

TOP STORY

Parents say school failed to protect their daughters

By Noah Diedrich Sentinel Staff
Aug 15, 2026

Three parents allege administrators in the Hinsdale School District failed to protect girls in their care from harmful behavior by fellow students and a staffer.

One parent alleges officials didn't do enough after her teenage daughter reported a middle/high school employee had given her his phone number and was following her around school grounds. Although administrators knew of the girl's concerns, her mother said she found out only after a teacher contacted police.



Hinsdale Middle/High School on July 28 in Hinsdale.

Bailey Stover / Sentinel Staff

A second mother alleges a boy sexually harassed and assaulted her daughter at the middle school, but the principal's investigation into this ended without any

meaningful steps taken to protect her.

A third parent, Taneeka Thompson, alleges administrators did not protect her seventh-grader from racial bullying, which included the use of racial slurs and, in one instance, the girl's hair being pulled so hard an extension came out of her head.

"The safety of our school is our top priority, both physical and emotional," Hinsdale Middle/High School Principal Anna Roth wrote in a December 2024 email to one of the mothers interviewed for this article. "We look to and respond appropriately to incidences as they are reported and would encourage both you and [your daughter] to continue to report any concerns you have."

The families in all three of these stories did report their concerns. And in emails to The Sentinel, Roth said the allegations prompted investigations and, when warranted, discipline. But, unsatisfied with the administration's response, the families ultimately looked beyond the school district to keep their children safe. Two pulled their daughters from Hinsdale Middle/High. The third secured a protective order against an employee, which forced the district to move him out of her daughter's building.

This isn't the first time Roth has faced allegations of not adequately addressing harassment.

In 2021, while principal of Twin Valley Middle High School in Whitingham, Vt., Roth was named in a Vermont Human Rights Commission complaint filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont on behalf of a Black student.





Signs inside the superintendent's office on July 28 at the Hinsdale School District office in Hinsdale.

Bailey Stover / Sentinel Staff

The female student “experienced severe and racially motivated targeting, harassment, and discrimination by peers while at school—including derogatory racial slurs, references to white supremacy, and threats of physical violence,” the complaint said.

Despite receiving multiple reports of harassment, the complaint claimed Roth and another administrator had failed to take meaningful action.

The complaint triggered a federal investigation and received national news coverage. It alleged that Twin Valley administrators “conducted cursory investigations, attempted to rationalize and minimize the harassment, or ignored it altogether.”

An ensuing investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice found school administration had failed to respond sufficiently to harassment against the girl and what it called “a broader hostile educational environment” at the school.

