Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
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As a 19-year-old special needs student approached the bus that takes her home Dec. 9, she tugged at bus driver Gloria Frank's arm to let her in, who had blocked the doors, drawing either side close to her body as she spoke with fellow bus driver Laverne Jim. It was the end of the school day at Miyamura High and students were just starting to board buses.

Based on bus video footage, the response the Miyamura High senior received when she attempted to board her bus was a punch in the face by a district employee, followed by some choice curse words.

According to Gallup Police Department Sgt. Billy Padavich's report, and contained within the video footage itself, after Frank struck the student, she called her a "F-cking B-tch, F-cker."

It also appears that Frank checked her knuckles for damage. The video also shows the student touching her mouth while Jim, sitting in the driver's seat, seems unfazed by her colleague's actions as students start to filter onto her bus.

The incident was reported by the student's mother Denise Jones that same day, and Gallup McKinley County Schools Transportation Director Jeff Bond would take investigative and administrative action the following day.

Jones said during a phone interview Dec. 17, that when she viewed the police report, "it just made me cry."

“She only got charged with battery and that isn’t fair,” she said. “I am planning on talking to the governor about that.”

In a written letter attached to Padavich’s report, she said that when she picked up her daughter Dec. 9, she was crying, and said that a lady slapped her and “was calling her bad names.”

“My daughter had a red mark on her left cheek and she said her teeth were hurting but I gave her some aspirin for it,” the letter states.

Also, according to Jones’ letter, the next morning she approached bus driver Jim, who said she didn’t slap her daughter, and claimed that she didn’t know the other driver’s (Frank’s) name.

Frank said, in a written statement, that she saw the student running towards the bus and that the student told her to move.

“… So I said wait and she just grab my arm without no reason so I hit her in the mouth, and she grab my arm again and she got on the bus and she was saying stupid, ugly, and shut up to me,” Frank stated. “… I left back to my bus, and Laverne [Jim] told me ‘what wrong with you.’”

Based on video footage, it does not appear the victim was speaking as she was touching and holding her mouth as she boarded the bus.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 16, Bond said he could not reveal if Frank was still working at the district, and to make a written request through Superintendent Frank Chiapetti’s office.

Chiapetti responded via email.

“I cannot go into detail because both are personnel actions,” he said. “Board policy and

personnel action was followed with Laverne Jim. Gloria is on administrative leave pending personnel action."

Sources close to the district said they haven't seen Frank at work since she got called into Bond's office, and confirmed that Jim was still driving her bus.

While the district remains tight-lipped on the matter, GPD Capt. Rick White lauded Bond for conducting an immediate investigation and notifying police of the incident.

"Jeff Bond did an excellent investigation on the school district's behalf," White said.

White said a Criminal Complaint has been filed in Municipal Court, and Frank is facing one charge of battery – a charge that if it leads to a conviction – could mean a sentence of up to one year in jail.

As of press time, Municipal Court had not set a preliminary hearing date.

To review the video of the incident and for updates, go to: ***www.gallupsun.com***

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