?
- 5 A. I haven't been to Sessums in quite a while. I
- 6 don't remember when.
- 7 Q. Have you been there since Bella passed away?
- 8 A. Not to my recollection.
- 9 Q. How often are elections held for board members?
- 10 A. Every four years. The terms are staggered so
- 11 that three are elected, and then two years later, four are
- 12 elected.
- Q. And it's my understanding in 2012, it was the
- 14 year that four board members were up for reelection; does
- 15 that sound accurate to you?
- 16 A. Yes. Because I wasn't and mine is the year when
- 17 three people were up.
- 18 Q. Okay. When are you up for reelection next?
- 19 A. I would be up next year if I were running, but
- 20 I'm not.
- Q. So in 2012 it's my understanding that board
- 22 members Kurdell, Edgecomb, Valdes and Lamb were up for
- 23 reelection; does that sound accurate to you?
- 24 A. Yes.
- Q. And Mr. Lamb was not reelected, correct?



- 1 A. Dr. Lamb was not reelected.
- 2 Q. Thank you.
- 3 Cindy Stuart took that seat?
- 4 A. She did.
- Q. And those elections are held in August, correct?
- A. They're held in August unless someone doesn't get
- 7 51 percent of the vote, and then I think the final is held
- 8 in general election in November.
- 9 Q. You mentioned one of the responsibilities of the
- 10 board was to do the evaluation of the superintendent,
- 11 correct?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Okay. How often is that done?
- 14 A. Once a year. Actually, we have what we call a
- 15 formative and a summative. So there are two pieces to it,
- 16 but it's once a year.
- 17 Q. Can you explain the two pieces to that?
- 18 A. It's the same form. I think the idea behind it
- 19 is you tell someone that I want you to look at these things
- 20 for improvement, and then at the end you do the
- 21 assessments. This is my assessment of your performance for
- 22 the year.
- Q. Is one more of an interim type of process?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. And then the -- there's a final one at the end of



- 1 the year?
- 2 A. Right.
- 3 Q. Typically, when during -- during the year is that
- 4 done? Is that done during the school year or is it --
- 5 A. The final one is usually supposed to be finished
- 6 by August 1st, but that deadline is not always adhered to.
- 7 Q. And how about the initial one, typically?
- 8 A. I can't remember. It would probably -- I would
- 9 quess, early in the calendar year.
- 10 Q. And what's expected of you as a board member for
- 11 that early formative process? Is there anything you have
- 12 to do?
- 13 A. I have to complete the form to my best of my
- 14 ability using whatever tools I think are appropriate.
- 15 Q. Okay. And then it's same form you fill out again
- 16 at the end of the year?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. So I take it you have done several evaluations of
- 19 Ms. Elia, correct?
- 20 A. I have done several evaluations of Mrs. Elia,
- 21 yes.
- Q. What was the last one that was done?
- A. I think it was in September or October.
- Q. I'm going to hand you -- it's identified as, it
- 25 looks like attachment A and attachment B, with regard to



- 1 her evaluation.
- 2 MR. GONZALEZ: Can I just see it?
- 3 MS. POWERS: Sure.
- 4 BY MS. POWERS:
- 5 Q. Give you a chance to look at that, and if you
- 6 could just tell me what that is.
- 7 A. Without reading it, it looks like the summary --
- 8 oh, it says, Compilation Summary of Points for Standards
- 9 for Evaluation of Superintendent, Summative Evaluation.
- 10 Q. What's the date on that?
- 11 A. 2012 to 2013.
- 12 O. So that would be the most current one that has
- 13 been done?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. And that was the summary one, so that would be
- 16 the final?
- 17 A. Summative, yes. Final.
- 18 Q. Okay. And it looks like there's two. It says
- 19 attachment A and attachment B. Do you know what those were
- 20 attached to?
- 21 A. I think they were probably attached to the agenda
- 22 item at which we accepted the evaluation.
- Q. Okay. And one is more of a narrative comment
- 24 style evaluation and one is a numerical scoring correct?
- 25 A. The numerical scoring is the evaluation. The



- other is comments that each board may or may not choose to
- 2 make.
- 3 Q. So the actual evaluation is the scoring page?
- 4 A. I believe that's true.
- Q. Okay.
- A. There's -- as I remember the form, there's space
- 7 for comments and we can either make comments or not or make
- 8 them at the end of -- as a general set of statements.
- 9 Q. And was that evaluation accepted by the school
- 10 board?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Okay. And I see in there, in the numerical
- 13 scoring, there's some disparity between different board
- 14 members. Some scoring her very low, some scoring her in
- 15 the higher numbers, fours and fives. Was that something
- 16 that was discussed at the board meeting were it was
- 17 presented?
- 18 A. Yes. We discussed -- each of us discussed why we
- 19 gave the scores we gave.
- 20 Q. And is it essentially what you put in your
- 21 comments, or was it more than that?
- 22 A. I don't remember.
- Q. Sure. And what was your general impression as
- 24 far as the reason why there was such a disparity in the
- 25 numbers?



