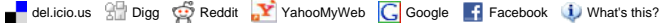


Local News



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## Forest Lake school board member says district ignored van death, sex case

Board member says district too passive after sex case, death  
**BY MEGAN BOLDT**  
 Pioneer Press

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A Forest Lake school board member's call to reprimand Superintendent Lynn Steenblock for not demanding more thorough background checks of those working in the district sparked some controversy this week.

David Gay said he made the suggestion at Thursday night's board meeting to call attention to what he sees as a disturbing pattern.

He said no one has taken any responsibility after a district self-defense instructor was charged last month with having sex with a 15-year-old student and a 14-year-old girl was killed in May while being driven home from school by a contract worker. The driver, who also died in the accident, was found to have marijuana in his system.

"When something happens, we kind of ignore it and it just goes away," Gay said. "We need to step in and do something about it. We need to make sure the youth and leaders are protected."

The district did not conduct a criminal background check on Ladislao "Audi" Enriquez, who faces first- and third-degree counts of criminal sexual conduct. And a transportation company that had a contract with the district did not do any checks on Scott Wendt, the driver involved in the May accident.

Both men were independent contractors, not district employees, and the district was not required to perform a check.

Other board members defended Steenblock, arguing it wasn't fair to place the blame on him.

Board member Joe Grafft agreed they need to look at the policy. But he also pointed out that even

background checks don't guarantee something bad won't happen with an employee or volunteer.

Board Chairman Bill Bresin said the administration has looked at requiring more stringent background checks, but the board hasn't voted on it yet.

"The board is the one that votes on the policies," Bresin said in the meeting. "If someone is not doing their job, then it is the board, not the superintendent."

Megan Boldt covers education, including Washington County schools and the North St. Paul-MaplewoodOakdale school district. She can be reached at mboldt@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5495.

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