

Solana Beach School District

April 19, 2016

10:00am

Investigation interview of Joel Tapia, Principal, Solana Vista School

Persons Present: Joel Tapia, Sal Gumina

Introductory Information:

Reason for Meeting: Staff members from Solana Vista came forward with concerns about various aspects of your conduct and performance as principal of Solana Vista this school year. I have followed up on many of those concerns by speaking to additional Solana Vista staff members. The District placed you on paid administrative leave due to the allegations brought to the District's attention. The purpose of this meeting is for me to gather information from you, and afford you an opportunity to explain or respond to the allegations that were presented against you.

Ground Rules: Answer questions presented to the best of your ability and recollection. You are not expected to, and should not, guess or make up answers. You are expected to tell the truth in this interview and in all your dealings with the District.

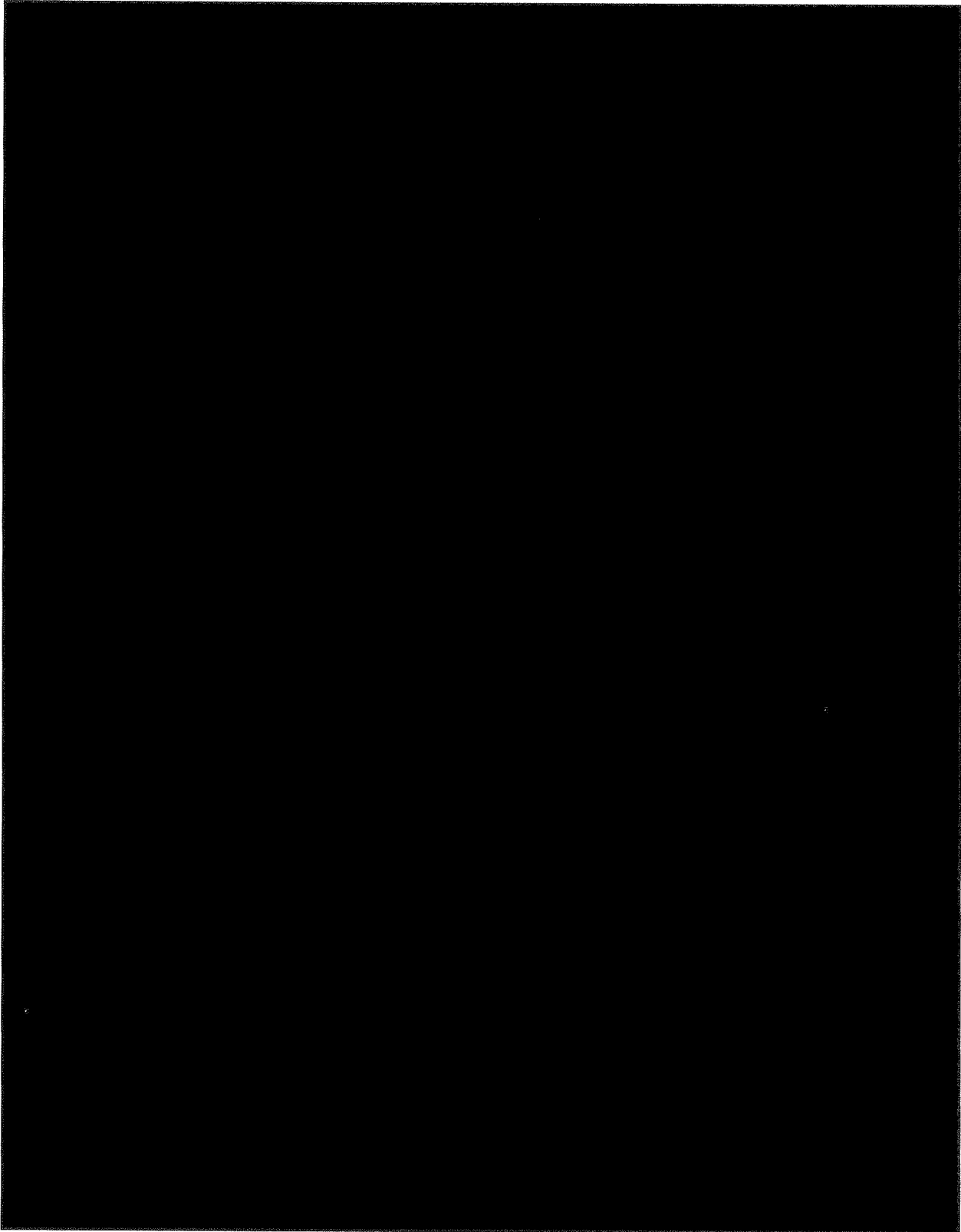
Applicable Procedures: I am meeting with you today to gather information about allegations relative to your conduct and performance. Because many of the allegations are general in nature, the District is treating this as a general personnel investigation, and it is being conducted by my office (Human Resources).

