



JESSE BACON, SUPERINTENDENT  
ADRIENNE USHER, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
BRANDY HOWARD, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER  
TROY WOOD, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

**DATE:** June 12, 2023

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**TO:** Mr. Troy Wood, Chief Operations Officer/Support Division

**FROM:** <sup>BN</sup> Berniece Nyarko, Title IX Coordinator/Supervisor Social Services

This investigation is the result of a complaint received from 2015 Bullitt Central Graduate Ms. [REDACTED] who alleges intentional grooming, inappropriate communication, sexual assault and harassment against Bullitt Central High School Band Director Mr. Rodney Stults. Her concerns arose from expressed personal experience and potential threat to current band students who could be affected by alleged behaviors.

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**Summary:**

This investigation is the result of concerns expressed by Ms. [REDACTED] via email on May 19, 2023 in which she expressed personal concerns from past interactions as a student during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years as a Junior and Senior at Bullitt Central High School. Within the complaint she describes a "wildly inappropriate relationship with current Band Director Mr. Rodney Stults. It is her recollection that she was groomed and sexually abused by a person who she worshipped and adored as a child and student. Ms. [REDACTED] is a self-described successful professional flute player who presently has a career as a teacher and currently owns a thriving private flute studio. In reflection, she describes her relationship with Mr. Stults as someone she thought was a friend who took advantage of her when no one was around. Ms. [REDACTED] makes reference to a trip taken to Red River Gorge in June of 2015 at the personal invite of Mr. Rodney Stults for all graduated Senior band students. Ms. [REDACTED] reports joining Mr. Stults with approximately five additional graduated classmates. She describes the date of the trip as, "conveniently turning 18 years old two days prior." Ms. [REDACTED] further expressed concern that, "students are not safe" with Mr. Stults. She shares being diagnosed with PTSD approximately three years ago from her then experience. According to her written statement she quotes, "during class with Rodney, he would frequently encourage myself and my female friends to SIT ON HIS LAP, hug him, let him kiss our cheek, etc. In lieu of these allegations, Ms. [REDACTED] requested that Mr. Stults should be investigated and his employment with BCPS subsequently terminated accordingly. She further states, "I won't let go of this until something is done." Ms. [REDACTED] has requested a response to her email and forewarned of going public with information.

In response to recent allegations the focus of this investigation consists of determining if any similar behaviors are allegedly continuing with current students. The following information are excerpts from multiple interviews as transcribed by Microsoft Office and WAV file.

**May 23: I (Berniece Nyarko-TIXC) interviewed [REDACTED] for any additional comments or information. She expressed addressing the majority of her personal concern in the original email and could not recollect very much additional content. She indicated that she had spoken with Shepherdsville Police and is moving forward with a criminal complaint. According to her interview, some of the following information was collected:**

Ms. [REDACTED] describes the first contact she conversed with Mr. Stults was reportedly through the social media app Messenger her Junior year of high school in 2014. The conversation was allegedly initiated by Mr. Stults requesting a message in reference to All-State band results from an audition. She contends replying and asking if he was aware of her results. Mr. Stults allegedly responded and from that point forward, all of their communication was established through Facebook which continued throughout her enrollment as a BCPS student and briefly after graduation.

Ms. [REDACTED] reported that Mr. Stults would contact her late nights and discuss what she describes as blatantly inappropriate conversations while still a minor, but closer to the age of 18. Initial conversations originated with sharing various band information, however progressed to

conversations that included references to Mr. Stults making statements that "he loved me", "I was so pretty," "I looked better without makeup," "I should cut my hair", "I should wear my hair a different way."

Ms. [REDACTED] reports that Mr. Stults would call her while intoxicated however had no way to prove the accusation. She continued to claim that her parents were unaware that he messaged her as frequently, however presumably assumed the contacts were solely related to band communication.

Ms. [REDACTED] reports attending the same church as Mr. Stults which resulted in a formed measure of trust between the two families.

Ms. [REDACTED] makes the following claim that the majority of her concern stems in reference to an annual trip taken after graduation at the invitation of Mr. Stults that specifically occurred two days after her 18th birthday to Red River Gorge. This is reportedly when she allegedly expressed experiencing what she describes as sexual harassment. Ms. [REDACTED] in reflection identifies the stipulation to have reached 18 years of age as a red flag rather than passed off as merely a liability issue. She suggests that some students who attended the trip were not 18 years of age at the time, however Mr. Stults was more concerned regarding her birth date.

Ms. [REDACTED] states the following: "He had a gun on the trip. He brought alcohol on the trip. He was definitely drunk with us on that trip."

