

**SOUTH MIDDLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
4 Forge Road, Boiling Springs, PA 17007**

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
July 2, 2012**

The South Middleton Board of School Directors met on July 2, 2012, in Brenneman Auditorium at Boiling Springs High School for a Special Board Meeting. Board President, Thomas Merlie, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Recording Secretary called the roll with all members present except as designated:

**School Directors**

Mr. Steven Bear

Mr. Michael Berk

Mrs. Shelly Capozzi

Mr. Derek Clepper - **Absent**

Mr. Thomas Hayes

Ms. Pamela Martin

Mr. Thomas Merlie

Mr. Paul Slifko

Mr. Robert Winters

**Administrative Staff**

Dr. Patricia B. Sanker, Superintendent

Joseph Mancuso, BSHS Principal

Patrick Dieter, Athletic Director

**Visitors**

See attachment to the minutes.

**Board Secretary**

Richard R. Vensel – **Absent**

**Recording Secretary**

Beth Scott

**Solicitor**

Philip H. Spare - **Absent**

**INTRODUCTIONS AND RECOGNITION – None**

**CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

Mrs. Jennifer Taylor of Fairview Street in Carlisle, PA addressed the Board. The statement she made is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Justin Weibley, 10<sup>th</sup> grade student at Boiling Springs High School, was unable to attend the meeting, but his statement was read by his mother, but his stepmother, Mrs. Sandy Weibley. The statement is attached is attached to these minutes.

**TOPIC DISCUSSION - FOOTBALL**

Attorney Amy Guerin, of the Levin Legal Group, P.C., reviewed the Investigative Report and Recommendations regarding the July 2011 Football Team Camp operated by Albright College. The report is attached to these minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Berk made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, that the Board approves the agenda of July 2, 2012, with all corrections as indicated. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Berk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Capozzi, that the Board appoints Beth Scott as the recording secretary for the meeting of July 2, 2012. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Berk made a motion, seconded by Mr. Winters, that the Board appoints Patrick L. Dieter to the position of Director of Athletics/Facilities for a three (3) year term, commencing July 2, 2012, and ending June 30, 2015, and authorizes the Board President to execute an employment agreement with a first year salary in the amount of \$83,500. The employment agreement is subject to the approval by the District Solicitor prior to Board President's signature.

**On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Winters made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hayes, that the Board approves the investigative report dated July 2, 2012, regarding the July 2011 football team camp operated by Albright College, and directs and authorizes the School District Administration to take any and all steps necessary to implement the recommendations contained therein.

**On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

Tracy Perry spoke about the July 2011 football camp and her son's involvement with drugs at the camp. She hopes that in the future the "zero tolerance policy" is enforced.

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Laurie Enck stated that the report reviewed by Amy Guerin of the Levin Legal Group did not recommend firing any of the football coaching staff nor was there any suggestion that the Board hold Albright College liable for having faulty air conditioning units.

Carol Nelson stated that the District have a policy to verify that air conditioning is functioning prior to students' arrival at a sports camp. She also stated that there is a perception among some parents that the school district is punishing the football coaching staff for what happened at the team camp last July. Mrs. Nelson commented that she supports Coach Heiser. He was a good influence on her son, and she wants the coaching staff back.

Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Mellott both spoke about the timing of what they perceive as doing away with the old coaching staff. Mr. Mellott asked if the Board was seeking to make changes to the current football staff, why didn't they start looking immediately after the 2011 season, rather than five or six weeks prior to the 2012 preseason training.

Mrs. Mellott spoke about a current assistant football coach that was more than qualified to serve as the head coach. She was disappointed that Coach Frier was not appointed as the head coach.

### **FOR THE RECORD**

Mr. Merlie stated that the Board met in Executive Session on a personnel issue from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. that evening.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Slifko made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bear, to adjourn the special meeting at 9:05 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Scott  
Recording Secretary

**FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS  
REGARDING THE  
JULY 2011 FOOTBALL TEAM CAMP  
OPERATED BY ALBRIGHT COLLEGE**

**JULY 2, 2012**

**Prepared By:**

**Levin Legal Group, P.C.**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On July 22, 2011, the South Middleton School District (“School District”) family suffered the tragic loss of Boiling Springs High School football player Samuel Gitt (“Gitt”), who passed away while attending a football team camp at Albright College. Local authorities ruled Gitt’s death to be the result of natural causes. The School District began its own investigation into the events at team camp immediately upon learning of Gitt’s death. The initial investigation was conducted by School District Superintendent Dr. Patricia Sanker (“Sanker”), with assistance of Boiling Springs High School (“BSHS”) Principal Joseph Mancuso (“Mancuso”). Sanker’s investigation included an initial group interview of the coaches who attended team camp, followed by individual interviews in Fall 2011. Additionally, School District employees spoke with Gitt’s roommate at team camp and four members of the BSHS football team (the team captains).

In February 2012, the South Middleton Board of School Directors (“School Board”) retained the Levin Legal Group, P.C. (“LLG”), to assist it with a new phase of the investigation and ultimate conclusion of the investigation into the events at Albright College’s team camp. Parents of BSHS football players were invited to attend a meeting on March 15, 2012, to learn about the purpose and scope of the investigation. The investigation officially began the next day, March 16, 2012, and continued through the end of the May 2012.

## **II. SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION**

The scope of the investigation was described to parents at the March 15, 2012, meeting as follows: to engage in fact gathering regarding the events at team camp, and to understand some of the “cultural” issues surrounding the football team. The significance of understanding football “culture” at BSHS is that it provides context for individual decision making. It was clearly communicated to parents that a purpose of the investigation was to inform School Board deliberations regarding whether there are any policies it could enact and/or modify to enhance the safety and welfare of the School District’s students, even when students are not attending School District sponsored or endorsed events, to the greatest extent possible within the School Board’s authority.

In addition, the School Board identified several specific issues that it wanted LLG to specifically investigate. These included determining the veracity of several rumors that numerous students became sick during the course of camp; rumors that some students engaged in extra and/or punitive running; the quality of the student dorm rooms at Albright College; the availability of water and the frequency of water breaks; the extent of any drug use at team camp; and whether any football activities were cancelled and/or modified as a result of extreme heat.

Consumers of this report would be remiss not to acknowledge the context in which the investigation took place. The death of Sam Gitt and ensuing investigation had a profound impact on School District community, and the BSHS football team in particular. Students and parents alike communicated a variety of viewpoints during and after the March 15, 2012, meeting. Generally, the various viewpoints depict a community divided into factions of those who believe that the School Board's investigation was overdue, those who believe that the investigation would unnecessarily compel students to relive a painful experience, those who believe that the investigation was motivated by a desire to assign blame for Gitt's death, and a variety of other opinions along this spectrum. These divides were readily apparent during the investigative interviews. In light of this, it becomes essential to emphasize that student and parent participation in the investigation was completely voluntarily, and that it was beyond the scope of the investigation to determine the cause of or "assign blame" for Gitt's death.

The investigation entailed voluntary interviews of 24 football players (of the 43 who attended team camp), 12 parents and community members, three coaches from two other school districts that also attended Albright College's football team camp in July 2011, and interviews of coaches, and an interview with the BSHS principal for information on existing policy/procedures. All students were given the option of remaining anonymous during their interviews, and 10 students elected to do so. Also included was a review of relevant PIAA bylaws/rules, team camp schedules from Albright College, and handwritten notes regarding BSHS specific activities prepared by coaches.

### III. LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION

There are a number of limitations inherent in the investigative process that must be acknowledged. First, as already noted, all student interviews were voluntary; thus, the information reported herein was provided by a self-selected group of students. Moreover, as discussed further below, an individual football player's experience at team camp depended upon factors such as what position he played; whether he was viewed as a starter or someone with the opportunity to earn a starting position; his overall level of physical fitness; and/or his grade level. As a result, one limitation of the investigation is that it was not possible to select students in order to guarantee a balanced representation of all these factors, and it is not possible to know the motivations underpinning a student's decision to volunteer. Nevertheless, this limitation appears to have been mitigated to some extent by the fact that slightly more than half of the students who attended team camp volunteered to be interviewed (24 of the 43 football players that attended camp), indicating the likelihood that there was a fair representation of all the various student experiences.

A second limitation is that a self-selected group of approximately four to six students attempted to influence the outcome of the investigation. Five students reported that this self-selected group actively discouraged other students from volunteering for interviews. When asked whether they were aware of students being discouraged from participating in the investigation, two alleged members of this self-selected group denied that any such conduct was taking place. However, a third alleged member of the group readily admitted to participating in an effort to discourage other students from volunteering. Also, a fourth student who also allegedly discouraged students from volunteering would only admit that he had "heard" about football players being discouraged from volunteering; but he also asserted his belief that it was juniors worried about "stuff getting screwed up for next year" engaging in the conduct. Ultimately, it is unknown how many students would have volunteered but decided not to as the result of peer pressure from this self-selected group.