- 1 A. Different board members see things
- 2 differently.
- 3 MS. POWERS: I will go ahead and attach the
- 4 scoring page, attachment A, as Plaintiff's Exhibit No.
- 5 2. And the comment section for attachment B as
- 6 Plaintiff's No. 3.
- 7 (Plaintiff's Exhibit Nos. 2 and 3 were marked for
- 8 identification purposes.)
- 9 BY MS. POWERS:
- 10 Q. All right. I want to turn and talk a little bit
- 11 about how communication's handled between district
- 12 employees and the board. In general, how is information
- 13 communicated to the board by the district?
- 14 A. It can be communicated in a lot of ways. A lot
- of information is e-mailed, and the superintendent has said
- if one board member asks for information, everybody should
- 17 get it. Sometimes it's printed out. If it's voluminous it
- 18 is often left in the board office for us to go through
- 19 whatever parts of it we want. Sometimes it's a phone call.
- 20 Sometimes it's seeing somebody in -- before a meeting or
- 21 after a meeting. There are a lot of different ways.
- 22 Q. Okay. And specifically with regard to incidents
- 23 that occur involving students, for a example, injury to
- 24 students. I understand currently there's a daily report
- 25 that's sent over to the board; is that correct?



- 1 A. The board is copied on every -- on whatever
- 2 reports schools send to the administration.
- 3 O. And those are now forwarded to the board members
- 4 directly, correct?
- 5 A. The board is copied on those, yes.
- 6 Q. Okay. And that's something that has only
- 7 recently started, correct?
- 8 A. I couldn't say how recent but it has not been the
- 9 practice forever.
- 10 O. How about back in 2012?
- 11 A. I don't think it was done that way.
- 12 Q. Okay. Back in 2012 if there was a student who
- 13 was involved in an incident that involved injury, how was
- 14 that, if it was, communicated to the board generally back
- 15 in 2012?
- 16 A. It was rarely communicated. You know, we have
- 17 200,000 children and they do get injured.
- 18 Q. As a board member for the Hillsborough County
- 19 School System, if a student has an incident while is in the
- 20 custody of school personnel and was sent to the hospital
- 21 and subsequently died the next day, is that something you
- 22 would expect to be communicated to the board?
- A. In this day in age, yes, it would be. In the
- 24 past, no.
- Q. When you say this day in age, what are you



- 1 defining as --
- A. well, after Isabella died some board members
- 3 asked to get information about incidents and the practice
- 4 was put in place of copying us on everything. We get -- if
- 5 a school bus bumps a fender, we get it. Every incident
- 6 that involves a school bus, I think, is communicated to us.
- 7 And incidents that happen at school are also communicated
- 8 to us.
- 9 Q. And I understand now that's the current practice?
- 10 A. That's what I -- I'm sorry. That's what I was
- 11 trying to say.
- 12 Q. Sure. I'm saying prior to the current -- the
- 13 current practice being put in place, would that type of
- 14 situation be something that you would expect was
- 15 communicated to the board?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. Okay. Why not?
- 18 A. I don't know why it would be.
- 19 Q. Who would you expect that to be communicated to?
- 20 A. Probably someone at a senior level of
- 21 administration who oversees that area. If it's
- 22 construction, the chief facility's officer. If it's human
- 23 resources, the chief human resources officer. That kind of
- 24 person, that level and the superintendent.
- Q. As a board member, wouldn't you want to ensure



- 1 that when incidents occur there's a review to make sure
- 2 that whatever the situation was it was handled
- 3 appropriately by school staff?
- A. Regardless of who handled the incident, I would
- 5 want and would expect that the appropriate staff would
- 6 conduct such a review, and to my knowledge that happens
- 7 pretty generally.
- 8 O. Going back to general communication, I understand
- 9 there's the primary superintendent, and then there's two
- 10 deputy superintendents, correct?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 O. And then under that there's numerous assistants,
- 13 superintendents, correct?
- 14 A. Assistants, superintendents, and then on the
- 15 non-instructional side you have the chief business officer
- 16 and chief facility's officer, et cetera.
- 17 Q. And those department chiefs would be equivalent
- 18 to an assistant superintendent --
- 19 A. They would.
- 20 Q. -- level of position?
- 21 A. They would.
- Q. Okay. And would they report directly to a deputy
- 23 superintendent?
- 24 A. I don't know whether they report directly to the
- 25 deputy or directly to the superintendent.



- 1 Q. Okay. As a board member, do you have
- 2 communication on a regular basis with deputy
- 3 superintendents?
- 4 A, Yes.
- 5 Q. Approximately how often?
- A. Well, probably once every couple of weeks. If
- 7 there is a situation about which I have a concern, I will
- 8 call a deputy superintendent more often than that if there
- 9 are more situations.
- 10 Q. And when you say situations, can you give me an
- 11 example of something that would be a concern to you that
- 12 you would reach out to a superintendent level person?
- 13 A. Yeah. A parent was having some problems getting
- 14 his child into the school, into the right program in the
- 15 school, and I would go to a deputy and say, can you help
- 16 this parent figure out how to maneuver to get his child
- 17 where she belongs.
- 18 O. And would that be based on a parent coming to you
- 19 to make a complaint?
- A. More often with a question than a complaint.
- 21 But, yes, it would be based on a parent or someone in the
- 22 school. A teacher might come to me and say, the bus seems
- 23 to be running late, something like that.
- 24 O. And how about assistant superintendents?
- 25 A. I tend to work more often with the deputy



