



June 27, 2025

Dear Parents and Community Members,

The Board of Education and I recognize that recent events have been difficult for our Denman Elementary students, staff, and the entire Quincy Public Schools community. While I previously issued a general statement confirming that the district had investigated and addressed the matter, I was and am limited in the information I can share because this involves students and is a personnel matter. Out of respect for the individuals involved and in accordance with legal and ethical obligations, we are not permitted to publicly disclose specific details. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed information has led to increased speculation, the spread of misinformation, and in some cases, entirely false claims.

In early November, prior to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) becoming involved, QPS received reports from parents regarding staff conduct at Denman School. The district promptly investigated and addressed the reported behaviors—specifically birthday spankings and the use of tape on students to ensure that such conduct ended immediately.

The QPS administration made it clear to all involved that this type of behavior, including distributing tape, students placing tape on their own mouths, or birthday spankings, even if purported to be playful or fun, is not acceptable in any school setting. Administration implemented corrective action consistent with the provisions of Illinois law on November 15. Such action has not been made public as it is a confidential personnel matter. All personnel cooperated fully in the internal investigation and subsequent DCFS investigation. Shortly after our investigation began, DCFS initiated its own review in November. That report, as shared by local media, determined there was no evidence of child abuse or neglect by Denman staff. However, it is important to emphasize: a finding of “unfounded” by DCFS does not mean that QPS condoned or approved of the conduct. We did not.

One of the central misconceptions that continues to circulate is that these behaviors persisted after November. This is not true. Since that time, the district has received additional concerns from parents, and we have taken each report seriously. Our follow-up investigations have been thorough and transparent. They included:

- Interviews with 36 students and parents,
- Reviews of numerous hours of security footage,
- 21 interviews with staff members regarding specific reports.

Each staff member confirmed they have not witnessed or participated in any further incidents involving tape or spankings since November. To date, after consideration of all the evidence uncovered in the investigation, we concluded that there is not credible evidence to show that the conduct continued after our November response and implementation of corrective action. As of June 25, all complaints brought to QPS have been fully investigated. DCFS has also conducted two independent investigations, one in November and one in April. Both were determined to be unfounded. The April investigation was unfounded due to either lack of evidence or missing key details such as specific dates, times, or individuals in the complaining report.

We are also aware of harmful and inaccurate comments circulating on social media that have targeted not only staff at Denman but also educators across the district. These claims are not supported by any evidence and are deeply damaging to the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly for our students. We stand firmly behind our staff and reject baseless accusations that harm their reputation and integrity.

QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

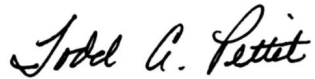
June 27, 2025

Page 2

Quincy Public Schools remains committed to the safety and well-being of our students and staff. We take every concern seriously, and we will continue to respond with transparency, due process, and appropriate action.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in making our schools safe, respectful, and student-centered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd A. Pettit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'P'.

Dr. Todd Pettit
Superintendent, Quincy Public Schools

On behalf of the Quincy Public Schools Board of Education:

Shelley Arns
Latonya Brock
Tim Davis
Damion Dodd
Rachael Petty
Curtis Sethaler
Jim Whitfield