It also appears that one or more students (including at least one member of the aforementioned self-selected group) identified and encouraged specific students whom they wanted to volunteer for an interview. Two students indicated during their interviews that they were specifically encouraged to meet with the investigator. When asked why he volunteered,

the first student responded as follows:

I just want to make things smooth as possible, just sort of – I know you're not trying to get anyone out or anything. Just sort of make things go by smooth.

\* \* \*

I do remember someone was like, yeah, try it out. Just sort of make things go by smoothly.

This student said that a senior encouraged him to volunteer, but he claimed that he could not remember who. Similarly, when the second student was asked whether he had heard about students being discouraged from volunteering, the second student stated:

I haven't heard that. People have told me to volunteer. A few people have told me to volunteer to tell people – well, tell you what actually happened so that you didn't get the wrong opinion on the whole situation.

When asked who told him to volunteer, he responded in part: "A bunch of the seniors did, and I just listened to them, and I felt like coming down to see you."

Taken together, all of the aforementioned conduct indicates that there was a coordinated effort by a self-selected group to influence the outcome of the investigation. The outcome this group desired can be inferred from the nature of the statements they made during their interviews and the divisions on the BSHS football team referenced in Section II. More specifically, it is apparent that these students wanted to use their influence to ensure a report that downplayed any negative aspects of team camp.

With respect to the divisions on the football team referenced above, one football player succinctly described the situation as follows: "It's sad because we've like the kids that were there [sic] have divided into groups, like the people that are going to stay with [the coach] and the people that are going to tell the truth." At least three students identified as those who would elect to "stay with" coaches were also identified as being part of the self-selected group who allegedly engaged in discouraging/encouraging others from volunteering for interviews.

It is impossible to know the full extent of the impact that the self-selected group and the divisions on the football team had on the content of the individual interviews. A number of students asked to "confirm" their anonymity before answering certain questions and others expressed a desire to remain anonymous so that they could tell the truth without their statements getting back to their friends. However, it is also important to note that, regardless



of whether a student was identified as someone who would tell the "truth," as someone who would "stay with" coaches, or with neither group, the vast majority of students consistently made similar statements when describing the actual events that took place at team camp.

#### **IV. FINDINGS REGARDING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD**

As noted above, the School Board identified several issues that it wanted LLG to specifically investigate. These included determining the veracity of several rumors that numerous students became sick during the course of camp; that students engaged in extra and/or punitive running; the quality of the student dorm rooms at Albright College; the availability of water and the frequency of water breaks; the extent of any drug use at team camp; and whether any football activities were cancelled and/or modified as a result of extreme heat. A summary of the results follow.

##### **A. STUDENTS WHO BECAME SICK AT TEAM CAMP**

Several rumors have been circulating regarding football players other than Gitt experiencing any level of distress during the course of summer camp. Based upon the totality of the interviews, the following was determined:

1. A second football player was transported to the hospital as the result of severe dehydration. This student self-reported, and it was confirmed by numerous other witnesses, that he voluntarily engaged in extra running around the practice field utilized by BSHS following the last practice/conditioning session on July 22, 2011, and did not stop until he was instructed to do so by a coach.
2. Another football player self-reported fainting in his room after the last practice/conditioning session on July 22, 2011. The fainting was witnessed and confirmed by another football player. The student who fainted complained during his interview that he was never able to "bring down his core temperature" during the course of team camp. In addition, a different football player (who did not witness the fainting) separately reported that the student who fainted had suddenly turned "bright red" earlier during the day. Although this other football

player claims that he encouraged his teammate (who later fainted) to stop for water, the student who later fainted reportedly did not stop.

3. Two football players reported that one of their teammates experienced severe, painful cramps and had "passed out" in his bed immediately following the final practice/conditioning session on July 22, 2011. This football player volunteered for an interview and acknowledged feeling sick to his stomach and going right to his bed after conditioning, but he denied fainting and/or passing out.
4. Another football player experienced severe leg cramps a number of times during team camp and ultimately "collapsed" in the shower after completing the final practice/conditioning on July 22, 2011. This was witnessed by at least one of his teammates, and he reportedly shared what happened to him with others. Additionally, the football player who "collapsed" was reportedly unable to walk from the shower back to his room and was found "crawling" down the hallway in a towel by two other football players
5. Another football player self-reported experiencing severe cramps in his feet and legs early in the day on the July 22, 2011. He stated that he actually missed most of the morning practice on July 22, 2011, because he "could not get his socks on" due to the cramping.
6. Yet another football player self-reported having severe leg cramps throughout camp and was observed limping at various points by several others. This individual said that he "jumped up" while watching television and was "dancing around" in pain because his leg muscles were cramping. He stated that he continued "dancing around" until another football player and a coach happened upon him and helped him stretch out his legs. However, this student also claimed that he regularly experiences cramps.

7. Another football player self-reported having ongoing issues with his calf cramping throughout team camp.
8. One football player self-reported becoming “really hot” at some point during camp (he does not remember when) and needing to leave practice to obtain an ice pack from an Albright College employee and/or volunteer that was assigned to monitor the practice field that BSHS was utilizing.
9. Another football player reportedly became very hot and dizzy during one of the early practices (it is unclear on which day of team camp) and was sent to see an Albright College trainer by one of the coaches.
10. An unknown number of students reportedly felt sick before lunch on July 22, 2011, and elected not to eat lunch.

Numerous students stated that they or others they knew experienced cramps, fatigue or feeling ill at various times during team camp. Since students were participating in an athletic camp for a physically demanding sport, some level of soreness, fatigue and exertion is expected. However, the foregoing students were observed experiencing, or self-reported that they experienced, something more than “typical” soreness and/or fatigue.

**B. “EXTRA” AND/OR PUNITIVE RUNNING**

Another goal of the investigation was to determine the veracity of conflicting reports about whether any football players were subjected to any “extra” and/or punitive running. Unquestionably, a number of football players experienced punitive running and/or were made to run “extra” for a number of different reasons. The reports of punitive/extra running included the following:

1. Quarterbacks. The three quarterbacks at team camp were assigned the responsibility of bringing footballs to team camp; however, at least two footballs were missing and/or forgotten. Punitive running was imposed on all

three quarterbacks as a consequence. All coaches, except for one, initially denied having knowledge of any extra/punitive running being imposed. However, the extra/punitive running for the quarterbacks was reported/confirmed by at least 13 different football players – including quarterbacks.

2. Football Players Suspected of Using Marijuana. Around lunchtime on July 22, 2011, four football players were suspected of using marijuana (later determined by the School District to be synthetic marijuana). There is no consensus on whether those students were made to run extra as a punishment. Three coaches stated that no punitive running was imposed, while two coaches denied having any knowledge of punitive running. However, 10 of the 24 students interviewed asserted that the four students suspected of using marijuana were made to run extra after the final practice/conditioning on July 22, 2011. One student, who actually admitted to smoking synthetic marijuana at team camp, firmly stated: “They were actually punished. They had to run.”
  
3. Special Teams/Punt Team Practice. A mishap during a special teams practice (which took place near the end of the last practice on July 22, 2011, before conditioning) reportedly resulted in what was perceived by some football players to be extra/punitive running. The punter accidentally punted the football into the back side of another football player, and the football ricocheted into the air. Nearly the entire team started laughing at what had happened. The head coach claimed to have no recollection of this event, and suggested that he may have been at a different part of the field when this happened. However, multiple students and two other coaches reported and/or confirmed that the head coach actually became angry, reminded the team that they had lost a game as the result of a similar mistake last season, and yelled at the entire team for not taking practice seriously enough. Immediately afterwards, the entire team was reportedly made to run up and down the field in helmets and shoulder pads as part of punt practice. This can be fairly characterized as punitive running.

4. Players Unable to Finish Conditioning. A number of football players (at least 3, but possibly as many as 6) were physically unable to complete the conditioning/running drills after the final practice on July 22, 2011.<sup>1</sup> The conditioning itself entailed “bag pushes” (pushing heavy bags partway across the field); a “four corner drill” (where the team splits into four groups and sprints around the practice area, stopping at each corner to engage in a different exercise); and possibly a drill that entails running diagonally across the field. Some football players recalled that the “big guys” (a reference to the linemen) were given the opportunity to stop running/conditioning if they felt physically unable to finish; they could walk and/or jog instead. However, these football players could opt to walk and/or jog with the understanding that they would have to do extra sprints when conditioning was over. This was regarded by some football players as “running extra,” but it was regarded by others (including the coaches who acknowledged the running) as simply “making up” for running that was not completed.