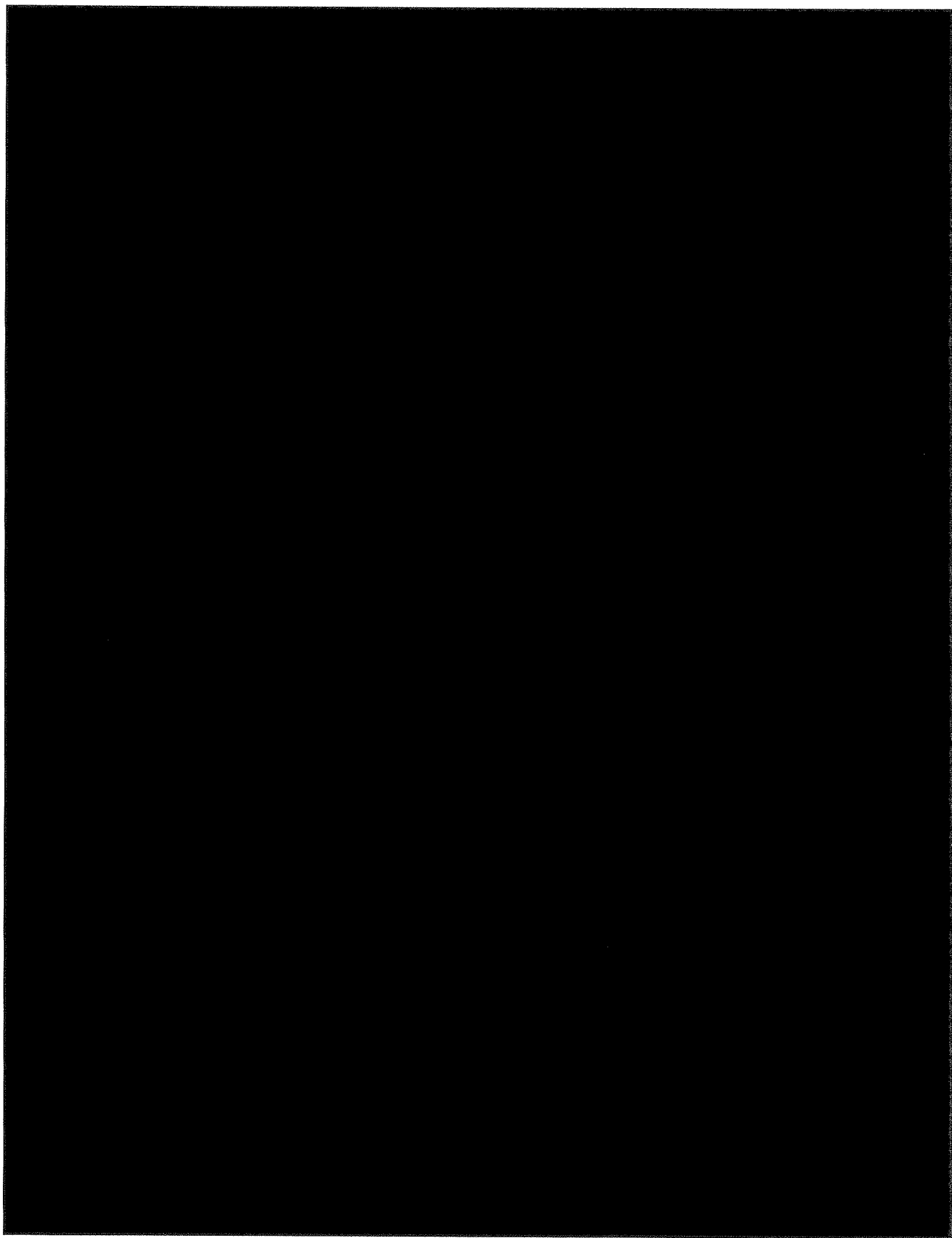
No Retaliation: Retaliation against any complainant, perceived complaint, witness, or perceived witness will not be prohibited, and would subject you to serious disciplinary action irrespective of the merits of the underlying complaint. Retaliation could also result in legal liability for the District. I am explicitly directing you to refrain from engaging in any acts that may constitute retaliation. This would include any communications that may be perceived by a suspected complainant or witness as confronting them about concerns they expressed.