- 1 superintendents but I do interact with the assistant
- 2 superintendents as well.
- Q. What type of situations would prompt you to have
- 4 -- or to communicate with assistant superintendents?
- 5 A. As an example, if someone wanted -- a nonprofit
- 6 wanted to use our playing fields for after-school sports
- 7 and needed to know how that would operate and what they'd
- 8 have to do, I would probably contact the chief facility's
- 9 officer and ask her to help that person with that process.
- 10 Q. And when you would reach out to either an
- 11 assistant superintendent or a deputy superintendent, would
- 12 you typically -- what type of communication? For example,
- 13 would you make a phone call, an e-mail?
- 14 A. Most likely I'd make a phone call. Sometimes
- 15 these are way too complicated for an e-mail or there's a
- 16 piece that I wouldn't think to tell them unless they asked
- 17 me a question. Sometimes I'll send them an e-mail. It
- 18 really varies.
- 19 Q. Would it be fair to say that most of your
- 20 communication with the superintendent staff would be by
- 21 phone?
- 22 A. I would have a hard time -- I think it's probably
- 23 a mix but I can't say most. A lot of it certainly is.
- 24 Q. And what other modes of communication do you
- 25 typically use other than phone?



- 1 A. E-mail, sometimes in person.
- Q. Has it been your practice to use text messaging
- 3 with --
- 4 A. No. I don't text. That's not true. I think
- 5 I've had -- sent or received about six texts in my life.
- 6 I've really -- It's just not something I do very much.
- 7 Q. Any texts with school employees?
- 8 A. Not that I can think of.
- 9 Q. All right. I want to talk a little bit about the
- 10 ESE department. When I say ESE, do you know what I'm
- 11 referring to?
- 12 A. Yes, I do.
- 13 Q. In your tenure as a school board member and
- 14 observing the information that you get and people that you
- 15 speak with, overall, are there any criticisms of the ESE
- 16 department and how it's run overall that you can articulate
- 17 to me?
- 18 A. I wish we had more people. I think that the
- 19 complexity of exceptional student education between laws
- 20 and case law and regulations and the tremendous diversity
- 21 of needs, special-needs children bring to us is very
- 22 complex, and I wish we had a few more people to work in
- 23 that area. But then I wish we had a lot more people in a
- 24 lot of areas, so --
- Q. And when you say you would like to be able to



- 1 have more people in ESE, work in ESE, in what types of
- 2 capacities do you think you would focus that effort?
- A. When I look at our ESE people who work with
- 4 parents and try to find the best solutions for their
- 5 children, they take a tremendous amount of time to do that.
- 6 And they take -- they have to have a lot of knowledge to be
- 7 able to help parents and teachers figure out what the very
- 8 best placement -- the very best situation is. And they
- 9 work awfully hard and they work long hours, and if we had
- 10 more, they might not have to work as long hours. But they
- 11 know what's happening when they go in and they're committed
- 12 to their kids so they might not say that, but that would be
- an area I'd bulk up if we had the extra resources.
- Q. And that would include, for example, teachers,
- 15 ESE teachers?
- 16 A. It would probably include both classroom
- 17 teachers, teachers who provide support and other people in
- 18 the district.
- But, again, that's -- you know, if we had -- in
- 20 an ideal world, that would be my wish. But that's -- I
- 21 don't know that that's really even a criticism. It's just
- 22 a gah-lee, I wish they had more time and a little more
- 23 help.
- Q. Would that include, for example, therapy staff,
- 25 physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech?



- 1 A. That would -- it would probably include almost
- 2 everybody who provides services to all our kids, but
- 3 especially the children with special needs.
- 4 Q. Now, it's my understanding that after the
- 5 evaluation of the ESE department that was done after
- 6 Bella's death came to light and Jenny Cabarello, one of the
- 7 things that was done -- strike that.
- 8 There was some reorganization at the
- 9 administrative level; is that correct?
- 10 A. That's correct.
- 11 Q. And an assistant superintendent was added,
- 12 correct?
- 13 A. I don't think that's correct. And I assume you
- 14 mean moved or fired, but I don't believe -- I don't believe
- 15 an assistant superintendent was moved.
- 16 Q. I'm not talking about moved. I'm talking about
- 17 an additional position was created for another assistant
- 18 superintendent.
- 19 A. Oh, we created an assistant superintendent for
- 20 supportive services I think as -- as part of an effort to
- 21 really provide a wider range of services, so that position
- 22 was created. I'm not sure that was -- I don't know what
- 23 all the reasons for that were.
- Q. Okay. What's the general salary range for an
- 25 assistant superintendent, if you know?