In sum, there were at least four different groups of students engaged in extra and/or punitive running at team camp on July 22, 2011. All coaches denied that there was any extra/punitive running at all with two exceptions: the head coach ultimately admitted to approving punitive running for the quarterbacks, but denied administering it; and another coach recalled both the quarterbacks and the “walkers” during conditioning running extra. However, as described in footnote 1, it is possible that there were other students running extra for other reasons. Unfortunately, students were unable to recall any more specific information.

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<sup>1</sup> Students were generally confused over exactly who was running extra for reasons other than (1) quarterbacks forgetting footballs, (2) suspected marijuana use; (3) not taking practice seriously enough during punt practice; or (4) not finishing the conditioning drills after the final practice on July 22, 2011. At least three football players were made to run extra because they did not complete all of the conditioning. One additional student reported that he was made to run extra, but he could not remember the reason why. Another student asserted that he found the conditioning easy and voluntarily ran extra in order to support/cheer on his teammates. Some students asserted that there were others engaged in “extra running” for reasons such as “dogging it,” “goofing off,” and/or not trying their hardest during the bag pushes. Unfortunately, memories were vague on who was running extra for what reasons. It was not clear whether some students engaged in extra running for one the four specific, aforementioned reasons were also inadvertently being “double counted” by their teammates during the investigative interviews as students running extra for different reasons (such as “dogging it” or “goofing off”).

### **C. QUALITY OF THE AIR CONDITIONING IN THE DORM ROOMS**

A third area of specific inquiry was whether or not the student dorm rooms at Albright College had adequate air conditioning and to what degree any lack of air conditioning impacted individual football players. At this juncture, it is appropriate to note that Pennsylvania was experiencing record temperatures on July 21 and 22, 2011, and Berks County had issued heat advisories for both days. According to the weather station at Spaatz Field, approximately five miles from Albright College, temperatures reached a high of 102 degrees (36% humidity) at 4:00 PM on July 21 and a high of 106 degrees (32% humidity) at 4:00 PM on July 22.

Virtually every student reported that the air conditioning was inadequate. It appears that only one dorm room had a fully functioning air conditioner<sup>2</sup> and the balance of the rooms ranged between moderately hot or extremely hot. The head coach reported the problem to Albright College staff and, at some point during July 22, 2011, Albright College mechanics were sent to work on the air conditioners. Also, select students (it is unclear how many) were eventually given the option of moving to a different room after practice on July 22, 2011. However, some of those given the option to move did not do so because the condition of their new rooms was reportedly either the same or worse than their originally assigned rooms.

Twenty-one of the 24 students interviewed commented about temperature in their dorm rooms and the inadequacy of the air conditioning. Seven students specifically reported not being able to sleep because of the heat. Six students specifically reported sleeping and/or waking up in puddles of sweat. Representative examples of other student comments follow:

- “It got to the point to where we were so desperate, you know, because the rooms were so hot. To try to get some cold air in, we would – I remember we left – we actually opened the door and the freezer to our refrigerator to try to, like have the air, like, come out of the refrigerator and the freezer to try to cool our room down.”
- “The room was very hot, because the air conditioners were broke. So it was -- we kind of got over it. We got used to the heat. We found way[s] to keep ourselves

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<sup>2</sup> The only fully functioning air conditioner was located in the room where students were suspected of smoking marijuana.

cool with, like, wet towels. And I had mineral ice. So I just rubbed that all over my body to make me feel better...We tried everything possible. We went into every other kid's room. They were all hot.”

- “It was absolutely terrible...The AC was broken. It wouldn’t work. It was only blowing out warm air. And it was so hot, because it was the middle of July. You would open a window. No air coming in. And you’d just try to sit there to, like, lay down at night; and you’re sticking to your sheets. It [was] just a mess. It was really bad.”
- “I woke up in the morning and I thought that someone was laying something on me ...[but] it was my pillow soaked in my own sweat. It was soaked to the point where you could ring sweat out...you’d wake up and there would be like this outline of your own body in sweat.”

Overall, it appears that the inadequate air conditioning negatively impacted most football players’ abilities to feel fully rested. Moreover, as noted *supra*, one student observed that the most significant impact of the lack of adequate air conditioning was that he was never able to "bring down his core temperature."

#### **D. QUALITY OF WATER & FREQUENCY OF WATER BREAKS**

The subject of water and water breaks during team camp requires some understanding of BSHS “football culture.” Although there was general dissatisfaction with the quality of the single water source provided by Albright College at the practice field, there is no dispute that coaches encouraged students to take water breaks if they felt they needed to or that football players were given regular water breaks throughout team camp. However, as discussed below, football players frequently did not feel as if they could take extra water breaks.

Albright College provided a single water source at the field that was the football team’s primary practice field: a water hose attached to a PVC pipe and set upon a wooden horse. The pipe had numerous holes punched into it so that more than one football player could drink from it at any given time. Football players provided a variety of answers when asked about the

quality of the water source, with the majority of students expressing dissatisfaction:

- Seven students reported the water was “hot,” “scalding hot,” or “disgusting.” This was likely because the water hose sat in the sun until it was time for a water break and the hose was turned on.
- Four students described the water as “warm,” but stated that they were able to get hydrated. One student commented that he “was happy for it...it was basically all you could ask for” and another said it was “it wasn’t like warm warm, but it wasn’t like cold...it was [re]freshing.”
- Two students said the water was cold at points. One of those students observed: “[I]t didn’t make anyone sick. We’ve always had it. So it was – it’s like a typical sports water thing you’ll see in anything.”

There was clear consensus that coaches emphasized hydration during practice and that water breaks were taken at regular intervals (estimated to be anywhere from every 10, 15 or 20 minutes), depending on the position group. The majority of students also reported that the coaches specifically told them that they could take extra breaks and/or get extra water at any time if they needed it; all they needed to do was let their position coach know. Examples of some student comments include the following:

- "And our coaches had even told us, you know, don't be afraid during a drill... [I]f you feel like you need water or you need to sit out, you know, sit out or go get water, do whatever you have to do."
- "Well, [coach] gave us a lot of breaks. I mean, every five or eight minutes we stopped and took a water break. And [the head coach] kept on telling us to make sure you get water."
- The coaches are “[j]ust, like, telling us to, like, keep hydrated, work at your level.



Like, if you feel uncomfortable, take a break." The student goes on to state: "Like, they obviously wanted us to do it [the drills], because you need to learn how to play; but like, if you couldn't do anything, then you can't do it."

- Generally, the head coach told football players to take a break if they need a break; they just needed to tell their position coach. Other students reported that there were a lot of reminders to stay hydrated and that the water breaks were adequate.

Irrespective of what the coaches were telling football players about taking extra water breaks, the majority of students felt that they could not take extra water breaks. Their reasons were varied, but all centered around the theme of competitiveness: football players push themselves, they push each other (both positively and negatively), or they are afraid that taking an extra water break would be looked down upon. The vast majority of students talked about "pushing hard" or "going 100 percent" at practice all the time (even though some admitted to "slacking off" when the coaches were not looking). Those football players consistently identified as "working hard" all the time were the team leaders, those who wanted to be team leaders, and/or those who trying to impress the coaches because they believed they had the opportunity to be starters in the upcoming season. The dominant viewpoint was that "working hard" included not taking extra water breaks; this helped football players be perceived as "tough" and enhanced their "rep" on the field.

When specifically asked whether they took an extra break or went for extra water, the vast majority of students answered "no" without hesitation. This is significant, given that the temperature on July 22, 2011, ranged 81degrees at 6:00 AM to 95 degrees at 8:00 PM, with a high of 106 degrees at 4:00 PM. Football player comments were particularly illustrative on this subject and offer insight into football culture:

- When asked about taking extra breaks, a football player responded: "Like, I just wouldn't -- I don't know I didn't want to miss a play. I was trying to, like, be there. But I wouldn't -- I don't remember anyone doing that really."