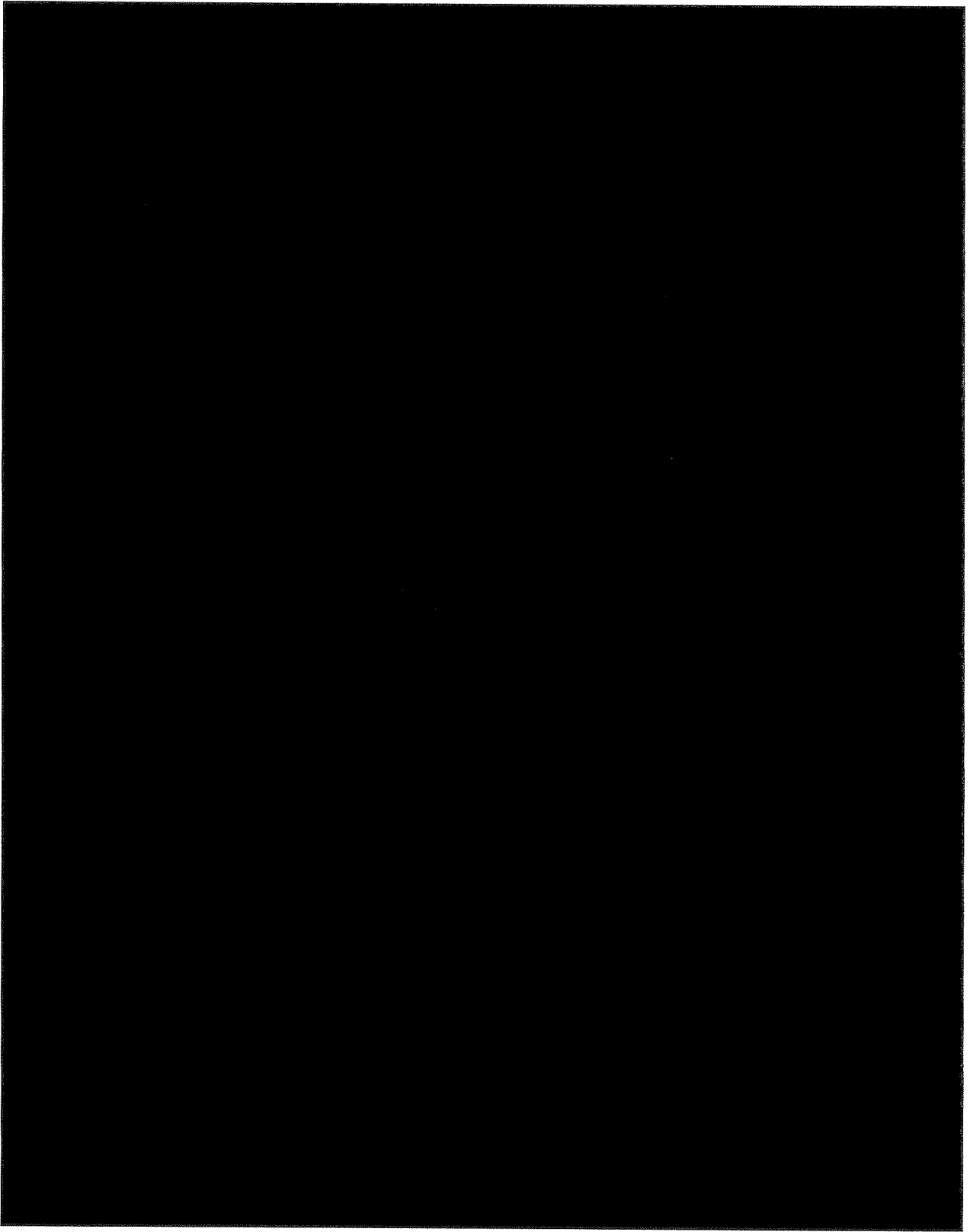
Do you understand this directive to refrain from engaging in retaliatory action?