Ms. [REDACTED] alleges Mr. Stults brought a two person tent on the trip and chose to sleep in the tent with approximately five female students instead of the tent with the two male students.

Ms. [REDACTED] alleges that Mr. Stults was possibly shirtless without pants and in his underwear, but could not confirm.

Ms. [REDACTED] alleges that Mr. Stults slept very close to her, was rubbing all over her body, kissed her face, neck and continuously reminded her of the gun. At some point, Mr. Stults allegedly pulled the firearm out and Ms. [REDACTED] decided to leave the tent.

Ms. [REDACTED] states that she was unaware that Mr. Stults followed her out the tent and suggested she should not use the enclosed campsite bathroom because of it's distant location yet could not confirm the accuracy of past memory. As an alternative Mr. Stults allegedly suggested that she use the bathroom outside in the woods.

Ms. [REDACTED] states that she complied, "And right when I was no longer wearing pants he shined like a flashlight on my vagina. I think it may have been his phone, and I still don't know if he was like taking a picture or what he was doing. I told him to stop multiple times and he just stood there like staring at me with a light on me so, and then he did like follow me back to the tent; and then the next day, he pulled me away from like all the other kids and told me I couldn't tell anyone what happened, uhm and that like nothing happened and I can't talk about it. Uhm, I

think he may have said, because I might lose my job. Obviously, no one heard that conversation, but that's what I recall of it. But leading up to that we always had a pretty inappropriate relationship. He would cuddle students. He had female students to sit on his lap, like at school which we did."

Ms. [REDACTED] continues stating that, "He would kiss us like on the face at school. He messaged more than just me and was messaging other girls and calling other girls, but I think me more than anyone else."

Ms. [REDACTED] reports working at Walmart after graduation, however had not reached 18 years of age and Mr. Stults allegedly would, "show up at my work and like some of my coworkers were like, who is this person, like what is going on. Like wondering if we were dating like whatever."

Ms. [REDACTED] reports, "he had us come to his house while we were students. Uhm, we would have like marching band meetings at his house. He had pool parties at his house. Mostly girls would attend and we would meet like in his basement. Whenever we would go to his house there was usually no else there. No other adults."

The remaining information suggests statements allegedly made after Ms. [REDACTED] exited high school and obtained the age of majority. Ms. [REDACTED] disclosed that she has recently made statements to Shepherdsville Police, restated that the relationship was not appropriate and because he is still respected within the community, parents blindly trusted him with their kids. Ms. [REDACTED] strongly suggested that students are unsafe around Mr. Stults.

**May 25th-I (TIXC-Berniece Nyarko) interviewed Bullitt Central High School Band Director Mr. Rodney Stults** as a result of the allegations. I asked Mr. Stults to discuss his recollection and any information he could share in response to the recent email. Mr. Stults responded by asking if he could share background information, hesitating and then asked if the dialogue could start with the prepared questions. I (TIXC) requested further confirmation to start the interview with questions; however, conceded and encouraged Mr. Stults to respond with background information. Mr. Stults began and suggested that band kids are different from guitar kids due to the length of time that is spent with each subgroup. He suggests that band students have more of a bond because of the amount of time they spend with their families through band travel, activities and the significant amounts of time commitment that surrounds the group. He suggests that he always treats the students, "like they are mine." Rodney Stults compares band families as a group of young band parents similar in age as he, more specifically during the earlier years of his career as Band Director beginning in 2000 to present. He describes its evolution as a nurturing atmosphere for students. Mr. Stults further explained that the Stults and [REDACTED] family attended church together and were part of a smaller subgroup and included several other band families. According to his recollection, the 2015 Red River Gorge trip was on June 19th. He later confirmed that his conversations with Ms. [REDACTED] was connected with him via Facebook Messenger through approximately May 28, 2017. It is his recollection that Ms. [REDACTED] continued with visits to the school to observe his class, as well as visitation to his house for dinner two full years after the Gorge trip. Due to the casual nature of his family's



relationship with the [REDACTED] family, he was allegedly asked by [REDACTED] (mother) to speak with the older sister [REDACTED] regarding an illicit relationship. Mr. Stults recalls accusations of a sexual nature from [REDACTED] that surfaced in 2019 regarding the same 2015 Red River Gorge trip, however nothing specific was ever stated as to what supposedly happened other than, "he did bad things." According to Rodney and wife Stacey Stults, the accusation coincidentally was in retaliation as a response for not attending Ms. [REDACTED]'s wedding the same year. Rodney Stults describes "doing life" with the [REDACTED] family. "They were close friends for years. It broke my heart." He felt it was unfair that he was never given an explanation of what the accusations were at the time.

