



f 107

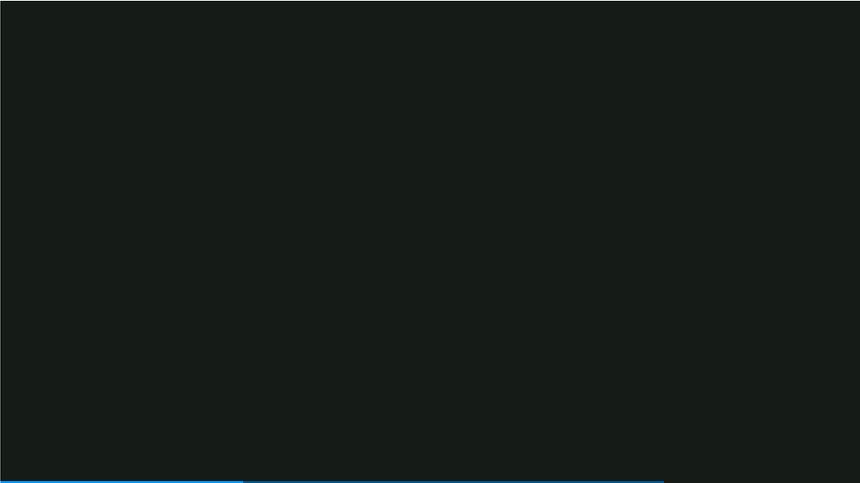
t

in 10

5

## Indianapolis Public School officials waited 6 days to report abuse, court documents show

Marisa Kwiatkowski and Justin L. Mack, IndyStar Published 11:56 a.m. ET March 2, 2016 | Updated 6:39 p.m. ET April 13, 2016



A former school counselor for Indianapolis Public Schools is facing nine felony counts of child seduction. And two district officials are accused of failing to report the allegations to child-welfare authorities. (Dwight Adams/IndyStar)Wochit



(Photo: Provided by IMPD)

f 107 | t | in 10 | 5 | EMAIL | MORE

CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN COMMENT

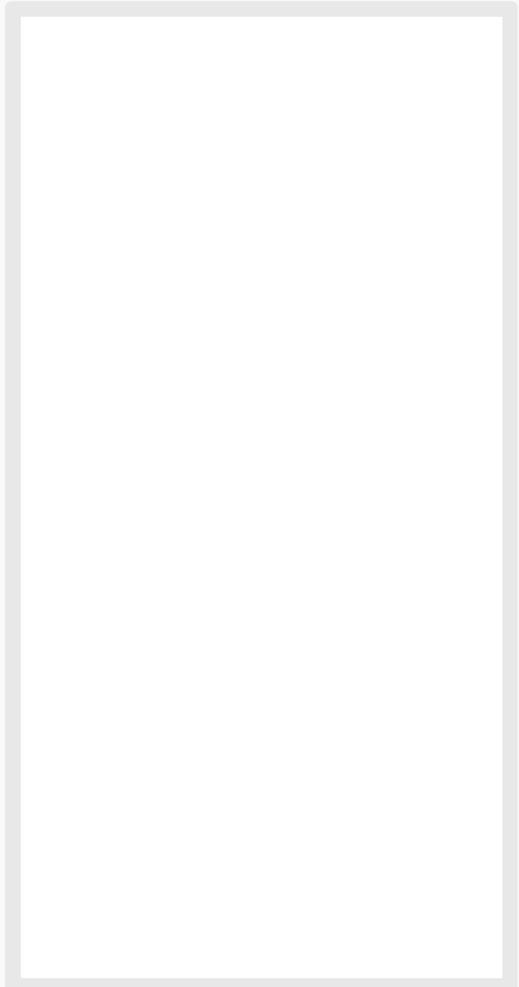
Marion Superior Court records indicate Indianapolis Public Schools officials waited six days to report allegations of sexual abuse involving a guidance counselor and two teenage students — a delay that may have violated state law.

Shana Taylor, 37, was charged Wednesday with nine felony counts of child seduction, one felony count of dissemination of matter harmful to minors and one misdemeanor count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, according to court records.

Taylor is accused of engaging in sexual conduct with one student in multiple locations — including the school — between October and February. The encounters began when the student was 16 and continued while he was 17, according to the Marion County prosecutor's office.

Taylor also is accused of having a sexual encounter with a second student, age 16.

Court records indicate at least four school officials knew about the allegations as early as Feb. 17, but no one reported them to the Indiana Department of Child Services until



### TOP VIDEOS



Feb. 23 — six days later. Indiana law requires certain school officials to immediately report instances of suspected child abuse at their institutions to DCS or law enforcement.