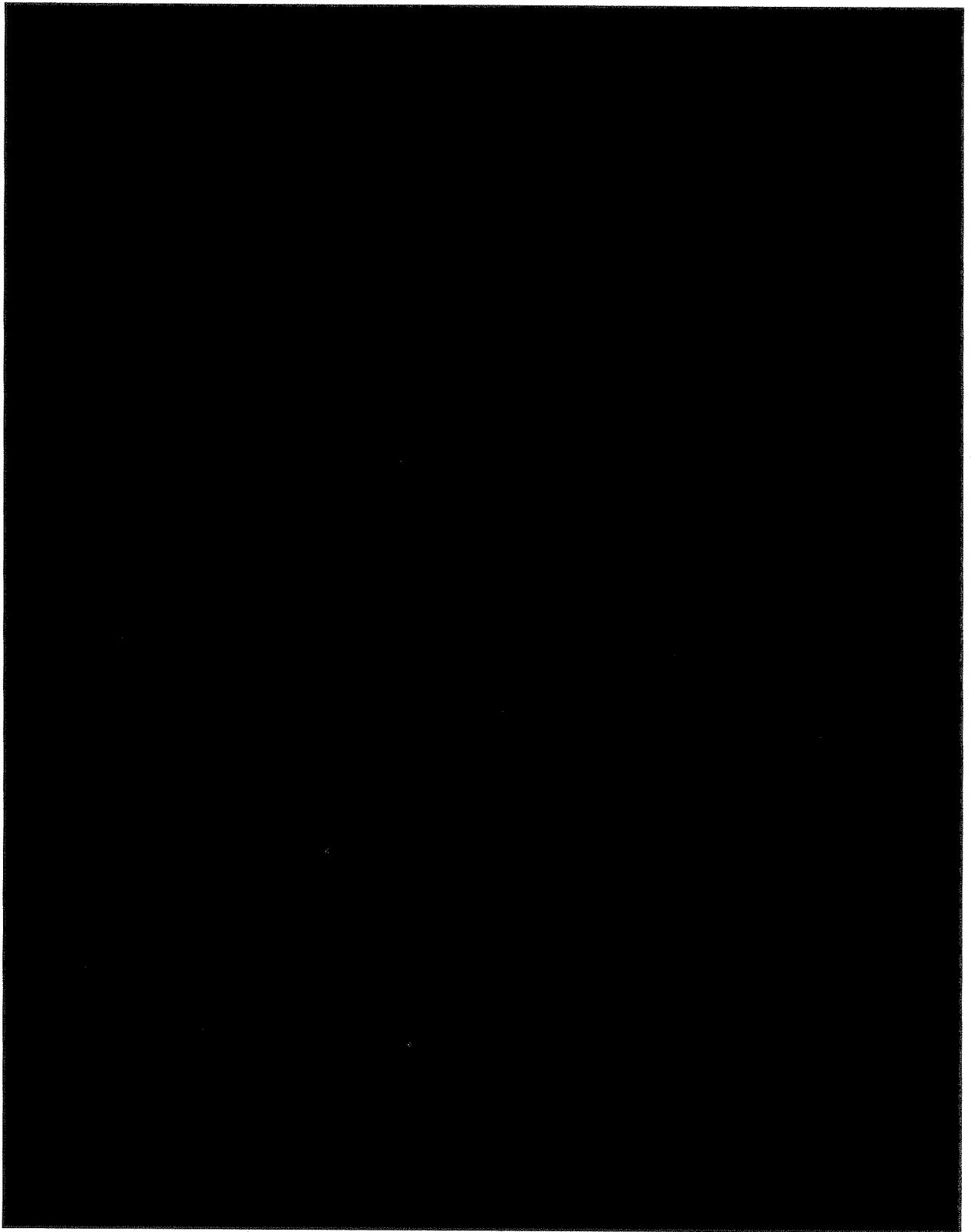
Questions about Allegations / Information Gathering