(TIXC) I asked if he was aware of the allegations ("bad things") stemming from 2019. **Rodney Stults** responded, "Well, just from the email." (TIXC) I replied, the present complaint is about [REDACTED] **Rodney Stults** responded, "Right, I'm assuming that it's the same thing." I asked if it were the same allegations, to which **Rodney Stults** responded, "I am assuming. Ma'am I don't, I don't know. I say that [REDACTED] didn't tell me, but I don't, because I don't know. It's possible that I'll know and I'll remember. Does that makes sense because of the whole stroke thing. Like I don't know if I knew the accusations. I don't think I did though. I'm pretty sure that [REDACTED] never told me what the accusations were. Did I answer your question?" (TIXC) I replied, "Okay, so she never told you what the accusations were,...**Rodney Stults** replied, "No." (TIXC) I replied, "but you don't know whether you knew or not due to your stroke? **Rodney Stults** replied, "Correct, but I'm pretty sure I didn't." (TIXC) I replied, "Okay so, I guess my first question is do you remember any sexual assault? **Rodney Stults** replied, "No, absolutely not." (TIXC) I asked, "Okay, do you have any recollection of what they could possibly be potentially referring to that they're not speaking of? **Rodney Stults** replied, "I remember, I mean I remember the trip. I don't remember all the details because it's been eight years, but" (TIXC) I replied, "Well, anything sexual in nature obviously would stand, would be...**Rodney Stults** replied, "Obviously." (TIXC) I continued, "would stand out. So do you have,...**Rodney Stults** replied, "Obviously." (TIXC) I replied, "So do you have any recollection of anything between either of the sisters? **Rodney Stults** replied, "Ma'am, definitely not." (TIXC) I replied, "Okay."**Rodney Stults** replied, "Ma'am, this has nothing to do with sexual. This has nothing, this has to do with a kid who got, who was pissed off that I called her out, because her mom asked me to call her because she was sleeping with a married man and then, I can't even explain. I don't know what's going on with [REDACTED] I do, I do believe she, I think I do. I think I believe that she really does believe that something happened. I do." (TIXC) I asked, "And your memory is that? **Rodney Stults** replied, "No it wasn't me. No I mean. When I, don't hear what I'm not saying. Don't hear what I'm not saying please. Nothing happened on that trip with me. So, I am concerned that something has happened to [REDACTED]" (TIXC) I replied, "And when you say something has happened to [REDACTED] what are you referring to?" **Rodney Stults** replied, "Well I don't know. I don't know. I don't know, but for, I don't know. I just thought I knew [REDACTED] and this does not seem like [REDACTED] so, I don't know but this is, this is not about sexual this is, I don't know what this is about." (TIXC) I replied, "So you have no; so when the, when the allegations came in 2019 with the older sister and you know, you said there was a distinct shift with [REDACTED] what, what information did you receive in 2019 at that time, that disturbed you to the point where you noticed a shift in her? And who was making contact with you? Was it [REDACTED] directly? Was it the older sister who I think you said is

██████? Was it mom who I believe you referred to as ██████? ██████ I'm sorry." **Rodney Stults** replied, "████, ██████ (TIXC) I replied, "Okay." **Rodney Stults** replied, "Uhm, I don't know. I don't remember." (TIXC) "You don't. Okay" **Rodney Stults** replied, "Can, Stacey will need to fill in those holes okay. I'm sorry." (TIXC) Okay, that's no problem. **Rodney Stults** replied, "I'm sorry. I just don't remember." (TIXC) I replied, "Okay." **Rodney Stults** replied, "I spent hours on this and I thought I had everything filled in. I'm sorry."

When asked if he communicated with students through social media **Rodney Stults** replied, "We didn't have; back then, we didn't have, we didn't use Remind a lot back then. That wasn't prevalent back then. "We're a little bit different with this group of kids who were, who were kids of; that were in our small group, you know." Upon further question, Mr. Stults confirmed that he communicates with students by giving frequent compliments referring to them as "pretty" and vocalizing statements such as "I love you." **Rodney Stults** replied, "Yes, no more than any other student."

According to Mr. Stults, the Red River Gorge camping trip has been actively attended since approximately 2005 through 2018 with the exception of about three years. It is described as a non-sponsored school trip for former band students who have graduated and are accompanied by him on an overnight camping trip. Senior parents are aware, however signed permission was not a prerequisite to attend. The dates to camp are collectively decided by checking calendars for work schedules, personal family schedules and around female menstrual cycles. Three optional days of the week are given between Monday through Friday. Weekends were exempt due to a high volume of crowds. Rodney Stults states that no trips have been scheduled for approximately five years and Covid restrictions.