- "I just wanted, like, every coach to see that I know what I'm doing, like, because in the past years, I had problems with, like, learning plays and stuff like that. And this year I had everything -- like, I wanted to be the leader of -- one of the leaders of the offense and be known as the receiver on the team. And I -- if I -- I felt like if I gave too many breaks or got too many breaks, I would lose something."
- When asked if anyone ever took their own water break, a football player responded: "Like, they [the coaches] frown upon it. And they want you to stay with the team, especially the young guys so they can learn."
- When asked if anyone ever took their own water break, another football player responded: "No, because then you get in trouble for doing that. Like, you stay with your teammates."
- "They [the coaches] want [you] to be there as much as possible. But with the water breaks they were giving us, you didn't really have to wait, plus you were trying to be competitive. If one person is staying, the other person would usually stay."
- You do not take breaks unless you want to be seen as a "wussy." The coaches are saying you can take a break if you feel lightheaded, but "no one is going to do it though." This football player went on to state: "[B]ut who do you know that is really trying their hardest to get a starting position and that sort of stuff, no one is going to sit on the side." Some try to take breaks during conditioning, but no one takes breaks when they are practicing in their position groups. However, he acknowledged that he took an extra break at one point because he was hot.
- Whether or not you are willing to take a break or go for water depends on whether you are trying to compete for a starting spot: "I think they would prove -- want to prove that they wanted to be on the team more than they wanted to get water. It's kind of like if you don't go get water, you are tougher than the person in your position kind of. That's not true, but the mindset people have like, oh, if he's going

to get water and I'm not, the coach thinks I'm more tough or something like that." Although he acknowledged that he did take an extra break once, this football player was identified by others as someone who appeared to need more breaks.

This same football player disagreed that taking extra water breaks was "frowned upon" by the coaches, but suggested that not taking water breaks made you look better to the coaches: "...if everyone goes for a water break and you [stay] back, it's kind of like, okay, this guy's, like, whenever I need him he's not going to get tired or something like that."

- "They [the coaches] just keep telling us to make sure we were drinking water and it was like no one is going to speak up and go I need some water, coach, not because [a coach] is going to go you don't get any water. They are just not going to say I don't want any water, coach, because then that makes them look like a bitch to the other guys."

This same student responded to the question of whether or not guys felt like they could stop if they needed to by stating: "No...Because you just get yelled at and you would lose your spot, and just again, you like you [sic] don't understand how much not looking like a bitch means to the guys. I mean that is your whole reputation on the football field is [sic] not looking like a bitch. You do everything you can not to look like a bitch. If you stop, that's like a sure sign for people to ream you about -- like for something they can ream you about a sure sign that you are a bitch and you can't hack it."

- "Well, if it's not a scheduled break, then, if you want me to be honest, you're still going to look like a puss....Well, I mean, like if no one else is allowed to get a break, why do you have to go take a break. Like man up and just do your work."
- The coaches never said anything negative about needing to take a break, and the coaches encouraged players to get as much water as they could. However: "But

like when you see your other teammates going through, like, the workout or whatever drill it is, you don't want to leave them. Like you don't want to -like it's almost like a feel of abandonment not to yourself but to the other people. Like I'm trying to take the easy way out. So, like I said, again, it's nothing like negative. It was all like within yourself.” However, he also claims he saw some others taking extra breaks.

- Coaches do not like you taking breaks because they want to see you get your “reps” in. When asked how he knows that coaches do not like players to take breaks: “Because if you keep getting water breaks, how will that look when you're there on a Friday night in the middle of a game. He always came back to Friday nights. Like it's the middle of the fourth quarter, will you need to go get -- when the game is on the line, will you be going to the side line getting a drink of water? And he'll be, like, kind of bringing that up.”
- Another football player asserted that guys really want to “prove themselves.” When asked if he thought players were pressured into not taking breaks, he stated that he did not take breaks during the regular season because others – especially seniors – were not taking breaks. When asked if he thought players could speak up for themselves: “I think that a lot of us don't speak up for ourselves, because we don't want to be made fun of, which really isn't the right thing. So that's -- I don't know. That's what really, like, hurts people. Like, it really hurts people because they don't tell people that they're hurting or they're sick. They just kind of go along with it, and they just try to push through it until it's over and then they're fine afterwards. And they're just like, "Oh, this wasn't that big of a deal.””
- “Some people did [not take breaks] and some people just got a drink when they needed it. It just depended on the personality of the person. Like, I wasn't one of the people that would stop if they're tired. I was never really at the point where I was tired, like, really tired, so I never really had to. But some people keep pushing themselves when they know they probably shouldn't.” This football player went on

to state: "It's more of a pride thing than anything else."

Despite feelings that they could not or should not take breaks for whatever reason, a handful of football players also acknowledged that, as the second day of practice progressed, they observed others stopping for extra water more frequently. However, one student reported that a coach became upset when, during either the last practice or during conditioning on July 22, 2011, a large number of football players went for water at the same time and there were not enough football players to run a drill that a coach wanted to run. As a result, the coach reportedly yelled for the entire team to come back. In addition, a few students suggested that the number of water breaks given by the coaches was adequate and that additional breaks were not necessary. Examples of those comments include:

- You could always take a break if you needed it, but "no one was complaining." Everyone was fine and no one needed additional breaks.
- "The coaches wanted football players to stay with the team as much as possible. But with the water breaks they were giving us, you didn't really have to wait, plus you were trying to be competitive. If one person is staying, the other person would usually stay. But, no, I don't think they ever made you feel like you shouldn't go get water."

When the coaches were asked about football players feeling as if they could not take extra water breaks, despite being encouraged to do so, because they feared it would be "looked down" upon, all of the coaches emphatically denied that it was possible. In fact, most coaches claimed that they emphasized hydration. Yet, the rationalizations offered by the football players for their individual decisions regarding water breaks indicated that students may be receiving conflicting messages. For example, despite being encouraged to stay hydrated, football players were encouraged to work harder during team camp and were reminded that it was going to be that hot during their first game with Littlestown. Or, as referenced earlier, a student reported that a coach yelled at the team because too many football players went for water at the same time and the coach was left without enough football players to run a drill.

#### **E. DRUG ABUSE ON THE FOOTBALL TEAM**

Since four students were suspected of using marijuana at team camp, and later admitted to smoking synthetic marijuana, a specific area of inquiry for this investigation was the extent of any drug use at team camp. In brief, in addition to the four students that the School Board is aware of, at least two other football players at team camp (and possibly more) smoked synthetic marijuana but were not caught.

Beyond team camp, students reported a high level of drug on the football team and at BSHS. Of the 24 students interviewed, 14 were well aware of drug use on the football team, some even characterizing it as an “open secret.” Estimates of how many football players use marijuana ranged from 5 to 15 or more. One student suggested half of the team. Most estimates, however, were in the 10 to 12 range. Moreover, most students felt that the level of drug use on the football was proportional to the level of drug use at BSHS. The main distinction between the football team and the rest of the school was that no one knew of about any football player using anything other than marijuana. In contrast, most football players claimed to know someone at BSHS (not on the football team) who was using hallucinogens, prescription drugs (Oxycotin, Concerta, Adderal), and possibly cocaine. A few students stated their belief that BSHS was known as a “druggie school.”

#### **V. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AT TEAM CAMP**

Once again, the primary purpose of the investigation was to determine what events transpired on July 22, 2011, at Albright College’s team camp. As noted earlier, the School Board also indicated that it wanted LLG to investigate whether any practices were cancelled and/or modified. In general, how an individual football player experienced the Albright College team camp was largely dependent on a number of factors; beginning with the individual football player’s position. Football players were assigned to both offensive and defensive position groups, and practiced together in those groups under the supervision of one or more coaches.

Generally speaking, the practice area was described as a rectangular field that was estimated to be approximately 60 yards in length and 50 yards in width. A road ran alongside the “top” of the field, a second practice area utilized by other teams during team camp was

immediately to the right of the field, and a parking lot (beyond which were the football players' dorm rooms) was to the left of the field. Typically, linemen practiced in the upper-left corner of the field, closest to the water source.. Wide receivers (during offensive practices) and corner backs (during defensive practices) generally utilized the entire length of field, along the right side. Finally, generally occupying the "bottom" of the field during offensive practices were quarterbacks and running backs. During defensive practices, this area was utilized by linebackers.

There were periods of time where different groups (such as quarterbacks and running backs) came together to conduct particular drills and/or the entire team came together to practice specific plays. Moreover, there were also special teams practices and scheduled "seven-on-sevens" with other schools arranged by Albright College, during which all the players except the linemen would scrimmage against another school attending also attending team camp. During seven-on-sevens, linemen either continued with their own practice or received instruction from representatives from Albright College's football program. A "team practice" at camp generally consisted of a "dynamic warm-up," the football players engaging in drills in their individual position groups, different positions coming together for specific drills, the entire team coming together to practice specific plays, and possibly a special teams practice. In addition, conditioning was scheduled by the coaches at the beginning and end of each day.

An individual football player's experience also depended upon his fitness level. Linemen, who are the bigger/heaviest members of the team, reportedly struggled to cope with the heat more than lighter/more fit players – such as some of the wide receivers. The purpose of this report is not to detail every combination of individual experiences, but to identify and report upon the overall experience of the team.

