

# Greece schools settle age bias case

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GREECE — The Greece Central School District has reached settlements with three teachers who accused the district of discriminating against them because of their age.

Board of Education President Ken Walsh said the board's legal team reached settlements last week with Evelyn Krane, Carole Giordano and Cheryl Livoti, reading specialists who retired in 2004.

According to a lawsuit they filed in January, the district under former Superintendent Steve Walts used teacher evaluations "to pressure, coerce, intimidate, unlawfully induce and manipulate these older teachers to leave the employment of the district and retire." Their complaints and two others led to the suspension and eventual resignation of three top district administrators earlier this year.

Walsh said it was too early to release details of the settlement, but he said the board might do so at its scheduled meeting June 13.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission determined last year that there was probable cause to support the charges by Krane, Giordano and Livoti as well as charges by two others not party to their suit.

Walsh said the board's attorneys are also negotiating with teacher Mary Donlon, who filed a separate age discrimination suit in January.

The district is also trying to resolve a complaint by teacher Terry Luther, who said she was singled out for unfair treatment after she told a supervisor that some of the curriculum didn't challenge her students. Luther's attorney, J. Nelson Thomas of Dolin, Thomas & Solomon, said mediation sessions are being scheduled.

The EEOC had referred Luther's complaint to the U.S. Department of Justice for possible action. Thomas said the department has not yet taken any action on her behalf.

The teacher evaluation process was the subject of an investigation begun in September.

At that time, the board put then-Superintendent Margaret Keller-Cogan, Human Resources Executive Director Brian Ladewig and Assistant Superintendent Kathleen Pagano-Fuller on paid leave pending completion of an investigation by Berry Consulting Services.

The investigation was completed in December, but the district has refused to make public the results.

On Jan. 31, Keller-Cogan settled her contract with the board and resigned. Pagano-Fuller and Ladewig resigned in March.

None was ever officially accused of wrongdoing. □

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