When asked, Rodney Stults denies encouraging any students to sit in his lap. "There has never to my recollection, there have never been a female student sit in my lap with the exception, there's a little bit, there's a little Down syndrome girl that is in BC right now that two year ago or one year ago sat in my lap one time and I didn't stop her and but she; but I didn't let her the next time. In my twenty years of teaching, that's the only time I recall that happening, ever. I'll go ahead and tell you boys sit in my lap all the time to be goofy, and it's usually their moms encouraging it and taking pictures to be silly and put it on Facebook."

When asked if it were a common occurrence for Mr. Stults to hug and kiss students **Rodney Stults** replied, "Yes I do. I'll kiss them on the forehead or the top of the head, yes." Mr. Stults however denies kissing students on the neck, mouth and cheek area.

When asked if he had regular band meetings and pool parties at his home and if band students were invited. **Rodney Stults** replied, "So we have class reps. It will be the drum major, the assistant drum major, and then two people from each class that the class picks and hit the show tunes for marching band and yeah, they come to my house in, in a, in summer." Mr. Stults continues and claims not to have had this type of activity for at least ten years however, students of parents that are close friends come over for various reasons. When asked if there

was a possibility that students within the last four years have come to his house for any reason **Rodney Stults** replied, "It is possible."

When asked if students were allowed then and now to skip classes to sit in his office **Rodney Stults** replied, "Yeah, we don't have that. That does not happen."

When asked if students are allowed to leave the building to get fast food, **Rodney Stults** replied, "I don't recall."

When asked if he would lay in students' laps, kiss on their faces and play with their hair **Rodney Stults** replied, "No."

When asked if he was flirtatious with [REDACTED] or other students **Rodney Stults** replied, "No."

When asked if he would hold students' hands, **Rodney Stults** replied, "Well can you tell me about that? I mean like there; yeah, there are situations like where if the students like more; ok like in a situation like that, yeah."

When asked if he had anything else to add **Rodney Stults** replied, "Ms. Berniece, you can't see me how I am. You hear me. Girl, I love my job. I've been here for 21 years. Been through a lot. I love kids and I really treat them like their my own. You don't know me, and so you don't know I'm telling the truth. I mean I very well could be lying to you. You don't if I could be lying to you, but the kids at Bullitt Central love me and they miss me real bad and I miss them real bad. And they need me back there. And no offense, but this is stupid."

**May 26, 2023**-I met with **Stacey Stults**, wife of Rodney Stults. She explained that [REDACTED] and Stults' families have known each other for a long time from band and church. She describes the [REDACTED] family consisting of three siblings and former students who participated in the band. When asked to describe the relationship with the family **Stacey Stults** replied, "Alright, well so yes, we're talking back in 2015, now the [REDACTED] family was with us longer than that because there's an older sister and there's a younger brother, so we've knew that family for a long time." Ms. Stults makes reference to developing an even closer relationship with band students than other teachers because of being with them for approximately four years and participating in lots of competitions, band camps and things outside of school. Over time, these parents become involved as "band moms" who complete tasks such as fixing lunches, participating with travel and spending lots of time together. Ms. Stults confirmed that a closer relationship was established through a small church group that both families attended. **Stacey Stults** describes Rodney Stults as the following, "My husband is the kind of person that loves and loves big his kids. He does the things she said in the email about saying that he loved her and that she was beautiful. He tells all the kids that to this day. And I will say this about my husband that, you know when we were going through the trauma of COVID and we weren't supposed to be touching kids and all of those things, he still did and those kids would line up at the door because they knew he would give them a hug. That's just the kind of teacher he is." Ms. Stults describes not being surprised by the recent email and made the following statement:

"So when I received the email on Friday, this was not new information to us. We had former students and band parents telling us that this family was talking about this back in 2019, so the alleged incidents happened in 2015. Around 2019, we were being told that they were saying these things about Rodney and so it wasn't a surprise."

I asked if Rodney Stults kisses students on the cheek. **Stacey Stults** replied, "Yeah, he does absolutely with permission knowing those kids are comfortable with it. There are kids that are not comfortable with that and he would not do that and I mean there are kids that he goes in for a hug and they're like, nah man and then he doesn't."

I asked if students were invited to come to their home for band meetings and pool parties regularly. **Stacey Stults** replied, "Yes, because for a while when they were planning marching band shows he had what he called; I can't remember what he called them. They were basically reps from each grade level. So like two freshmen, two sophomores, two juniors, two seniors like this committee, they got to help plan what the next show was going to be and those people were like voted on within the band like they were the section leaders and drum major and that kind of stuff. But yeah, because they were planning it in the summer, those kids would come to our house, they'd have a meeting at our basement around our kitchen table and yeah he would invite them to swim afterwards or whatever, yeah."

