



BENJAMIN STODDERT MIDDLE SCHOOL

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www.ccboe.com/schools/stoddert
Home of the Stallions

#stoddertstrong #allin

Marvin L. Jones
Interim Principal

Erica Williams
Vice Principal

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Vice Principal

Matthew Newcamp
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Administrative Intern

January 5, 2018

Dear Stoddert Families:

In the continuation of our efforts to keep you informed, I wanted to provide you this update with regard to the legal matters involving Carlos Bell, former instructional assistant at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. Today, Mr. Bell pleaded guilty in Circuit Court for Charles County to 27 charges, including sexual abuse of a minor, attempted transmission of HIV, child pornography and other charges. Bell was charged last year with sexual abuse, assault and additional crimes against children, and has remained in jail since June 2017. Bell's sentencing is set for March of this year, where he could face 190 years in prison. The State's Attorney's Office has shared that Bell will also plead guilty to federal charges later this month.

Charles County State's Attorney Tony Covington is holding a press conference this afternoon at the Charles County Sheriff's Office headquarters in La Plata to inform the public of Bell's plea.

While today's court proceedings are a step forward, we continue on our mission of encouraging and entrusting our students, teachers and parents to Speak Up and Speak Out. If you see something, say something. Our staff has received Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training to better recognize and report signs of inappropriate behavior, and we will support those who come forward and those who need additional services, in every way we can.

At any time, services for any student who may need to speak with a trusted adult is also available. Our pupil services team includes a psychologist, pupil personnel worker and school counselors who are ready to work with students who need additional support. The school system has an ongoing partnership with the Charles County Child Advocacy Center as well, which provides free therapy for victims of sexual abuse through a federal Victims of Crime Act grant. Please call 301-609-9887 and ask for Sara Ortiz, Victim Services Coordinator, to make an appointment.

Our school will likely be in the headlines again soon because of Carlos Bell's guilty plea today, as well as other charges he faces in his impending federal case. As we forge ahead into 2018 and beyond, we will not forget our past but neither will we let it define us. We will continue to support each other and stand Stoddert Strong throughout. I will continue to keep you informed about this case if we receive information from the Charles County State's Attorney's Office.

As always, if you have a concern or a suggestion, please contact me, or any administrator, at the school office.

Respectfully,

Marvin L. Jones
Interim Principal