- 1 A. I don't know.
- Q. What was your involvement in the approval process
- 3 of hiring Joyce Wieland (phonetic) to the position of
- 4 general director of the ESE?
- 5 A. I voted on the recommendation. As a school board
- 6 member we vote on all personnel.
- 7 Q. You actually brought the motion, correct?
- 8 A. I have no idea whether I brought the motion or
- 9 not. It was the superintendent's recommendation. I might
- 10 have.
- 11 Q. What was your knowledge at the time of Ms.
- 12 Wieland's background?
- 13 A. I knew her as a very effective principal in
- 14 several situations.
- Q. And when you say several situations, what do you
- 16 mean?
- 17 A. She had been principal of at least two schools
- 18 and so she dealt with a variety of parents and
- 19 instructional issues.
- Q. Do you know how many people applied for that
- 21 position back in 2008 that Ms. Wieland was appointed to?
- 22 A. I do not.
- Q. Okay. And it's my understanding that there's a
- 24 -- applications come in, there's a screening process, then
- 25 an interview process and then the staff makes a decision on



- 1 who they want to recommend to the board, correct?
- A. I think that's probably correct, yes.
- 3 Q. In a general since?
- 4 A. Very general, yes.
- 5 Q. Okay. And then once a decision is made, who's
- 6 going to be recommended, it's my understanding that
- 7 typically a phone call is made to the board members by the
- 8 assistant superintendent to let each of them know who's
- 9 going to be recommended; does that sound familiar to you?
- 10 A. That's -- that's correct.
- 11 Q. Okay. And do you remember getting a phone call
- 12 with regard to the appointment of Wynne Tye -- excuse me,
- 13 of Joyce Wieland?
- 14 A. I don't remember, but that doesn't say I didn't
- 15 get one.
- Q. Sure. I'm just asking what you recall.
- 17 A. Yeah, I don't --
- 18 Q. If you do recall having that conversation.
- 19 A. I don't, I'm sorry.
- 20 Q. And do you recall raising a -- well, strike that.
- 21 Do you recall having any concerns about Joyce
- 22 Wieland being appointed -- recommended for the position of
- 23 the ESE director?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Do you recall whether or not any of the other



- 1 board members had any concerns about the recommendation to
- 2 put her into that position of ESE director?
- A. No.
- 4 Q. What's your understanding as far as what the
- 5 board can and can't do with regard to accepting a
- 6 recommendation made by the superintendent for an
- 7 administrative position?
- 8 A. I believe that in personnel matters we can accept
- 9 it or we can reject it for cause.
- 10 Q. And when you say for cause, what does that mean
- 11 to you?
- 12 A. I would have to ask the school board attorney in
- 13 a situation, a particular situation.
- 14 Q. Do you recall ever rejecting a recommendation for
- 15 an administrative position recommended by the
- 16 superintendent where cause was raised and it was rejected.
- 17 A. I don't have any recollection of something like
- 18 that.
- 19 Q. And I'm not talking about just of Ms. Wieland,
- 20 just in general?
- 21 A. Right. I don't. I can't think of an example,
- and I don't know that it's ever happened.
- Q. What's your understanding of Ms. Wieland's
- 24 experience in the area of ESE?
- A. I don't believe she has a certificate, but my



- 1 understanding -- knowledge, my person knowledge is that she
- 2 dealt with a lot of special-needs children and their
- 3 parents and situations like that during her time as
- 4 principal.
- 5 Q. And where do you believe you have that knowledge
- 6 from?
- 7 A. She was a principal at a school in my district
- 8 and I knew a lot of the parents, I often talked to them in
- 9 the grocery store.
- 10 Q. What school is that?
- 11 A. Dale Mabry.
- 12 Q. Dale Mabry. And what's the ESE type of
- 13 population in that school?
- 14 A. I couldn't speak to it now. I can tell you that
- 15 there were times when parents called and said, I'm at my
- 16 widths end, I don't know what to do. And I'd say call the
- 17 principal and they would call, and in one case she called
- 18 -- the parent called back and said, and this may not have
- 19 been when Mrs. Wieland was there, I don't remember exactly
- 20 the time, the people there are wonderful, thank you so much
- 21 for encouraging me to ask for help.
- Q. Is Dale Mabry a school that traditionally has a
- 23 high ESE student population?
- A. I don't know how high it is. I know that they
- often have special-needs kids, ESE kids.



- Q. But you can't say how many?
- 2 A. No.
- Q. What was the other school she was a principal of?
- 4 A. Westchase.
- Q. And what's your knowledge as far as the ESE
- 6 population at school?
- 7 A. Don't know it at all.
- 8 Q. Is that in your district as well?
- 9 A. No.
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. I've been there but I don't have much interaction
- 12 with them.
- 13 Q. You're in District 2, correct?
- 14 A. Yes.
- Q. What area does that encompass?
- 16 A. Essentially from, I think, Cypress Street to
- 17 Manoritha (phonetic), all the way down the Sea Coast to the
- 18 Manatee County Line and out to, depending on where you draw
- 19 that -- where you are at 301 or 401, roughly.
- Q. And during your entire tenure on the school
- 21 board, you've represented that same district?
- 22 A. I have.
- Q. Did you have any knowledge as it relates to any
- 24 concerns that Dr. Lamb had with regard to the
- 25 recommendation of Joyce Wieland?