While the actual sequence of events during camp was readily established by referring to the schedules created by Albright College in conjunction with the handwritten notes/schedules provided by coaches, the investigation also sought to determine the nature of the events at camp rather than a simple chronology. Relevant context for this kind of inquiry includes establishing the temperature and relative humidity at various points throughout camp; thus, historical weather data from the weather station at Spaatz Field in Reading, PA, approximately five miles from Albright College, was obtained for this purpose. Coaches denied receiving any

specific information or guidance regarding the weather from Albright College, which was consistent with reports from coaches from the Eastern York and Northern York school districts, who also attended the same team camp. Albright College reportedly had representatives present at each practice field while a team was using it to practice, although it is unknown if these representatives were athletic trainers, what the precise purpose of their presence was, or what kind of training they had. In addition the BSHS coaches, the Eastern York and Northern York coaches all reported that Albright College readily identified and provided indoor practice and/or meeting space if a team requested it, but it was left up to the head coach of each football team to decide whether to cancel, move or modify their team's scheduled outdoor practices.

**Thursday, July 21, 2011**

Most students did not recall much about July 21, 2011 – the day that they arrived at team camp – other than the quality of the air conditioning in their dorm rooms and that it was “hot” on the practice field. The temperature reported at Spaatz Field was 99 degrees, 38% humidity, at 2:00 PM, which is believed to be the approximate time that the first practice began. No student who volunteered for an interview recalled anyone, other than possibly one student, feeling sick or ill during the first day. Many students reported that they and their teammates were “going hard” on the first day because “well, that’s kind of like where [the coach] gets his evaluations. So we were going pretty hard, you know, we were showing him what we got. So we can see – so we can know exactly who is going to get starting positions and stuff like that.” Other general comments included:

- The individuals on the team were “working their tails off” because coach “expects 110 percent out of every player and nothing less.”
- “The first practice of the day wasn’t – it wasn’t hard. It was just of like getting in the groove. There was a little bit of running but that’s how every football practice is, so it was pretty easy
- “Basically [it was] your typical first practice. It wasn’t anything too hard. It was just basic drills. We did them.”



- “Well, I guess everyone was – they weren’t really like dying in the heat, because it was the first day. The kids were excited, because it’s the first practice they actually get to do something.”
- “Well, the first day it was hot. We were kind of shocked about how hot it was, but, I mean, you got used to it, like, rather quickly.”

Not all students recalled conditioning on the first day, but those who did indicated that there were bag pushes, a four corner drill, and possibly a “railroad tracks” drill (which consisted of a number of football players lying on the ground and whomever was on the end getting up, running over the other players, lying down again on the other side, and the next person doing the same). There may have also been some running without equipment associated with a special teams practice. Overall, the most notable events from July 21, 2011, involved the student complaints about trying to sleep in the dorm rooms with no/inadequate air conditioning.

**Friday, July 22, 2011**

Most students recalled the second day of camp in more detail than the first day. Overall, the consensus was that the second day was more “fast paced” and “intense” than the first day. There is disagreement among the football players who volunteered for interviews regarding whether everyone was “going hard” at every practice, but virtually all the football players who volunteered for interviews indicated that they were “going hard.”

**A. APPROXIMATELY 5:50 AM: MORNING CONDITIONING**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 6:00 AM: 81 degrees, 82% humidity*

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 7:00 AM: 82.9 degrees, 79% humidity*

The second day of team camp began with an early morning jog around the campus followed by conditioning on the practice field. At least 4 football players recalled that a number of their teammates (estimated between 3 and 6) did not have shoes for the morning run; those football players either ran barefoot or attempted to run in flip-flops. Some

speculated that the football players without shoes either forgot to bring regular gym shoes to team camp or woke up believing that the team was gathering to go to breakfast as a group. The conditioning consisted of a four corner drill and possibly some other exercises. In general, the linemen reportedly found the morning conditioning, and particularly the initial jog around campus, to be more difficult than their teammates did. No one reported that they or anyone they knew felt sick or ill at this point at team camp. The morning jog and conditioning is believed to have lasted approximately 25 to 30 minutes. From the practice field, football players either went directly to the cafeteria for breakfast or stopped at the dorms for a shower and change of clothes.

**B. APPROXIMATELY 8:30 AM: MORNING PRACTICE**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 9:00 AM: 91.9 degrees, 60% humidity*

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 10:00 AM: 95 degrees, 56% humidity*

This first practice of the day was described as being almost substantively identical to practice the day before. Students were wearing helmets and shoulder pads for the entire practice. One student stated "...the intensity level at this camp was like top of the bar. It was as intense as it could get." Yet, many students are reportedly still "groggy" from practice the day before, from waking up early, and from being unable to sleep well due to the heat and lack of air conditioning. Although coaches are reportedly conducting a lot of "walk-throughs" to teach students about their positions during this practice, the majority of football players also reported that both they and those around them were "pushing hard" and "working hard." The actual intensity level appeared to depend upon an individual player's position.

In the words of the students: "The first practice [of day two] is usually – it's a little more strict, because it's still not as hot [as the later practices]; but it's still a practice." The practice "started off fairly cool. Well...it was about the same as the run. And by the end of it, it was pretty hot out. And, I mean, as far as I can remember, it was just a normal practice."

The head coach was routinely described as a "yeller" and an "intense" person, but no one suggested that he was angry at any point during the first practice. Football players reported that the head coach was yelling to encourage and motivate the team to work hard.

The head coach and, sometimes the other coaches, would call out to students to go faster, to go harder and to push themselves. As the practice progressed and the temperature rose, there were reportedly references made to the team's upcoming first game and how hot it was expected to be at that game, including statements to the effect of 'do not complain about the heat' and/or 'the team needs to get used to the heat.' A comment by one football player best summarized how those who volunteered to be interviewed generally described the first practice: "[Coach] just wants us to do the best we can. And he was really pushing us...Just telling us to give 110 percent and then some and just do our best. Even if we make a mistake, make that mistake at 110 percent and come back next time." One student even observed that coaches appeared happy with the team's performance at morning practice.

Overall, other than the student who self-reported that he missed most of practice due to leg and foot cramps, nobody reported that there were aware of complaints about any football players feeling sick or ill at that practice; most of the complaints were reportedly about feeling hot and tired. This was described as a "routine" practice that reportedly lasted until approximately 10:15 am, which is when the skilled positions (i.e., everyone except the linemen) left for another field for a seven-on-seven interaction/scrimmage against another team.

**C. APPROXIMATELY 10:30 AM: ONE SEVEN-ON-SEVEN INTERACTION AND LINEMEN DRILLS**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 11:00 AM: 97 degrees, 53% humidity*

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 12:00 PM: 99 degrees, 48% humidity*

Student memories were vague with respect to the seven-on-seven interactions against other teams coordinated by Albright College. This seven-on-seven was held on a turf field at Albright College's stadium, which reportedly caused some football players to feel hotter than if they were playing on a grass field. With respect to equipment, the general rule was that you only wear as much equipment as the other team. While no one could remember specifically what they were wearing or who they were playing, the majority of football players believed that they were only wearing helmets (no shoulder pads) and that they might have been playing Eastern York. (The schedules generated by Albright College did not indicate which teams were playing against one another.)

During this time, the linemen reportedly spent another 15 minutes doing drills before

departing for a different practice field in order to work with representatives from the Albright College football program. They performed a variety of drills, but one of the most frequently described drills by the linemen was a drill where a lineman would start on his knees in front of a bag. He would then lunge forward, pushing the bag as far out and away from his body as possible, and fall to the ground. Another drill was similarly described, except that the lineman would be expected to “pop” up, lunge at the bag, and then “flop” to the ground.

It is unclear how long these sessions (the seven-on-seven and the lineman drills) lasted, but estimates are around 30 minutes. Afterwards, students went back to their dorm rooms to shower and change, and then headed to an 11:30 am lunch. While the coaches stated that all the football players ate lunch, the football players reported that a number of their teammates did not eat lunch. Some unknown number of football players did not eat because they were feeling overheated and/or sick, or they did not want to begin the next practice with a full stomach. Others, rather than going to the cafeteria, had brought food to camp (such as peanut butter and jelly) and ate in their dorm rooms, while another group opted to go to a local grocery store. In any event, the football players were in various locations, while the coaches all ate together in the cafeteria.

Around lunchtime, two coaches came to suspect that some students were smoking marijuana in a dorm room. The coaches smelled what they thought was marijuana coming from one of the dorm rooms, so they knocked on the door and entered the room. One coach stated that the room smelled like cigarettes, but he noted that the window in the room was open and he went outside to see if anything was tossed out of the window. This coach stated that he believed he observed “snuff” on the ground under the window. The head coach then arrived at the room (it is unclear if someone called him or if he happened to be in the area). The head coach conducted his own visual inspection, but stated that he did not see anything.