I asked if any students were singled out or pulled away in a situation one-on-one with Rodney Stults without supervision. **Stacey Stults** replied, "I mean sure, there was times he had not a student in his office. I mean, that's the general or you leave your door open."

I asked if she was ever absent when students were visiting the home. **Stacey Stults** replied, "I can't say that beyond a shadow of a doubt. I would say, if I wasn't there probably one of our kids was. I mean, I don't remember him ever being alone, especially not with like one student in our home."

**May 26, 2023-** I met with Bullitt Central **Social Studies Teacher Mr. Allen South**. He described a long term history between he and Mr. Stults. He made reference to being interviewed for a past investigation involving Rodney Stults. I asked if he was ever contacted by any students sharing information that made them uncomfortable in reference to Rodney Stults. **Allen South** replied, "Well Mr. Stults and I ironically this is not the first time I've been interviewed about an incident with Mr. Stults but we went to middle school together, to high school together, both in the band. So he was a year older than me but we certainly knew each other well those years and went away to college, never spoke or anything like that and then I got a job here at Bullitt Central 17 years ago, he was already the Band Director. So we kind of reconnected and we're friendly you know I'm kind of friendly with everybody. I'm that guy and you know I would say I know him pretty well or have for most of those years. I shared with you when you emailed me because I've seen the news and everything. I expected that that was what this was about and sent you those emails. A student who I never actually had, but I knew her from this hallway and things like that. Her name is [REDACTED] had messaged me on Facebook 2019 and asked me if I had ever had a student complain about Mr. Stults to which you know I didn't really."



I sent you the whole correspondence, so I didn't really respond, but I asked her what's up and she had told me of an incident of in her words, him purchasing alcohol for her and some other students on a camping trip to which I asked while you were a student. This was long passed years since she was a student. She said no it was right, it was after graduation and alluded to you know you can read through the text messages. I got the feeling that she was saying there was some inappropriate behavior." Allen South continued by explaining a personal situation that he posted on Facebook in which [REDACTED] responded. **Allen South** continued, "She responded and said that the post made her think of this and told her you know, I was like I don't, can't offer you legal advice. I said, I don't know if you know, you know like the Board of Education or anything like that you know. And since it was after graduation, but she had alluded to that there was other misconduct other than purchasing alcohol and I kind of said, you know, if well you think laws were broken, I said it kind of sounds like maybe they were and if you feel you should report this you should do that, but I'm not you know giving you legal advice and everything. Very awkward situation and very shortly after that Mr. Stults called me on the phone to ask me if I had talked to a student, which I thought was doubly weird and I was honest with him. I told him yes and asked him and you know he was well, what was said. What was going on? And I told him I said, I think it's weird that you're calling me. I think this is very weird, but I told him it's like this student has accused you of doing this and that. And he said, well what did you tell them? And I said, well I said if they think that laws were being broken they should call the police. And you know this and we're very friendly you know and maybe you know it wasn't a professional call you know. So he was like why would you do something like that? And I just said, I said well I think that's true. I think if something illegal happened they should call the police, but in that, he certainly did not deny that that happened. If I don't know, should I give you my opinion? (**Berniece Nyarko/TIXC**) I replied, "Absolutely, that's what I'm here for." **Allen South** continued, "He did not come out and say he did and if I was giving you my opinion as a person who knew him, I think he was alluding to that that was a true story. But I do not know, that's an opinion. We stayed cordial you know after that. I kind of took a few steps back and Rodney as I'm sure you probably know. In the last, I'd say two years his behavior is more erratic."

**May 30, 2023**-I met with **Stacey Oliver**, current teacher at Roby Elementary and former band student at Bullitt Central High School. I asked when she graduated. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "2009." I asked what her experience had been in the past, her connection and if she was apart of the band what it was like. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "Ok so yeah, I met Mr. Stults my freshman year. I was in the band and just kind of while I was there for four years, so I graduated and went to school to teach music. That's what I'm doing now and he played a big part in that, so that's initially how I met him. We still chat and things a little bit to this day not as often. I actually talk more with his wife than I do now because she teaches at Shepherdsville Elementary, so we as elementary music teachers get together like every few months and kind of collaborate and stuff like that and so he used to go to our church as well."

I asked if she had Mr. Stults all four years of high school. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "I did, yes. Because I was in band and so you know, you'd have marching band in the fall, concert band in the spring, so yeah I had him all four years."

I asked if she ever witnessed or experienced any perceived inappropriate behavior. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "No, he's always been a little quirky. He's always been super fun. I know that I mean I've never met a student that's not said that they don't like Mr. Stults. He has different personality, so he's loud and goofy. He was like that when I was in band, but the kids like really took to that and he made learning music fun. Yeah, I never saw any inappropriate behavior."