It's the second time since December that Indiana school officials have delayed making such reports.

An attorney and school officials at Park Tudor, a private school in Indianapolis, were criticized after they [waited one day](#) to report allegations of child abuse against former basketball coach Kyle Cox. School officials allowed Cox to resign after he signed a confidentiality agreement that prohibited him from communicating with Park Tudor students and from discussing the reason for his resignation, according to federal court records.

Cox, 31, is accused in federal court of repeatedly coercing a 15-year-old Park Tudor student into sending him explicit images.

[Did Park Tudor officials violate state law?](#)

In the IPS case, a mother met with William Jensen, assistant principal at Positive Supports Academy, in the Longfellow Building at 510 Laurel St., on Feb. 17 to report the suspected misconduct involving her teenage son. She showed Jensen copies of messages and inappropriate photos, according to court records.

Jensen contacted Deb Leser, the director of student services, who instructed him to contact Tina Hester, the IPS human resources director, court records state. Jensen forwarded the messages and photos to Shalon Dabney, the human resources case manager handling the case.

Dabney met with Taylor the next day, Feb. 18, and placed Taylor on administrative leave.

A previous IPS statement said officials immediately "launched an internal investigation and instantly took steps to ensure the accused had no further contact with students."

"Parents should know that the employee was immediately suspended once the district was initially notified of the allegations," IPS spokeswoman Kristin Cutler said Tuesday in a statement. "The employee is being recommended for termination."

It is unclear why school officials waited until Feb. 23 to report the allegations to DCS. Cutler said she cannot comment beyond the statement she released Tuesday night.

DCS Director Mary Beth Bonaventura said school officials told her agency that the IPS person in charge had been on vacation, and school officials had been waiting on that individual's guidance.

Bonaventura said timely reports to her agency are crucial for many reasons. First and foremost, she said, it is DCS' responsibility to assess and ensure the safety of children. Timely reports also help DCS and police preserve evidence.

"Everyone has a role to play," Bonaventura said. "Ours is to investigate suspected child abuse or neglect. There's really no place for schools to do their own investigation. That's not their expertise."

Sandy Runkle-DeLorme, director of programs for Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, said those who work with children also should remember that telling a "designated reporter" to contact DCS does not absolve people of their own responsibility to make a report.

**Video: Tour \$12.8M Okoboji mansion**

5:13



Bulldog mama has paws full with pups  
0:21



Sloppy slime eel spill stops traffic  
1:00



Daily police briefing 7-12  
5:24



Cute contest: Dog vs. cat on wheels  
0:31

"There really is no reason to wait," Runkle-DeLorme said via email. "If, during the call, DCS needs additional information, they will ask for it."

Peg McLeish, spokeswoman for the Marion County prosecutor's office, declined to comment Wednesday on whether prosecutors would pursue criminal charges against IPS officials. Indiana law requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report it. People who fail to do so could be charged with a misdemeanor.

"The matter is still under investigation," McLeish said via email. "Anyone who may have additional information is encouraged to contact IMPD and speak with a sex crimes detective."

Police arrested Taylor [last week](#). She is being held in the Marion County Jail.

An emotional Taylor entered the courtroom for an initial hearing Wednesday afternoon with her wrists shackled. Outfitted in a yellow jail jumpsuit, she spoke only to confirm her age and indicate that she understood the charges against her.

Taylor quietly sobbed through most of the minutes-long hearing. Her sniffing prompted a man in the courtroom to provide her with a box of tissues, so she could wipe the tears from her face.

Following the hearing, Taylor's attorney, Brian Newcomb, said his client's demeanor was a sign of her remorse. He said Taylor plans to take responsibility for her actions and understands there are significant consequences.

"She's a single mother," Newcomb told reporters. "Her child's father passed away a few years back, and she's been raising a child on her own. I know that she admits that she has done some wrong. Whether those are legal wrongs, or moral and ethical wrongs. Either way, that remorse comes and flows from those wrongs."

*IndyStar reporters Madeline Buckley and Jill Disis contributed to this report.*

Call *IndyStar* reporter Marisa Kwiatkowski at (317) 444-6135. Follow her on Twitter: [@IndyMarisaK](#).

 Follow 390 people are following Marisa Kwiatkowski. [Sign Up](#) to see who your friends are following.

[Officials, parents frustrated with Park Tudor's handling of Kyle Cox probe](#)

[IPS counselor is latest in series of educator arrests](#)

**Learn more**

DCS offers a free online training course on reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Watch it here: [reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/](http://reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/).

 107 CONNECT |  TWEET |  10 LINKEDIN |  5 COMMENT |  EMAIL |  MORE

Sponsored Links by Taboola 