Most football players spent the time between lunch and the afternoon practice looking for locations to keep cool. Popular spots to congregate reportedly included the lobby of the dorm where the football players were staying and the lobby of the cafeteria, both of which had functioning air conditioners. No one, including coaches, reported any specific complaints about anyone feeling sick or ill, though by this point in time most students are aware that one of their teammates had become hot and felt dizzy and, thus, was not practicing. Meanwhile, in the lobby of the cafeteria, one student was watching television with some teammates and

experienced leg cramps that caused him to suddenly jump up and “dance around.” It is generally believed by most football players that an unknown number of students were experiencing various types of cramps during this time period, including the student who “collapsed” in the shower at the end of July 22, 2011. There was possibly one other student experiencing some light-headedness, but this could not be confirmed and no football players reported hearing about anything that they regarded as unusual or excessive.

**D. APPROXIMATELY 1:45 PM: AFTERNOON PRACTICE (INDOORS)**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 1:00 PM & 2:00 PM: 102 degrees, 41% humidity*

As noted earlier, the decision as to whether a practice should be cancelled, modified or moved indoors was left up to the head coach of each team. Sometime during the lunch break, the head coach proposed moving practice inside, solicited input from the other coaches at camp, and ultimately contacted Albright College representatives to secure a room on campus for the team. Albright College made an exercise room with mirrored walls available; most football players referred to this as the “yoga room.” The room was air conditioned and equipped with a white board that was used to instruct the team during the second scheduled practice.

The afternoon (indoor) practice reportedly began with team stretching and exercises (sit-ups, push-ups, etc.), but mostly entailed football players receiving instruction regarding special teams from the white board. Eight students reported either falling asleep or seeing others fall asleep because, in the well air-conditioned yoga room, it was reportedly the first time since arriving at team camp that they felt they were able to cool down. The team stayed in the yoga room until it was time to leave for the next scheduled seven-on-seven and lineman drills.

**E. APPROXIMATELY 3:00 PM: FIRST OF TWO SEVEN-ON-SEVEN INTERACTIONS AND LINEMEN DRILLS, AND APPROXIMATELY 4:00 PM: SECOND OF TWO SEVEN-ON-SEVEN INTERACTIONS AND LINEMEN DRILLS**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 3:00 PM: 105.1 degrees, 34% humidity*

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 4:00 PM: 106 degrees, 32% humidity*

The reports regarding the next two seven-on-seven interactions and lineman drills are combined because virtually no one could distinguish between the two of them. It is generally

believed that the students at the seven-on-sevens wore helmets (no shoulder pads). Although no one was certain whether they played against Eastern York during the morning or afternoon seven-on-seven, one coach clearly remembered that one of the two afternoon seven-on-sevens was against Northern York. Both that coach and the coaches from Northern York who agreed to be interviewed reported that the scrimmage between BSHS and Northern York was “spirited” and “competitive.” In fact, the scrimmage appeared to have become heated and physical, with at least one Northern York player allegedly hitting and causing a BSHS player to fall to the ground. (Per PIAA rules, physical contact is prohibited outside of the regular season.) One coach remembered encouraging BSHS players not to retaliate by hitting back. That coach also remembered that another coach yelled over to the Northern York coaches: “tell your guys to knock it off.” In response, the Northern York coach “got in [his] face.” At some point, an Albright College representative who was present for the seven-on-seven stepped in and reminded everyone on the field that the purpose of the scrimmage was to be instructional. The same Northern York coach reportedly started yelling at the Albright Coach.

From the football player perspective, the few who remembered the seven-on-seven did not necessarily remember what transpired with Northern York; rather, they remembered working hard and feeling hot. One football player commented: “It was insanely hot. That was like the hottest it has ever been. It wasn’t so much how hot it was, even though it was really hot, it was like the dew point that day was like incredible. You would walk outside and it felt like the air was sticking to you it was so hot and you kept sweating the entire time.” Because the seven-on-sevens entail a lot of running, the coaches reported rotating players out of the scrimmage every two plays. One student remembered that a coach was actively encouraging everyone to drink as much water as possible while not on the field. Additionally, a coach said that players were divided into defensive and offensive groups so that no player was “playing both ways” (i.e., playing both offense and defense); the purpose was to increase the amount of time a student had to recover in between plays.

Meanwhile, during this time, the linemen were reportedly in helmets and shoulder pads, and engaged in their own drills back on the practice field, which was separate and apart from where the seven-on-sevens were taking place. The linemen reportedly spent about 20-25 minutes engaged in drills. A football player reported a coach stating something to the effect of: “I just need 25 minutes of your time. And if you get through this, the sooner we get done,

the sooner we can go back and get ready for dinner.” This an area where the divisions on the football team became starkly apparent. During the investigative interviews, one lineman became visibly angry when recounting what they did during this period of time. Another was obviously frustrated and stated: “This was the hottest point of the day, we have shoulder pads on and helmets and I don’t think there is a kid under two hundred pounds that was out there.”

In contrast, a different lineman at the same practice characterized the drills as follows:

I mean, it's not like we ever did any -- we never did a drill that we wouldn't have been able to handle. Like the coaches knew this was our first couple of practices of the off-season. There were some guys that hadn't been working out in the weight room during the off-season all that much, and they knew that. And, I mean, you can tell the guys that were in shape and those that weren't, but it wasn't anything terribly difficult that we shouldn't have been able to handle.

The football players were consistent in terms of conveying objective facts (what they did, where they were, etc.), but their subjective characterizations of those facts were irreconcilable.<sup>3</sup>

The Albright College schedule indicated that the afternoon practice was scheduled to conclude at 4:40 PM, but the linemen were reportedly outside for only 20-25 minutes. It is unclear whether the seven-on-sevens were also finished early, particularly given the reports of the nature of the seven-on-seven with Northern York. After the conclusion of the seven-on-sevens and the linemen drills, the students went back to the dorms rooms for another shower and change of clothes, and then went to dinner.

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<sup>3</sup> By way of another example, the lineman who commented about being on the field during the hottest part of the day described the morning conditioning as hard, not “like a morning casual” run. At the same time, the lineman who said the afternoon drills were not “terribly difficult” also referred to the morning conditioning “light exercises.”

**F. APPROXIMATELY 7:15 PM: EVENING PRACTICE**

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 7:00 PM: 97 degrees, 45% humidity*

*Temperature at Spaatz Field at 8:00 PM: 95 degrees, 48% humidity*

The Albright College team camp schedule indicates that the evening practice was supposed to begin at 6:30 PM, but a coach stated that the start of practice was delayed until after 7:00 PM. This practice was conducted with football players wearing helmets and shoulder pads and it reportedly followed the same pattern as previous team practices. The vast majority of the students regard this as the most difficult practice of the day and describe how, even though this is a fast-paced practice, fatigue is beginning to slow them down:

- The third practice was “grueling.” “It’s just, like, extreme hot...I’ve never really experienced anything like being that hot and being outside.”
- “Coach is just telling us to keep pushing through it and players are kind of start to get more and more tired because of how bad the heat was.”
- “I mean, we’re all really tired. It’s been two days. It’s been really hot. You haven’t stopped sweating. Like I felt like I didn’t have enough water, but that wasn’t because they weren’t giving it to us. It was because it just kept coming out, because there was nowhere to, like, stop from like sweating.”
- “At this point, because it’s the second day, the end of the second day, and people are tired, [students] are not [pushing] too much...Like each one is just trying to just get through their own way.”
- Football players are reportedly mad at being outside “[b]ecause it’s hot, and they’re tired. It’s – honestly, I think it was more of a fatigue thing. Like, people were just tired in generally. The heat really didn’t have anything to do with it. They just didn’t want to be outside practicing.”



At the same time, a coach reportedly becomes angry during this practice and the football players speculate several reasons for why:

- Because the team did not perform well during the seven-on-sevens that day.
- Because of the students who were suspected of using marijuana upset him.
- Because the punter accidentally kicked the ball into the backside of another football player.
- Because some of the more experienced players were repeating the same mistakes over and over.
- Because some students were “slacking off,” “goofing off,” and not working as hard as they could.
- Because the quarterbacks forgot footballs.
- Because he learned that students were switching dorm rooms and/or doubling up in dorm rooms that were cooler than their assigned rooms without telling him.

The final team practice on July 22, 2011, is reported to have ended with a special teams practice. As already discussed *supra*, a missed punt during special teams practice that bounced off the back side of another student caused nearly the entire team to begin laughing. The head coach reportedly became angry that the team was not taking practice seriously enough, and the entire team then reportedly participated in punt practice by running up and down the length of the field (in helmets and shoulder pads) with every punt. One other coach estimated that the entire team ran the length of the field approximately six times. (While two coaches recalled the head coach becoming angry after the missed punt, only one coach recalled the team running the length of the field during punt practice.)