I asked if she ever witnessed Rodney Stults hugging, kissing or any students sitting in his lap. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "I don't remember seeing students sitting in his lap, but I do remember him hugging students. Yes, he was always like very like a very affectionate person. I've never seen it in like an inappropriate way, but yeah, I mean I remember one day in band he lined every single one of us up and gave every single one of us a hug. Like you know just one of my memories that I have."

I asked if she was ever a participant in any of the Red River Gorge trips. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "Yes, I think that tradition started when my senior year. There was a senior class. It was a small group of us. We went and we went hiking all day. I know we did like repelling off of some of the cliffs and then that evening we came back and we set up camp. The girls were in one tent. The boys were in another tent. He was in one tent. We cooked dinner over the fire. We all hung out. It started to pour rain that night which was terrible and then after that we were just kind of like quarantined to our tents after that. So and then we got up and came home the next morning, yeah."

I asked if she could remember any pool parties. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "Yes we did do, I think it was like after band camp. The BC pool when that was open. I don't even know if that's still open anymore."

I asked if she had any recollection of conversations by texting. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "No, I mean, I know we did text, but I couldn't tell you what the conversations were."

I asked if she had ever heard from any student that would have spoken anything inappropriate in reference to Rodney Stults. **Stacey Oliver** replied, "I have not. That's why I was a little caught off guard with when all this came out."

**May 30, 2023**-I met with **Bullitt Central Chorus Teacher Melanie Sparks** who was addressed specifically in the email as a close friend and co-worker to Mr. Stults. I asked if she could give any background information with regard to the complaint. **Melanie Sparks** replied, "Well I, I can promise you that none of it is true. I can just guarantee that he is the person of highest integrity and does everything that he does because he cares about people. As far as this student, I never had a lot of interaction with her family. She would come back for concerts after she graduated to visit and to and so I know her in that context that she would come back after graduation because like I said, that first year when she was a senior, I was only in the building from 8:00 to 11:00 because I was part-time my first year and then band was always at the end of the day, so her class never crossed over my time. However, she would I mean she was around quite a bit because she wanted to be in the band room. So I know she went on to

do music education. She went to Mr. Stults' alma mater for college, but that's really I just don't know a whole lot about her and her family. I know what Stacey and Rodney have told me about how they used to be in close relationship as families outside of the work environment and how that kind of fell apart a few years ago, which is from what I know around the time that the family started to kind of speak negatively or ill towards the Stults family. But, I really don't know what else I could even add to that conversation because I just don't know her her family very well to that degree."

I quoted a reference in the email that read, "as you unfortunately were a witness to Rodney's behaviors for years." **Melanie Sparks** replied, "And I truthfully have no idea what she; so first of all, I was torn up that somebody would accuse me of being knowledgeable of a situation that was harmful towards a student and not doing anything about it. If my own husband were to do something harmful towards a child, I would do something about it. So a coworker, of course and I, I have reported things before that have made me uncomfortable. Nothing with Rodney and but with other people. I have gone to the principal and said, hey, I don't care for how this teacher is interacting with this particular student or X,Y or Z happened that doesn't feel right to me, but I have never in the nine years that I have been at Bullitt Central that I had anything that I would be concerned about with Rodney and I would trust my own children with him. Anyway, the fact that she would accuse me of taking lightly how I care for the students at Bullitt, Bullitt Central. Sorry. It's really harmful. I don't know, but yes I do know Rodney very well. We work collaboratively all the time because it's what we do. We, you know, our rooms connect by a hallway, so I typically know what's going on in his room. He knows what's going on in my room. We will swap classes and co-teach in different areas. If there's something that I need him to help with, we'll swap so that I can work with his kids. He'll work with mine. We have actually co-taught some classes before, so you know, I've been in his classroom almost as much as in mine and we do joint events all the time where I see how he interacts with parents and students alike. And I mean he's just, he's the best. He's just genuinely good and I'm just devastated that this is all; just because I know how false it is. I just don't know how someone could have such ill intent. I I don't know, I don't know what has happened to [REDACTED] I don't know what her past is, but I just, I know that she and Mr. Stults had a very healthy relationship and and you know when you live in the community where you work, you're going to have different kinds of relationships with families and students that are going to overlap. And so I know that that, that just happens sometimes. I have the same situation with myself where I'm friends with a parent and therefore the student and I interact differently because we have an outside of school relationship and so anyway, I have been witness to him as a person in his teaching and his interactions with people and I have nothing bad to say. I have no concerns about anything."