- 1 A. No.
- Q. In your tenure as a school board member, how many
- 3 kids within the school system have passed away, whether it
- 4 was an accident or something completely -- you know,
- 5 illness or anything like that?
- 6 A. I couldn't give you a number. I know there are
- 7 some who die every year.
- 8 Q. So you're aware of at least one child a year that
- 9 you're aware of in general?
- 10 A. I wouldn't want to put it in a year, but I know
- 11 some years we've had a lot. I know our crisis team has
- 12 been very busy with communities grieving, but I can't give
- 13 you a specific number.
- Q. When a student dies, is that something that is
- 15 communicated to board members?
- 16 A. On occasion.
- 17 Q. Regardless of circumstances.
- 18 A. I'm trying to think. I'm sure it would be now
- 19 because the board members have asked for a different kind
- 20 of communication, but I can't speak to it in the past. I
- 21 know I've heard about instances but where I heard about it,
- 22 I can't tell you.
- Q. Okay. With regard to Bella Herrera, when did you
- 24 first hear about her death?
- 25 A. I don't remember. I know that sometime after



- that a reporter said, did you know about it, and I said, I
- 2 think so. And then I tried to figure out where I had heard
- 3 it, and I know -- I would assume -- let me try and -- let
- 4 me try and be quicker and brief. I think I heard about it
- 5 in the community. Where exactly or when exactly, I can't
- 6 tell you. I just remember thinking how sad it was.
- 7 Q. And in fact at the December 11th, 2012 board
- 8 meeting you acknowledged publicly that you had knowledge
- 9 about her death but you couldn't recall who told you, but
- 10 it was somebody -- not a staff member that told you?
- 11 A. I said I believe at the time I think I heard it
- 12 in the community.
- 13 Q. And as you sit here today, you still can't
- 14 remember?
- 15 A. That is correct.
- 16 Q. And when you heard it from someone in the
- 17 community, it was prior to knowledge about the lawsuit
- 18 being filed, correct?
- 19 A. I think so.
- 20 Q. Now, you said that you have not been to Sessums
- 21 in sometime and you don't believe since Bella's death, so
- 22 it wouldn't have been during an encounter at Sessums,
- 23 correct?
- A. Probably not. It was probably in the community.
- 25 That's where I have most of my conversations about children



- 1 in the schools.
- Q. And when you say communication, can you give me
- 3 some examples of what you're talking about when you refer
- 4 to that?
- 5 A. It could be in a store or a mall. It could be at
- 6 a meeting of friends, a library or some other community
- 7 group. It could be at church or a church.
- 8 Q. Or a community event that you're there as a
- 9 school board member participating?
- 10 A. Could be. Or I could just be there as a private
- 11 citizen. People know I'm on the school board, they talk to
- 12 me.
- 13 Q. Sessums is not in your district, correct?
- 14 A. I think that is correct.
- 15 O. And that's in the Riverview area, correct?
- 16 A. I think so but I'm not sure.
- 17 Q. Okay. How often are you over in the Riverview
- 18 area?
- 19 A. A few times a year.
- Q. When you say few, what does that mean?
- 21 A. Three, four, maybe five, maybe six. It really
- 22 depends on who invites me. It's probably more than that --
- 23 well, when I say south, if I think of the whole south
- 24 county area of my district, it's probably once or twice a
- 25 month but if you're limiting it to Riverview it's probably



- 1 three or four, maybe five times a year.
- Q. Okay. And that was true back in 2012, correct?
- 3 A. Uh-huh, yes. Sorry.
- 4 Q. And when you heard about Bella's death, what do
- 5 you recall being told other than she died?
- A. That's what I recall being told, that she had
- 7 died. It was very sad.
- 8 Q. Did they tell you where she died?
- 9 A. Not that I remember.
- 10 Q. And once you learned about -- well, strike that.
- When you learned about the death, did they
- 12 provide the name of her to you or was it just a student in
- 13 general?
- 14 A. I think it was a child. I don't think I heard
- 15 her name.
- Q. And this was before Jenny Cabarello's death,
- 17 correct?
- 18 A. Probably, yes.
- 19 Q. How did you learn about Jenny Cabarello's death?
- 20 A. I don't remember, but I think probably a staff
- 21 member called me.
- 22 Q. And when you heard about Bella's death, was that
- 23 something -- I know you said it was in the community, was
- 24 it in person that someone told you or was it a phone call?
- A. Oh, I think it was probably in person.



- Q. Okay. And once you were told that, you didn't
- 2 bring it to the attention of any of the other board
- 3 members, correct?
- 4 A. No. I mean, yes, you are correct.
- 5 Q. Would you agree with me that the school board is
- 6 responsible for the organization and control of the
- 7 district's public schools?
- 8 A. In an oversight basis, yes.
- 9 Q. And would you agree with me that the school board
- 10 is empowered to determine the policies necessary for the
- 11 effective operation and the general improvement of the
- 12 school system?
- 13 A. Sounds like you're reading from one of our
- 14 policies. I would have to agree with that.
- 15 Q. Okay. When did you see -- first see the bus
- 16 video that depicted the incident with Bella on the bus on
- 17 January 25th, 2012?
- 18 A. I don't remember. I think it was when a reporter
- 19 called me after the lawsuit had been filed and asked me to
- 20 look at it.
- 21 Q. So you had not seen it beforehand?
- 22 A. Not to my recollection.
- Q. Who's Lorrie Romanello?
- 24 A. I don't know.
- Q. Glen Lathers?