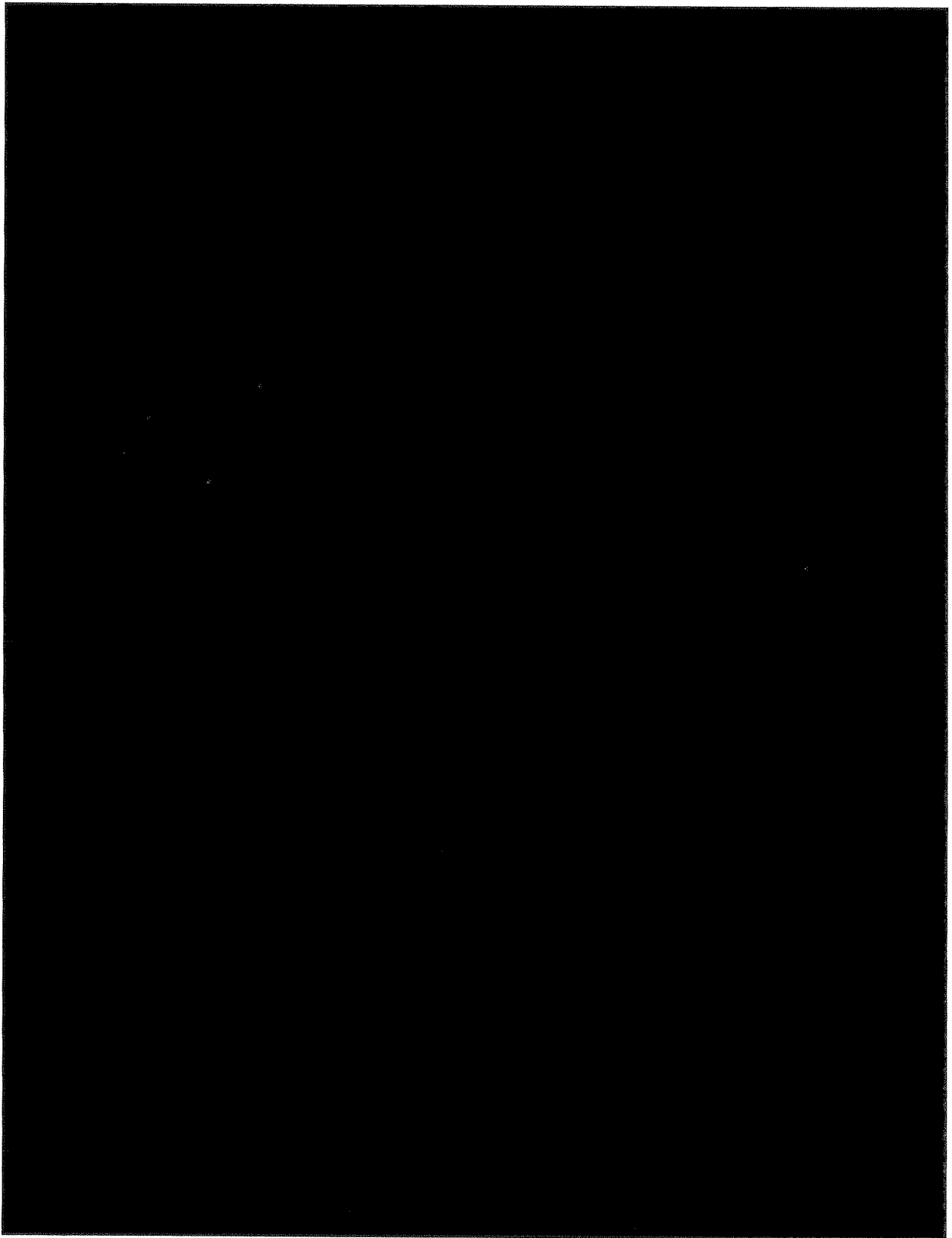












Unprofessional Comments / Harassing Conduct

[REDACTED]

How often do you interact with [REDACTED]? (Ms. [REDACTED] alleged she feels as though he is always checking in on her.)