**May 31, 2023-I(Berniece Nyarko,TIXC)** met with random selection of current band students and asked regarding their interaction, observations and experience with Mr. Stults. I received the following chosen excerpt responses:

[REDACTED] replied, "I've been in band for four years and Mr. Stults has been the Band Director that whole time. I've done marching band for one and I have never interacted with Mr. Stults outside of band events or school." I asked if she had ever been one on one with Mr.

Stults over the four years and what in reference to. [REDACTED] replied, "Yeah. It's mostly just conversations. He'll pull students into his office occasionally. Usually it's just to ask me if I'm feeling ok, because sometimes he gets really worried because sometimes I look really sad and so usually pulling aside and ask if I'm feeling okay."

I asked how long the conversation usually takes place. [REDACTED] replied, "Less than a minute usually."

I asked if she had ever felt uncomfortable around Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "No."

I asked if Mr. Stults has ever hugged, kissed or touched in any way that made her uncomfortable. [REDACTED] replied, "He has hugged me before, but I've initiated almost all of those and I've never felt uncomfortable."

I asked about her observations of other students in the classroom when involved with band activities and to provide an overall assessment and description of Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "I have never witnessed him doing anything inappropriate with the students. I mean he's a really good teacher and he's, I think, like a key adult I feel safe around that I can trust him and I think he's good at his job."

[REDACTED] He was really, really fun. Like kids like being in his class. This year he is very, very fun, but you can tell that he's like his health has gotten a little bit worse, so he's kind of like I feel like mentally drained and just kind of like physically drained and he's not been at school a lot because he's been having like really bad migraines. Stuff like that. So I don't know, I definitely would say last year he was more like energetic and fun. But this year he tries to make it fun for us, but it's just not the same."

I asked if she had any one on one meetings with Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "Many times because he is; last year I was going through some hard struggles with my family hard. Like stuff I didn't want to talk to my peers because I felt like they wouldn't get it, but I couldn't go to my family obviously, so I would go to Mr. Stults and Ms. Sparks a lot."

I asked if she were ever uncomfortable during those conversations with Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "No."

I asked if Mr. Stults ever hugged or kissed her in any way. [REDACTED] replied, "We've hugged before, but not in like not longer than like a three second hug. You know what I mean? Not anything weird."

I asked if she's ever been encouraged or witnessed anyone sitting in Mr. Stults' lap. [REDACTED] replied, "No."

I asked when alone with Mr. Stults what area of the school building. [REDACTED] replied, "Usually his office in the band room."



I asked if she had ever been to Mr. Stults personal home. [REDACTED] replied, "Yes, but that's only because I'm friends with his daughter."

[REDACTED] I've known him for a little bit because my sister went here, but this is the first year I've had him as a student.

I asked about her overall assessment and interaction with Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "I know that he's funny and easy to work with."

I asked if she ever felt uncomfortable around Mr. Stults and if she ever witnessed anything inappropriate or made her feel uncomfortable. [REDACTED] replied, "Not really. No."

I asked if she had ever been one on one with Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "Maybe like in the hallway like talking about sectionals, chairs and stuff."

I asked if there were any personal conversations with Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "Not really. Maybe like volunteering and stuff. Like I guess it's kind of personal because I like volunteering, but it was for band stuff."

I asked if she had anything to add about Mr. Stults. [REDACTED] replied, "He's one of my favorite teachers."

**June 1, 2023-**I met with **Bullitt Central Art Teacher Ms. Allison Lupton** and asked to provide an overview of observations and interactions with Mr. Stults. "My first interaction with him was as a student. I was not in band, however my best friend was and it's a small enough school you know. "

I asked the year she graduated. **Allison Lupton** replied, "I graduated from here in 2006 as a student from here and then we actually have had interactions over the years in passing. Partially from being from the same community. We attend the same church and he also has remained close. Like he still kind of talks to everybody all the time. It feels like I'm always running into somebody who's either seen him recently or knows him. And then I ended up getting the job here in 2020, yeah 2020 and he is a teammate for me now because being in both being in the Arts Department. I work closely with him in that regard."

I asked how the relationship has been. **Allison Lupton** replied, "Good. I mean Mr. Stults is incredibly easy to work with. He's goofy, like his overall reputation around school is just that he is loving and silly and is always up for pranks with people. But he has a really good heart and if you to anybody and you'll see this actually at this level. It's like generations of people I feel like have had Mr. Stults and they all pretty much have the same, like same mentality towards him and that's just it's all positive. It's all good."

I asked if there was any witnessed behavior that would potentially raise red flags, anything out of ordinary and/or has a student ever complained. **Allison Lupton** replied, "No, I'm trying to think if I've heard a student complain about him. But no, like I feel like most of our kids love him. I know that you know there are some kids who didn't who maybe dropped out of band, but it was like for reasons like, they didn't practice enough and they weren't like, it was for whatever that kind of reason. It was never about him. I don't believe it was, just they had run his course with him. They were done. They didn't want to play anymore. Quit kind of deal, but no complaints."

