

SHELBY POLICE DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 9-27-19 the Shelby Police Department was notified by Shelby Schools Superintendent Tim Tarvin that a teacher had overheard a conversation between two students that School Resource Officer (SRO) Keith Swisher, in his capacity as Girls Soccer Head Coach, had walked through the Girl's Locker Room at the Field House while either Soccer or Cross Country Girls were present in the Field House locker rooms.

Officer Swisher was immediately placed on Paid Administrative Leave by the Shelby Police Department and suspended from his coaching duties by the Shelby City Schools, while an investigation was conducted. All physical or electronic access to the schools or school property was revoked.

Two supervisors were assigned to conduct parallel inquiries into the allegation. One supervisor was tasked with conducting a criminal investigation; the other with conducting an internal investigation for policy violations.

Approximately 20 student athletes from two teams were interviewed and/or their parents contacted and notified of the allegation. Staff and coaches were also interviewed. Officer Swisher submitted to both criminal and internal interviews. Upon completion of the criminal investigation, it was submitted to Attorney John Studenmund at the request of Shelby Law Director Gordon Eyster for review as a Special Prosecutor. Attorney Studenmund reviewed the file and on 10-7-19 declined charges on the case due to a lack of evidence.

I reviewed both the criminal and the internal investigation and determined the following:

Officer Swisher did in fact pass through the female side of the Field House on more than one occasion in order to access the coaching offices to change for soccer practice. This occurred prior to the official start of school while off-duty and also on at least one occasion off-duty but while in uniform after the start of the school year. No female student athletes were undressed when he passed through. At no time did he stop, loiter, linger, or engage with the athletes in the locker room. While there is a shower facility in that locker room, it is used as storage and not actively as a shower. There are no restroom facilities in that locker room.

The Field House is a symmetrically designed building with a common area at the front and coaching offices at the rear. There are male and female doors at the front of the building from the common area, but the large locker rooms on both the male and female sides must be walked through to reach either the track and field area or the coaching offices.

As a result of the internal investigation, Officer Swisher was disciplined and received documented cautioning and instruction for not following departmental rules. He has been counseled on accessing the offices using only the male locker room access and to announce his presence and/or have another staff member with him at all times when it is necessary to access a female-only portion of any school or other building.

After being disciplined, Officer Swisher's Administrative Leave was rescinded and he was reinstated to full duty. However, his status with the schools in both his coaching capacity and as the Shelby City Schools SRO have been referred to the Shelby School Board of Education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lance Combs'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'M' and a long horizontal stroke.

M. Lance Combs
Chief of Police