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# INHERITING PROBLEMS FROM THE PAST

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*AISGW's Keeping Campuses Safe from Educator Misconduct*  
*January 30, 2018*

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# TWO SCHOOLS, TWO VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

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Katie Titus

Head of School, Mercersburg Academy

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# BEFORE THE ALLEGATION

- Start talking NOW with your board
  - Decide your broad priorities should you need to respond to an allegation - what are your goals?
    - It's a good time to review your community values
  - Bring in an expert to help the board understand the complexities

# BEFORE THE ALLEGATION

- Have a great lawyer that you trust and who will be your partner, not your dictator
- Decide on the taskforce who will be your team - keep it small
- Know your communications team - do you need to have a crisis communications firm at the ready?
- Have all historic insurance information on hand

# ARE YOU CONSIDERING A PROACTIVE APPROACH?

- Question: Is it a matter of “when” versus “if”?
- Draft a proactive letter - how does it feel?
- Do you know what’s in the double-secret files?

# TASKFORCE - STILL BEFORE THE ALLEGATION

- Draft the community letter and review it with legal counsel
  - Know your plan for who will receive it and how it will be distributed
  - Make a list of constituents who will need to hear the news first and preferably how
- Be clear about everyone's roles on the taskforce
- Set norms for how & what will be communicated to the taskforce
  - “Don't communicate anything that you would not want printed on the front page of the New York Times”
- Discuss what the school's support for victims will be and how they will access that support

# FACING AN ALLEGATION

- Stay Calm
- Listen with care and empathy. Plan a follow-up
- Developing trust with victims and letting them be heard is a huge part of their healing process
- Understand where they are in their healing process - “victim” or “survivor”
- Trust your instincts
- Communicate with your lawyer ASAP and follow-up with the taskforce

# FACING AN ALLEGATION

- Set communications timeline (if necessary bring in crisis communications team ASAP - have your lawyer hire any consultants on behalf of the school) - critical and complex step (faculty/staff, students, board, friends, former heads, etc)
  - Update letter draft as necessary
    - Will you name the alleged perpetrator? Why? Why not?
    - Decide on if you will have a separate statement for the press
  - How will you handle press on campus? What needs to be communicated to the faculty/staff & students with regard to press questions or people on campus?
  - What is your obligation to report to authorities?
  - Will you hire an external investigation firm?
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# ONCE THE LETTER GOES OUT

- Be sure to clear your schedule
- Respond to every communication personally and track them
- Pick up the phone to call people who are angry - support ALL alums
- Schedule taskforce calls as necessary but keep lawyer on speed dial
- Reassure your community & be present

# THE “END” OF THE INVESTIGATION?

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- What do I expect?
  - Are we ever done?
  - Community healing is ongoing
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# BOTTOM LINE -

- Lead with your heart and trust your instincts
- Find the balance - the needs of today's school with the needs of the victims
- Stay connected to victims - you can be a significant part of their healing process
- Be willing to bear the burden of information and keep the circle small
- Have an outlet for support - this is isolating work

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**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?**

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