Minimal outside of iep / sst mtgs. (mostly within the context of iep/sst mtgs and/or any other professional mtg.) Very little small talk.

Has Ms. [REDACTED] told you, "You don't need to keep checking on me?" If yes, what was the context?

She never said that

Do you touch her on the shoulder and/or back when greeting her?

No, never

Do you make comments about Ms. [REDACTED]'s appearance?

No, never

Have you asked Ms. [REDACTED] for her personal cell phone number? In what contexts?

Yes, for work related. (ie emergencies) because she does not carry a wt. How many times (estimate)?

Once. Only one time. Asked Jill for [REDACTED] cell phone number. Jill gave JT [REDACTED] CC extension. JT took this to mean [REDACTED] didn't want to give him her cell phn number.

JT never asked [REDACTED] directly for her cell phone number.

Weeks later. JT questioned [REDACTED]. "You don't give out your cell phn number?" [REDACTED] "I don't give out my cell phn number anymore."

Did you ask Jill Lamb to give you Ms. [REDACTED]'s personal cell number? If so, why?

See above

Did you call Ms. [REDACTED]'s mother on February 11?

"not that I recall" "no" "unless it was a mistake" "never intended to call [REDACTED] mother" "that would be strange"

If yes, why? How did you get Ms. [REDACTED]'s mother's number?

If no: Any idea why Ms. [REDACTED]'s mother would ask if she was at work, because she just received a call from Joel Tapia, her principal, looking for her?

"Ok wait, hold on" SV has a contact sheet (emergency card) JT needed to get ahold of [REDACTED] Tried her at CC, no answer. JT went to contact sheet

Where is the contact sheet kept?

JT said the contact sheet is kept in a container, next to nancy's desk, but couldn't remember exactly where the container is.

JT said he needed to talk with [REDACTED] because it was a work related emergency.

What?

Can't remember. Must have been related to a sp ed student or iep request. when JT called the number, a woman answered. JT could tell right away it wasn't [REDACTED] Can a speak w/ [REDACTED] "this is her mom" JT informed the woman he was the principal at SV and that he was trying to contact [REDACTED] Apologized for the phone call and hung up. Feels he was being transparent because he identified himself as the principal

JT stated he feels he has the right, as the principal to have access to staff members phn #s in case of an emergency

Did you have an exchange with Ms. [REDACTED] after a February 26 disaster drill about how you could call her to alert her about drills if you had her cell phone number?

I don't recall that happening. It doesn't make any sense

Did you have a conversation with [REDACTED] about baby swaddlers in the presence of Ms. [REDACTED]? If yes, did you make a statement to Ms. [REDACTED] to the effect of her not needing a swaddle because she has a boyfriend?

No absolutely not. Never, ever made the comment to [REDACTED] It's a strange comment, and I didn't say.

Anyone else present.

No, I told her it works great

What did you mean by that? How did Ms. [REDACTED] react? How did (other teacher present) react?

Have you given gifts to any staff members? If yes, what and to whom? Why?

Sp ed team \$5 gift cards. Sent gift cards electronically to say thank you. In appreciation for the work they do

One other time given to [REDACTED] to say thank you for facilitating the SST mtgs.

Starbucks to the whole staff at staff mtgs

From what you have observed, does Ms. [REDACTED] seem to avoid interacting with you?

Yes

I try to be respectful and sensitive to her. I praise her for her work, trying to be positive and encouraging her in the work setting.

Do you recall your conference with me on October 1?

Yes.

What was the subject matter we addressed in that conference?

A tchr reported that she felt uncomfortable about comments JT made about the way she looked.

Do you remember that I informed you that, even if you did not touch the employee in an inappropriate way, that the touching/physical contact was unnecessary, unprofessional, and made her feel uncomfortable?

Yes

Do you remember that I directed you "not to touch any staff member other than regular work interaction (i.e. handshake), or in the case of an emergency situation or incident"?

Yes

Have you complied with that directive? If no, why not?

Absolutely. Have never touched anyone