I asked if she was ever aware of trips to the Red River Gorge. **Allison Lupton** replied, "I had been told that when kids graduated high school it wasn't a; it wasn't like a field trip or anything. It was like, it was like kids that he had known for a long time and had relationships with their families, like boosters and stuff like that. Sometimes he would throw it out there that; and I don't remember, I he's not had one since I've been here. I don't think at least I've not heard of one and I would have heard of it. We would have talked about it, but they would go on a trip to Red River Gorge and how I understood it, is that parents, you know, kids were graduated 18. It was just if they wanted to go. It was just a totally extracurricular. I never knew it to be a school thing. It was just kind of like a graduation thing. They've spent four years of their life. They want to go do that. One of his huge passions is being outdoors. He loves to hike and camp, and if he can do that he will."

I asked if she had witnessed students sitting in Mr. Stults' lap and/or kissing in public spaces. **Allison Lupton** replied, "Only time I've ever seen him kiss a kid is on top of the head like a grandparent. Another way of putting it and he, I will say, I should also say this, the only time I've seen him be like that close to a kid I feel like are kids that his own children have grown up. So, I did start teaching here when his sons were both seniors because he has twins and he currently has his daughter here now and some of those boys had run cross country or done various extracurriculars and been best friends with all these kids. So these kids have practically grown up at his house too, going in and out like you do with your friends and their parents and so his relationship with them was different you know, since they were little boys and he knew their families and they hung out and that sort of thing. So he would mess with them more. You know what I mean? He'd hug him, he silly like jokingly put them in a headlock in the hall and they're smiling the whole time. It was never, never anything that seemed out of place. It never raised a red flag. I never had a weird feeling about it."

I asked also in reference to "hugging" students. **Allison Lupton** replied, "Oh big hugger. Yeah, a lot of us are big huggers."

**Conclusion:**

This investigation is the result of the complaint submitted by Ms. [REDACTED] who alleges improper communication with a minor student during both her Junior and Senior enrollment between the 2013-2015 school year at Bullitt Central High School. She expressed being emotionally groomed as a minor and concerned that students are not safe around Band Director Mr. Rodney Stults. Ms. [REDACTED] claims that Mr. Stults improperly interacted and communicated with her as a student and potentially with other students. While there is no conclusive evidence that Mr. Rodney Stults intentionally grooms students the following information was determined.

Acceptable Use Policy adopted during the 2010-2011 school year read as follows:

**Employees shall not use any form of communications (phone/cell, phone/texting, or email) to discuss items of a "personal" nature with students that does not serve a legitimate professional, or educational purpose, unless the student's parent/guardian has knowledge of the communication and gives specific permission for same.**

The allegation that Mr. Rodney Stults violated BCPS policy by improperly communicating with a student in reference to Ms. [REDACTED] during her enrollment from 2013-2015 is **substantiated**. Communication between both parties by admission occurred on Facebook messenger and verified through submission of evidence.

No evidence has been provided to substantiate any current practice with other enrolled students.

The allegation and through admission that Mr. Rodney Stults kisses and hugs current students is **substantiated**.

Although Mr. Rodney Stults admits to kissing band students on the forehead and hugging them on occasions, there is no current evidence of sexual and/or discriminatory unwanted behaviors.

The allegations that Mr. Rodney Stults occasionally invites students to his personal residence for marching band meetings and pool parties through evidence and admission is **substantiated**.

Mr. Rodney Stults admits that band/section leaders are invited to his personal home during the summer for marching band purposes only. Students of close friends and families are also invited to stay and swim.

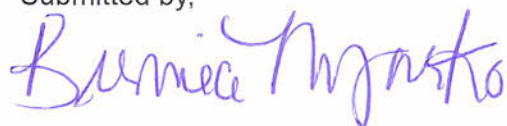
The allegation that Mr. Rodney Stults takes annual personal trips to Red River Gorge for graduated 18 year old Senior band students is **substantiated**.

Although there is evidence of past trips to the Red River Gorge, they are solely for the purpose of personal pleasure by invitation only. There is no evidence of Bullitt Central High School

sponsorship. Students attend on a voluntary basis. No recent events have been planned since 2018.

In lieu of these allegations and based on current student and staff responses, Mr. Rodney Stults received positive feedback and overall support. **Any disciplinary action as a result of this investigation is at the discretion of Superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon.**

Submitted by,



Berniece Nyarko, MSSW/CSW  
Title IX Coordinator/Supervisor Social Services

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