

Battery charges filed against pre-school teacher

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
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A criminal complaint has been filed against the president of the McKinley County Federation of United School Employees and Lincoln Elementary (451 Boardman Dr.) pre-school teacher Patrice Carpenter, charging her with three petty misdemeanors, also referred to as battery on Dec. 7 in Gallup Magistrate Court.

According to the complaint, a parent named LaNisha Coble heard from her daughter that a juvenile male was being grabbed and dragged by their teacher, Patrice Carpenter. Coble spoke with the boy's parents, Tamera Madrid and her husband.

Also, according to a police report submitted by Officer Nicole Diswood, the girl who reported this to her mother said the teacher had pinched her, spanked her and pulled her hair.

Madrid and Coble went to the school and made a complaint against Patrice Carpenter, with Principal Edgardo B. Castro, for mistreating their children.

Madrid said she was called in by the Central Office to view video footage of what happened to her son.

GPD Patrol Officer Nicole Diswood viewed the footage from Nov. 19, which showed the boy

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with other students on the playground.

In her report she said, other children came out to play and got on the jungle gym.

Diswood said the video showed Carpenter yelling at the children, who ran away leaving the one boy still standing by the jungle gym. She said she saw Carpenter grab his arm and pull him toward her, then push him, causing him to fall to the ground.

In the statement of probable cause, Diswood described the second incident based on her viewing of the video shown to her by Darren Soland, Gallup McKinley County Schools District principal investigator. This incident reportedly occurred on Nov. 30. Diswood said she saw Carpenter grab the same boy's hood as in the video from Nov. 19, while he was playing and drag him to where she was sitting and make him sit on the concrete. She said the video showed the boy trying to crawl away when she grabbed him again by the hood and dragged him back by her side. The boy tried to crawl away again and Carpenter again grabbed him by the hood and dragged him back, making him sit down on the pavement.

The complaint talks about a third incident from Dec. 3, which Diswood also viewed on video, in which the boy was playing with other children on the playground when Carpenter grabbed him by his hood and dragged him to where she was sitting and made him sit down.

On the New Mexico Courts website, the criminal complaint filed Dec. 10 in McKinley County Magistrate Court says Carpenter is charged with "unlawfully and intentionally touch [ing] or apply[ing] force" on three separate occasions "in a rude, insolent or angry manner, contrary to NMSA 1978, § 30-03-04. (a petty misdemeanor)."

Carpenter pleaded not guilty to all three charges.

Gallup McKinley County Schools Superintendent Mike Hyatt told the *Gallup Sun* "We don't comment on personnel matters or investigations."

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Brian Bernard, Vice President of McFuse said he did not want to speak about the case. "Not at this time. It's premature. It's a personnel issue. Nothing's happened yet other than allegations."

Carpenter's attorney, Joseph F. Arite, said the case is ongoing.

A pre-trial hearing before the Honorable Pat A. Casados has been set for Feb. 11 at 10 am.

In addition to the people quoted in this article, the *Sun* attempted to reach Patrice Carpenter, LaNisha Coble, Tamera Madrid, Deputy D.A. Paul Bleicher, Lincoln Elementary School Principal Edgardo Castro and Gallup Police Officer Nicole Diswood in connection with this case and received no response by press time.

By Beth Blakeman
Associate Editor