- 1 A. He's our chief safety officer.
- Q. Do you know who he reports to?
- 3 A. I think he reports to Mr. Valdes in HR, but I'm
- 4 not a hundred percent sure.
- 5 Q. Does he typically participate in board meetings
- 6 on a regular basis?
- 7 A. No. He is present at some and occasionally he'll
- 8 make a presentation.
- 9 Q. David Friedberg?
- 10 A. He's our chief security officer.
- 11 Q. And who does he report to?
- 12 A. I don't know.
- 13 Q. And is he routinely at board meetings
- 14 A. Usually, yes.
- 15 Q. Cathy Valdes?
- A. She's our chief facility's officer. Yes, she's
- 17 at all the board meetings -- well, unless she's -- she's at
- 18 almost all the board meetings.
- 19 Q. Does she typically make presentations to the
- 20 board on a regular basis or just present?
- 21 A. No. If a board member asks to have something
- 22 highlighted or has a question about facilities, she'll
- 23 answer it. But she doesn't -- it's not any kind of regular
- 24 schedule.
- 25 O. And how about John Franklin?



- 1 A. John Franklin is our head of transportation.
- Q. Is he typically at board meetings?
- 3 A. Yes, usually.
- 4 Q. Were you on the board in 1999?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Do you recall an incident involving Eric Martin?
- 7 A. That name doesn't sound familiar.
- Q. A sixth grade student who was involved in an
- 9 incident where a bus driver dropped him off at the wrong
- 10 bus stop and he ended up, after leaving the bus, getting
- 11 hit by a car?
- 12 A. I have no clear memory of that. I've -- I know
- 13 that we have bus drivers who drop kids off at the bus -- at
- 14 the wrong stop on occasion. Asking me to go back to 1999,
- 15 I'm sorry, without checking some records, I don't know.
- 16 Q. Well, there was a lawsuit involved. I just
- 17 wondered if that rung a bell with you. And that's no,
- 18 correct?
- 19 A. That's a no.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. Doesn't ring a bell.
- Q. All right. In February of 2011 there was an ESE
- 23 student with the initials CS, her first name Chelsea, who
- 24 was sent home with a spiral fracture of her femur. Were
- 25 you aware of that incident?



- 1 MR. GONZALEZ: Object to the form of the
- 2 question.
- 3 You can answer, if you can.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Pardon me?
- 5 MR. GONZALEZ: You can answer it, if you can.
- A. I have a recollection that there was a lawsuit.
- 7 That's all I remember about it.
- 8 BY MS. POWERS:
- 9 Q. You believe there was a lawsuit?
- 10 A. I believe there was a lawsuit, but that's all I
- 11 remember. It may have been a parent speaking about it.
- 12 I'm not sure there was a lot. I do remember hearing about
- 13 the child -- a child with that kind of injury.
- Q. Do you know the circumstances around the injury,
- 15 what happened?
- 16 A. Not off the top of my head.
- 17 Q. And were you aware that at the time of the
- 18 accident or subsequently?
- 19 A. I don't remember.
- Q. Later in 2011 there was an incident involving an
- 21 ESE student who was left on the bus. I believe it was on
- 22 December 15th of 2011, about a month before Bella's
- 23 incident, criminal charges were filed. Does that ring a
- 24 bell?
- A. It sounds familiar. I can't tell you that it



- 1 happened in that year. I don't remember very many
- 2 specifics about it.
- Q. Other than the date or when it happened, do you
- 4 recall the incident in general? Where a child was left on
- 5 the -- a ESE Child was left on a bus all day?
- A. Again, it sounds familiar but as to specifics, I
- 7 can't -- I can't say.
- 8 Q. We talked a little bit about the Cabarello
- 9 incident. You were aware of that, I understand it?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Okay. And on September 28th, 2012, there was an
- 12 incident involving an eight-year-old autistic child who was
- 13 kicked off of the school bus in Hillsborough County. The
- 14 bus driver was Stephanie Wilkerson who was subsequently
- 15 charged criminally. Are you familiar with that incident?
- 16 A. I'm familiar that it happened.
- Q. Do you know whether any -- whether the school did
- 18 any investigation?
- 19 A. I don't know whether it was the school or
- 20 district.
- Q. And when you say the school or the district, what
- 22 are you referring to?
- A. You asked me if I knew whether the school did any
- 24 investigation. I don't know who did the investigation. I
- 25 know there was an investigation.