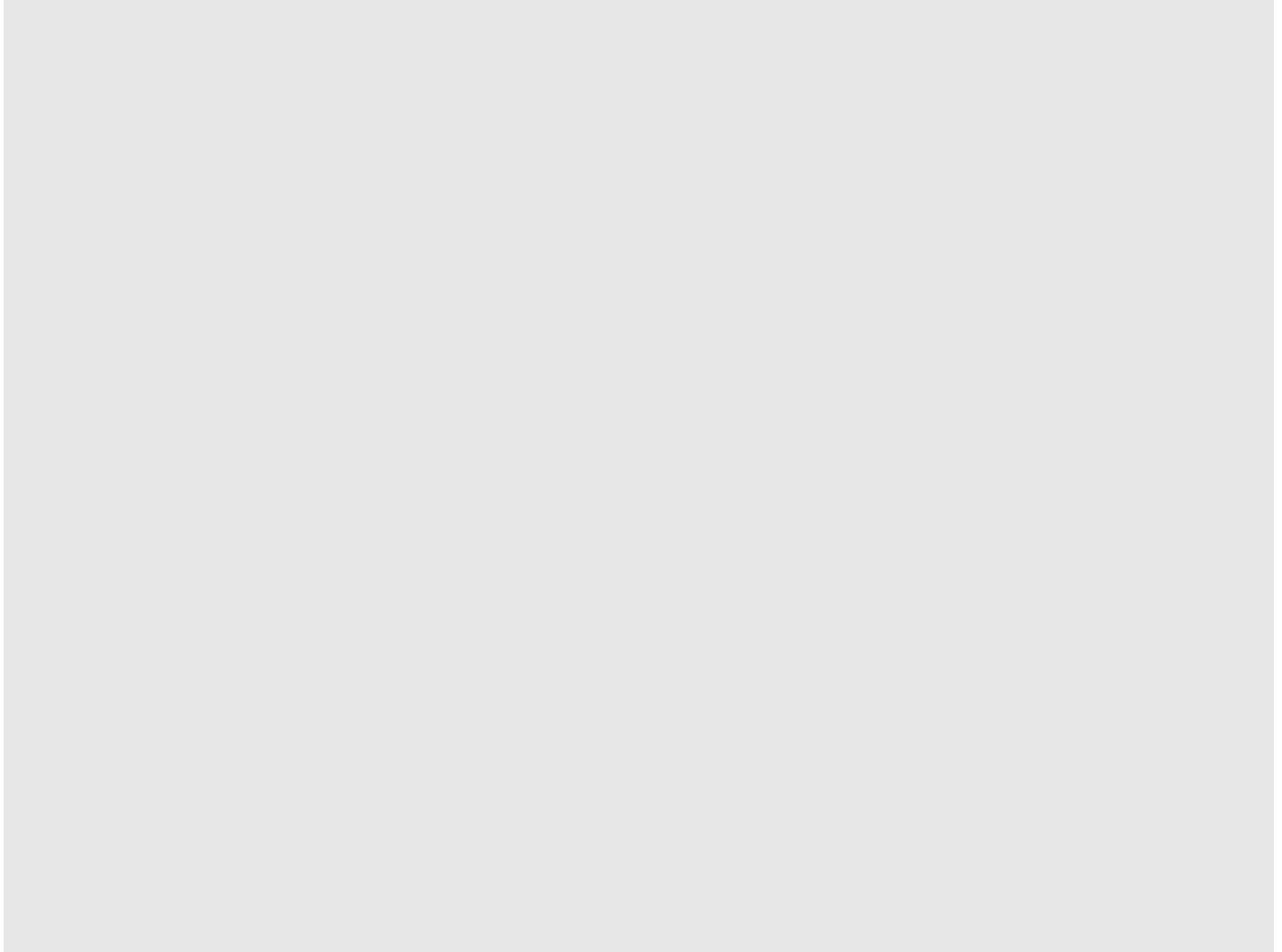
“The United States also shared concerns that students had experienced serious and persistent harassment based on sex, including based on sexual orientation and sex stereotypes, that were not sufficiently addressed through the actions taken by the District under its policies and procedures,” the department wrote in a 2023 settlement agreement.

The following year, Roth was hired for the top role at Hinsdale Middle/High School.

Superintendent David Ryan and two school board members reached by The Sentinel for this article said they were aware, before hiring Roth, of the federal investigation at Twin Valley during her tenure. Ryan, who also serves as Winchester’s superintendent, called the situation a “learning experience” for Roth.



As for the more recent allegations in Hinsdale, Ryan and Roth said in written responses to questions from The Sentinel that claims the high-schooler made against the staffer were investigated and not substantiated.



Raindrops on asphalt on July 28 at the Hinsdale School District office in Hinsdale.

Bailey Stover / Sentinel Staff

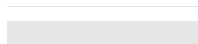
Roth concluded her investigation into the middle-schooler’s sexual harassment and assault allegations by determining the boy in question had not engaged in such behavior.

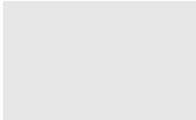
She said the “racially motivated behavior” toward Taneeka Thompson’s daughter was investigated and that responsible students were disciplined in line with district policy and code of conduct.

For the girls’ parents, these results fell far short of keeping their daughters safe.

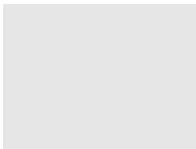


The Sentinel is not naming minors in this series. Parents are identified only if they have publicly identified themselves. Other parents are not named in order to protect the identity of their child.

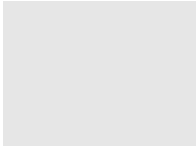




'I saw history repeating itself'
By Noah Diedrich Sentinel Staff 📖 9 min to read



'It was so unsafe for her at that school'
By Noah Diedrich Sentinel Staff 📖 6 min to read



Not believed
By Noah Diedrich Sentinel Staff 📖 7 min to read

Noah Diedrich can be reached at 603-355-8569, or ndiedrich@keenesentinel.com.

Noah Diedrich
Education and Business Reporter

