



## Mandatory child abuse reporting law earns criticism

*Senator Reschenthaler readies legislation linked to reasonable cause to suspect standard*

**June 10<sup>th</sup>** -- This week the Pittsburgh Tribune Review ran a story ([Pennsylvania's child abuse reporting law draws fire for perceived vagueness](#)) suggesting that Pennsylvania's mandatory reporting of child abuse law "is vague and confusing."

Critique of Pennsylvania's mandatory reporting law has been at the heart of two investigative grand juries.

A Dauphin County Grand Jury in 2013 and now a 2016 [Allegheny County Investigating Grand Jury](#) examined Pennsylvania's mandatory reporting law (its contents and whether it was followed) as they investigated sexual assaults or misconduct within two different school districts.

The Allegheny County Grand Jury completed an "extensive nine month inquiry" into the "actions, and lack of action taken by administrators of Plum Senior High School and by the School Resource Officer." The Grand Jury said it had "uncovered systematic failures to protect students" when a "blind eye" was turned to "obvious signs of teacher misconduct."<sup>1</sup>

Three teachers at Plum Senior High School have faced criminal charges related to sexual assault of students. Another teacher has been charged with witness intimidation. It is worth noting that the Leechburg Area School District (also in Western PA) is also under the microscope for employees allegedly failing to report suspected child abuse.<sup>2</sup>

The Grand Jury related to the Plum Senior High School was focused on "whether members of the administration and/or staff and/or other individuals assigned to work at Plum Senior High School had a reasonable cause to suspect" that one of the teachers "had been involved in multiple sexual relationships with female students at the school over the last several years and, if so, why no information about such

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wtae.com/blob/view/-/35286554/data/1/-/jms3ub/-/CInefra-grand-jury-findings-PDF.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wtae.com/news/leechburg-area-schools-staff-allegedly-didnt-report-child-abuse-placed-on-leave/39875370>