- Q. Okay. When you say there was an investigation,
- who would have handled that on behalf of the school system?
- 3 I'm talking -- Not including sheriff's department, DCF,
- 4 anything like that. Within the school system itself was it
- 5 investigated?
- A. Well, the human resources officer -- office we
- 7 have people who do investigations, so I would have to
- 8 guess, assume, think that they, one or more of those people
- 9 would do an investigation. Now, how much further they go
- 10 beyond law enforcement, I can't speak to.
- 11 Q. When you say human resources, are you talking
- 12 about Offices of the Professional Standards?
- 13 A. Offices of Professional Standards is part of
- 14 human resources.
- Q. Okay. And going back to the accident involving
- 16 bus driver Stephanie Wilkerson, that we were just talking
- 17 about, you said you assume there was an investigation done
- 18 but you don't have personal knowledge of that, correct?
- 19 A. Correct.
- Q. You're just assuming based on --
- 21 A. I can't -- I can't tell you. You know, I
- 22 don't --
- Q. Well, those were your words. I'm just trying to
- 24 confirm.
- 25 A. Yeah, I'm --



- 1 MR. GONZALEZ: Object to the form of the
- 2 question.
- 3 A. I -- I don't have personal knowledge, to my
- 4 recollection.
- I remember being upset that it happened, but I
- 6 don't remember beyond that.
- 7 BY MS. POWERS:
- 8 Q. The school board has the authority to ask for an
- 9 investigation, don't they?
- 10 A. I suppose we can take a vote and ask for it. But
- 11 generally when something happens that is damaging to the
- 12 student it doesn't require a school board vote. The staff
- 13 investigates to try to figure out what happened and make it
- 14 not happen again or fix the problem.
- Q. And that's because that's what the policies and
- 16 procedures are for the school system --
- 17 A. That's our practice. I don't know if it's in the
- 18 policy. I would assume. Yeah, I would assume it is but --
- 19 Q. Going back to the video. I think I asked you
- 20 when you first saw it, and you said it was after a reporter
- 21 called you -- the lawsuit was filed with regard to
- 22 Isabella's death correct?
- 23 A. I believe that's correct. I believe that's
- 24 correct.
- Q. Where did you obtain the video to watch it?



- A. I certainly wasn't given a copy, and I don't
- 2 remember where I watched it.
- 3 Q. Were you given a disc to watch it off of?
- 4 A. No, I wasn't given anything physical. I watched
- 5 it some place, I just don't remember where.
- 6 Q. Who was with you when you watched it?
- 7 A. I don't remember.
- 8 Q. And you said you don't remember where?
- 9 A. That's what I said.
- 10 Q. Did you watch it on like a TV screen or was it
- 11 on a computer?
- 12 A. I don't remember.
- Q. What reporter was it that you spoke with?
- 14 A. I don't remember. It was somebody from the
- 15 media. I spoke to several at that time.
- Q. Do you recall whether on October 31st of 2012 you
- 17 received an e-mail for Mr. Egrity (phonetic) that a lawsuit
- 18 was going to be filed?
- 19 A. I don't recall.
- 20 Q. Would that have prompted you to track down the
- 21 video?
- 22 A. It might have. I don't remember.
- Q. Were you aware that right after the incident
- 24 happened in January of 2012 that John Franklin demanded
- 25 that the sheriff provide a subpoena to get the video that



- 1 they were asking for?
- 2 A. I have no knowledge of that.
- 3 Q. What was your reaction to the video?
- 4 A. Sadness. Deep sadness.
- 5 Q. Do you know how long the video was? How much
- 6 time you spent watching it?
- 7 A. I -- I don't remember it being to terribly long,
- 8 but I don't know how long it was.
- 9 Q. Do you know whether you've watched the full video
- 10 or maybe just clips that were posted on media web sites?
- 11 A. I can tell you I didn't watch clips on media web
- 12 sites. Whether -- I think I watched the whole video, but I
- 13 really can't -- I don't remember.
- Q. Do you recall at what point the video ended?
- 15 What point in the process in the incident, what was
- 16 happening?
- 17 A. I don't remember.
- 18 Q. Do you recall whether paramedics had gotten there
- 19 yet?
- 20 A. I don't remember.
- Q. Do you recall whether Mrs. Herrera had arrived at
- 22 the bus?
- 23 A. I don't remember.
- Q. Do you remember watching her get on the bus?
- 25 A. I don't remember.



- Q. Did you have sound with the video as well?
- A. I don't remember. Bear in mind that I saw it
- 3 several times and heard a lot of people talking about it so
- 4 I'm trying to give you answers based on your questions.
- 5 Q. I appreciate that. And I'm just trying to find
- 6 out what you recall about it. You said it was very sad.
- 7 A. Yes, I did.
- Q. What about it made you describe it as sad?
- 9 A. Well, gah-lee, we have a child in distress, we
- 10 have school employees in distress, and I now -- and I knew
- 11 when I watched the video, that the child had later died.
- 12 Q. But you can't tell me whether or not you saw Mrs.
- 13 Herrera on the bus with her or not on the video?
- 14 A. I can't. I don't remember. I have a lot of
- information now. I can't tell you what it was that I saw
- 16 at the time.
- Q. We know that you watched the video on -- around
- 18 or shortly after the law -- around the time that the
- 19 lawsuit was filed. Have you ever gone back to watch it
- 20 again after that?
- 21 A. After that period of time of several days or
- 22 weeks, I have not gone back to watch it again, no.
- Q. And when you say you're trying to establish what
- 24 you recall or what you saw versus what you've heard, can
- 25 you explain what you mean by that when you say what you