Special teams practice concluded the team practice, which was followed by conditioning. It is unclear precisely what time practice actually ended, but coaches' notes indicate that conditioning began at 8:20 PM. Conditioning entailed bag pushes, a four corner drill, and running diagonally across the field. A few students also remember “bear crawls” (crawling across the field on hands and feet). Nearly all of the students reported that there was an increase in yelling during the evening practice and conditioning. Reported statements included the following:

- “Pick it up,” “let’s go,” “finish,” “get here,” “wheels, wheels,” “push harder,” and similar phrases.
- “Get your shit together.”
- Directed to specific students: “This would have been a lot easier if you were in the weight room this summer.”
- “What are you going to do in the fourth quarter; run to the sideline?”

The head coach denied saying anything other than “finish,” “finish strong,” “hustle,” “good job” and similar comments.

Divisions on the team became apparent yet again at this juncture. There are some football players reported that they were angry that they were working as hard as they were in the heat and some talked about being fatigued. One football player in particular was very upset by some of the comments from coaches; he had begun walking during conditioning because he was not able to finish but a coach compared him to Gitt and reported stated something to the effect of “he [Gitt] is bigger than you and he’s still running.” On the other side of the spectrum, a handful of students asserted things such as: the evening conditioning was easier than the morning conditioning; heat was not a factor during the evening practice/conditioning because it had cooled down outside<sup>4</sup>; and it was right to remind those who did not take the time to go to the weight room over the summer that the conditioning would have been easier if they did. Again, the factual reports about what actual events took place during the evening practice and conditioning are consistent, but subjective assessments of some of the football players are irreconcilable.

A number of football players were reportedly visibly tired and breathing hard/heavily during the conditioning drills. Virtually every student who volunteered to be interviewed spoke about Gitt’s dedication and work ethic during football practices, including how he insisted on finishing drills, did not take breaks, and never quit. Thus, when Gitt reportedly refused to stop running during conditioning, it was reported that numerous teammates began cheering him on to help him finish the conditioning drills.

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<sup>4</sup> The temperature at this time was in the high 90 degree range.

Immediately following conditioning, the team gathered together for a team meeting on the field. They were reportedly yelled at by a coach for a variety of reasons, and it was described by some football players as follows: “[H]e was pretty much saying that everything that went wrong in the camp at that time...And then he just kept on saying that we have to be more serious as a team if we want to go anywhere.” During the meeting, “[Coach] is yelling about the kids smoking pot and how disappointed he is, then he calls out the suspected guys and yells at them separately.” The head coach only admits that he yelled at the team for switching rooms without telling him and that he yelled at the individuals suspected of using marijuana:<sup>5</sup>

After the team meeting, the students headed back to their dorm rooms but not as a group. Meanwhile two coaches departed for an Albright College coaches’ meeting elsewhere on the campus; three coaches returned to the dorm rooms; the head coach stayed out on the practice field and made a phone call; and a football player began voluntarily running around both the main practice field and the one immediately next to it. This football player reportedly did not stop running until made to do so by the head coach.

#### **G. POST-PRACTICE EVENTS.**

The most common adjective used by the football players to describe what happened after practice was “chaos.” Albright College maintenance workers were unable to repair some of the air conditioning units that had been identified as not functioning properly. As a result, some players were returning to their rooms to find notes on their doors with new room assignments, and they began packing up their belongings and moving to their new rooms. The shower rooms were crowded with players who have just returned from practice, so some students seek out less full shower rooms on different floors rather than wait for the closest one to become available. The football players were spread over the first and second floors of the building, and the majority of those interviewed reported that they were not aware of what was

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<sup>5</sup> After he was made aware of the suspected marijuana use, the head coach decided to perform a “health and welfare” check on all of the other dorm rooms that the football players were occupying. It was at that time that he stated he realized that football players had switched rooms and/or doubled-up in rooms without telling him.

happening in rooms/hallways not in their immediate vicinity. Thus, when alarms that sound like fire alarms were activated, they reportedly began to evacuate the building not knowing that the alarm was triggered by someone holding an alarmed door open for paramedics to enter the building.

Different groups of students were aware of Gitt going into distress, the second student who went to the hospital for dehydration, the student who “collapsed” in the shower, the student who fainted, and the student who felt sick in his room. Some students are not aware of any of this at the time the events are transpiring. None of the interviewed coaches stated that they were aware of anyone experiencing any level of distress other than Gitt and, eventually, the second student who was transported to the hospital.

The primary focus of the fact-gathering process that the School Board engaged LLG to conduct was to determine the events that transpired on July 22, 2011. Overall, football players woke up at roughly 5:30 AM to begin July 22, 2011, with conditioning, and finished their day at roughly 8:35 PM – or approximately 15 hours later – with conditioning. In terms of modifications to the schedule, the afternoon practice was moved indoors and the evening practice start time was delayed. In summary, football players participated in the following outdoor activities: two conditioning sessions (without equipment) and two team practices (in helmets and shoulder pads). Additionally, the skilled positions participated in three seven-on-sevens (most likely only wearing helmets), and the linemen participated in two or three sets of drills (in helmets and shoulder pads) with at least one set directed by Albright College representatives.

**a. STUDENT & PARENT SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS**

As stated during the March 15, 2012, parent meeting, a purpose of the investigation was to inform School Board deliberations regarding whether there are any policies it could enact and/or modify to enhance the safety and welfare of the School District’s students, even when students are not attending School District sponsored or endorsed events, to the greatest extent possible within the School Board’s authority. To that end, students and parents who volunteered for investigative interviews were given the opportunity to make a recommendation

to the School Board regarding what aspects of either team camp or the School District's football program they thought could or should be done differently. Three football players requested that the School Board make no changes to the football program. Following is a list summarizing those recommendations that were received (summarized without noting whether it is within the School Board's authority to implement such a recommendation):

- A parent recommended that, if there is a way to do so within the rules and regulations of the PIAA, team camp should be held at BSHS because it would be "cheaper for the School District, and cheaper for the parents." However, it is important for the School Board to note that, in order to comply with PIAA bylaws, the School District in no way sponsors or organizes any football team camp and does not expend any funds in relation to team camp. Team camp fees are paid by parents, with subsidies from the football booster club, and paid directly to Albright College. The football booster club also pays for the cost of transportation. All permission slips/medical forms are issued from and returned to Albright College. Also, Article XVI of the PIAA bylaws requires that coaches attend as private citizens or volunteers.<sup>6</sup>
- Another parent recommended that any football player caught with marijuana should be made to leave the premises immediately and prohibited from participating on the football team.
- A parent recommended that there should always be a designated contact person present at the School District with all necessary contact information in the event of an emergency.

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<sup>6</sup> Notably, one coach described himself as an employee of Albright College for the purposes of team camp – purportedly in order to comply with PIAA rules – and acknowledged that Albright College pays coaches a small per student stipend (estimated between \$8 and \$12 per student) for attending team camp. Another coach acknowledged that he is aware of a historical practice of institutions that host team camps paying a stipend to coaches. When the PIAA was contacted in connection with this investigation, it relayed that coaches were professionals and not prohibited from entering into employment arrangements, receiving stipends, or similar conduct outside of the regular season.

- Two students recommended that three-a-day practices should be banned. One observed that even professional teams do not have three-a-day practices anymore, and expressed how he found it “unacceptable” that football players were practicing during a heat advisory.
- Four students essentially recommended that the School Board create a rule prohibiting them from practicing during heat advisories/extreme heat. Alternatively, one student suggested at least prohibiting wearing helmets and shoulder pads in that situation.
- Another student indicated that there should be a physical fitness test for “obviously out of shape” football players before they are allowed to participate in team camp.
- One student recommended that the School Board provide training for student athletes regarding heat related illnesses.
- Four students recommended that adequate air conditioning should be guaranteed *in advance* of attending a team camp, and one even suggested that someone should be sent to inspect the quality of the facilities before football players go to team camp.
- Two students recommended that more than just water should be made available at team camp because athletes sweat out minerals and nutrients as well, whether that is Gatorade, sodium tablets, anything similar.
- One student recommended that the School District introduce a random drug testing program throughout the year, not just during the football season and that, generally, the School Board needs to do more about the drug problem at BSHS.
- Two students requested better communications in two slightly different ways:

First, in situations similar to last year's team camp, if the School District is going to send representatives to talk to the football players, officials should send someone that the students are familiar. Second, there needs to be better/increased communication with students. (The implication was that communications always seemed geared toward adults, and it would be appropriate to communicate better with the students.)

## VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the information gathered through the course of the investigation, the desire to remain compliant with PIAA rules and regulations, and the scope of the School Board's authority in adopting/modifying School District policies and procedures, it is recommended that the School Board should immediately approve and direct the School District to implement the following initiatives:

- **Coaches Training Program.** Given the indication of some football coaches that they do not intend to return to BSHS for the upcoming season, the feedback from parents and students during the investigation, the Pennsylvania legislature's recent passage of laws requiring certain trainings for coaches,<sup>7</sup> some February 2012 updates to the BSHS emergency athletic plans, and the close-out of the instant investigation, the School Board has a unique opportunity to "reset the bar" for what it expects from all School District coaches (not just football coaches). The School Board should develop and require a coaches training program that considers these subject areas:

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<sup>7</sup> Starting with the new fiscal year, the School District and its coaching staff will be subject to two new pieces of (very similar) legislation: the Safety in Youth Sports Act and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act. These were enacted into law in November 2011 and May 2012, respectively. The former is geared towards recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussions in student athletes, and the later is geared towards recognizing the signs and symptoms of cardiac arrest. All coaches will be required to undergo annual training in both, and the School Board will be required to enact a policy with some stringent minimum penalties (to be effective in two years). Essentially, coaches will be required to prevent an athlete from participating in his/her sport if they show signs of either concussion or cardiac arrest. The student athlete will *not* be permitted to participate again unless they can produce a doctor's note clearing them. The minimum penalties required by law for not complying will be exclusion from coaching for the rest of the then-current season for the first offense, and exclusion from coaching for the current season and the next season for the second offense.

1. Reviewing the contents of the BSHS Emergency Action Plan and how/when to implement it;
  2. Having emergency medical procedures, medical kits, basic first aid;
  3. The new trainings required by law (see footnote 6) and information on the signs of dehydration and how to address it;
  5. Anti-hazing / Bully-prevention;
  6. How to use the Code of Student Conduct/Impose Discipline;
  7. Developing an emergency communications plan; and
  8. Drug Testing procedures and protocols;
- **Student Athlete Training in Heat Exhaustion & Hydration.** This recommendation comes directly from a BSHS football player (see above). The School District should provide training to student athletes on heat-related illnesses, hydration and related topics.
  - **Drug Abuse Prevention Program.** The number of students reportedly using drugs on the football team and in the school at large is significant. The School Board and/or School District should begin to explore whether a more aggressive drug testing program (perhaps including a suspicionless/random testing program), a new partnership with law enforcement, or some peer intervention program is warranted under the circumstances. Although these sound like dramatic responses, BSHS football players painted a fairly dramatic picture of drug use at BSHS and at least one student asserted his belief that random drug testing was necessary.

Of course, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives over time and to continue to discuss the range of information gathered during the course of the investigation. Dialogue with parents is particularly important as additional policies and procedures are deliberated. It is recommended, however, that the School Board begin work on the aforementioned initiatives – particularly the coaches and student-athlete trainings – prior to the start of the 2012-2013 school year.

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I wanted to email you to express my concerns about the current situation with the Football Program. I'm actually physically sick over the whole situation. My son has been through enough with what happened last year and now all of this on top of it is uncalled for. My heart aches for my son who last year lost a teammate and friend. And then this year he loses a wonderful Coach who he admired and looked up to and then loses an Athletic Director who he felt the same about. I never realized what an impact Coaches had on kids until this as all happened but the look of sadness and confusion on my son's face explains it all. When he realized Matt was leaving you would have thought his world ended. He no longer seemed excited for football and that drive he had was lost. But then when he heard of Coach Frier taking over that excitement slowly started coming back. When Coach Frier met with all the boys and they were given their helmets he came out of the locker room with the biggest smile on his face. Our family dinner talks started to revolve around football again and he was happy. But then the School Board just rips that all from them again. These kids can't take much more. They've been through enough. The death, the investigation, the loss of coaches and staff, enough is enough. The season is to start in 6 weeks and we need some answers. The school board is turning our kids worlds upside down and we want to know why and to know how this is going to be handled. You may say you have our children's best interest in mind and that you understand, but do you really? Was your child at camp last summer? Did your son come home last summer and not be able to sleep unless he had head phones on to block out the voices he kept hearing of Coach Heiser saying stay with me Sam stay with me. Is your son still not able to wear the t-shirt that was given to him at camp because of the bad memories he associates with it, so instead it lays at the bottom of his dresser no matter how many times you pull it out for him to wear. Well that is what my son has gone through and many others have gone through a lot worse, so until you can tell me your child went through it you have no idea. I realize you are in a tough spot because you do have the parents who are demanding answers and the ones who are on witch hunts for reason's unspecific to the situation although they are going to use this situation to try to get what they want which is totally uncalled for. The only people you owe answers to are the Gitts and no one else. No one ever wanted what happened last year to happen. No Coach on that staff wanted or expected that and we all know it. Should there have been more precautions yes maybe, who knows if it would have made a difference. Some people would have said the boys who got into trouble at camp shouldn't have punished the whole team and yes everyone knows about the boys who got into the trouble. We live in a small community and everyone talks and rumors spread. But you can't rely on the voices of just a few noisy parents to allow you to up root all the sporting programs at BSHS. You were elected to your position for a reason because you were supposed to be responsible and capable of making good decisions for our children without playing the politics game and cowering to a few noisy parents. Whatever anyone may think of the Coaching Staff or Athletic Director we used to have they walked on water in my eyes and many others? Did I always agree with every decision they made, of course not. Did they make me mad at times, of course so? But we are all adults and I ultimately knew they always had the best interest of the kids at heart and the best interest of all the kids not just a special few. The programs BSHS has are far above and beyond what other schools offer. The amount of time and money those coaches spend on our kids is extraordinary. When my son broke his wrist in the weight room Coach Heister was calling me before we even left the E.R. to check on him. And everyone has and is entitled to their own options, but to be on a witch hunt is uncalled for. Rumors have spread about the money be spent from fundraising etc., well let me tell you this until you stand in someone

else's shoes you should mind your own business. The amount of money to run any sports program is minimal, when you add up the cost of equipment for the weight room, cost to attend 7on7's, food, and clothing apparel for the kids it adds up quickly. There is never enough money. And for those of you who say well they don't need this or that. You aren't a coach and you aren't there so you don't know. The apparel given to the boys helped teach team unity, it made all the boys feel together like a team and they were able to show team pride. Yes we do hold a clothing fundraiser but what about those kids whose parents can't afford to buy them items. That's where a great coach came in and made sure every player had something not just a select few. He made them feel like a family and he cared for them like he did his own son's and punished them just the same when they screwed up, which in my book is ok with me. Many other parents from various school districts repeat daily that BS Parents don't know how good they have it. But regardless of what you or anyone thinks of the coaches. A decision needs to be made and it needs to be made now. This has gone on long enough. People should have been careful what they wished for because now all they have is kayos and it's affecting everyone. These boys need a coach staffing and they need it now. The political game needs to stop and we need to be adults and role models for these boys. The season is to start in a few weeks and they don't even know who their coach will be. You are so worried about our boys, how about their safety? Because right now you are on track to having a repeat of what happened last year because none of these boys are going to be in shape to step on a football field in few weeks in this heat. They should have been working out all summer to prepare for the season but they couldn't do that do to your lack of motivation and ability to make any decisions on time when they should have been made. So please start considering our son's safety and get them a coach.

Mr Murrie & Mrs Kaposi

Dear School Board and Dr Sanker,

I believe that your decision to fire Coach Friar has set the Football team up for failure and my reasons why are below..

1. Our playbook, the football team knows the playbook and what Coach Friar was changing. I believe it is too late to get

a new head coach and learn a new playbook this late in the pre season. We all knew the other Coaches and everyone likes and we all knew their expectations and what we had to do on the field.

2. I know Coach Friar made some personal sacrifices in order to be our Head Coach.

3. What are we doing about pre season training? It has already been changed twice, and it is very difficult to keep changing for our bodies going from one routine to another.

4. When are we starting pre season practice? Because if we don't start now its just going to end in failure once again.

5. Some of us were already upset that Coach Heiser left then we hear Coach Govern is leaving and now we find out were not getting Coach Friar! I feel like I've been lied to and frankly I blame all of you.

6. Hope? Is there hope for this season? Some of us have lost all hope...and a few are trying to get the players somewhat organised. Are we going to have a season this year?

7. What about the Seniors? What and how do you think they feel? I know alot of their parents are looking for scholarships and what College wants to look at a school that has a bad season because of your decisions.

8. We would have been just fine with Coach Friar and the rest of the Coaching Staff, we had a great Coaching Staff in my opinion .

Lastly Why cant Coach Friar be our Head Coach and the rest of the Coaches Coach this season?

Signed,

Justin Weibley 10th grade Boiling Springs High School Student and Football player

name, address,