## 1 heard?

- A. Well, people talked about it. Reporters asked me
- 3 questions, people on the staff talked about it, we talked
- 4 about it at board meetings, and I also saw the video. I
- 5 can't separate those pieces.
- Q. What's your understanding of Bella's cause of
- 7 death? I understand you're not a doctor, just what your
- 8 understanding is.
- 9 A. I have a very limited understanding of it. But
- 10 my recollection, and this is based probably as much on talk
- 11 as on video, is that she was a child with special needs,
- 12 she had a seizure and she died at the hospital.
- Q. So you think she had a seizure?
- MR. GONZALEZ: Object to the form.
- 15 A. That is my recollection from what I've heard.
- 16 I'm doing the best I can, but I don't really know. And
- 17 really my concern was she died and that was a tragedy. Any
- 18 time we lose a child it's a tragedy
- 19 BY MS. POWERS:
- Q. It certainly is.
- 21 MR. GONZALEZ: I'm sorry?
- MS. POWERS: I said it certainly is.
- 23 BY MS. POWERS:
- Q. So with regard to cause of death, you would refer
- 25 to medical doctors to explain that?



- 1 A. I would.
- Q. Has the board collectively sat down to watch the
- 3 video together?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. To your knowledge, has each board member viewed
- 6 the video?
- 7 A. I have no knowledge of that.
- 8 Q. Have you ever listened to the 911 call?
- 9 A. I don't remember. Again, it's just there's this
- 10 clump of knowledge.
- 11 Q. Sure. On January 26th, 2012, so the day after
- 12 the incident and the day that Bella died, there was an
- 13 event called Battle of the Belts; were you aware of that?
- 14 A. I know that the Battle of the Belts is held every
- 15 year.
- 16 Q. Okay. Is that something you routinely go to?
- 17 A. No. I go on occasion but not routinely.
- 18 Q. What is it?
- A. It's an event to publicize wearing seat belts for
- 20 students. To encourage them to wear seat belts.
- Q. And what's the involvement of the -- of the
- 22 school system?
- A. I think -- well, I think it's run by the parents.
- 24 Generally I think board members or some board members are
- 25 invited, and I believe the superintendent is invited.



- 1 Beyond that I couldn't say.
- Q. Do you remember going to the event in 2012?
- 3 A. I don't.
- 4 Q. Superintendent you believe was there as well?
- 5 MR. GONZALEZ: Object to the form of the
- 6 question.
- 7 A. I don't remember. I don't remember being there
- 8 so I wouldn't know if she was there. I believe -- well, I
- 9 don't remember.
- 10 BY MS. POWERS:
- Q. When was the last time you went to a Battle of
- 12 the Belts event?
- 13 A. I don't remember. We would have to check my
- 14 calendar.
- Q. Is that something you keep track of?
- 16 A. I don't. My secretary does, I believe, keeps our
- 17 calendars.
- 18 Q. After watching the video of the bus incident
- 19 involving Bella on January 25th of 2012, did you have any
- 20 criticisms of how the school personally handled the
- 21 situation?
- 22 A. No.
- MS. POWERS: I think I'm just about done. Let's
- just take a quick break and then we'll finish up.
- 25 THE WITNESS: Okay.



```
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off the record at
 1
 2
     3:13.
          The time is 3:15. We are back on the record.
          MS. POWERS: I have no further questions.
 4
     appreciate your time today.
 5
 6
          THE WITNESS:
                        Thank you very much.
 7
          MR. GONZALEZ:
                         Thank you.
 8
          THE WITNESS:
                        Thank you.
          THE COURT REPORTER: Is it going to be read or
10
     waive?
11
          MR. GONZALEZ: We will waive.
12
          THE COURT REPORTER: And are you going to order?
13
          MS. POWERS: Yes, please.
14
          THE COURT REPORTER: Do you want a copy?
15
          MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, please.
16
          THE VIDEOGRAPHER: This completes this
     deposition. We are going off the record at 3:15.
17
18
          (Deposition concluded at 3:15 p.m.)
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
```



1	CERTIFICATE OF OATH
2	
3	STATE OF FLORIDA
4	COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH
5	
6	I, Lindsey Ashworth, Shorthand Reporter and Notary
7	Public, State of Florida, certify that CANDY OLSON
8	personally appeared before me and was duly sworn.
9	Witness my hand and official seal this 20th day
10	of November, 2013.
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	At Arm Art with
17	Lindsey Ashworth Lindsey Ashworth, Notary Public
18	State of Florida, My Commission: EE862359, Expires: Jan.02, 2017
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	



1	CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
2	
3	STATE OF FLORIDA
4	COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH
5	
6	I, LINDSEY ASHWORTH, Shorthand Reporter and
7	Notary Public, State of Florida, Certify that I was
8	authorized to and did stenographically report the
9	deposition of CANDY OLSON; that a review of the
10	transcript was not requested; and the foregoing transcript,
11	pages 4 through page 52, is a true and accurate record of
12	my stenographic notes.
13	I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee,
14	attorney, or counsel to any of the parties, nor am I a
15	relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or
16	counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially
17	interested in the action.
18	Dated this 5th day of December, 2013.
19	
20	
21	
22	Lindsey Ashworth Lindsey Ashworth
23	
24	
25	
1	



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