

Trevyan Rowe leads to RCSD focus on wandering

Investigation of teen's death is ongoing

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Schools in the Rochester City School District will need to create detailed plans to contain students who escape or wander away from the building, part of the ongoing fallout from the March death of Trevyan Rowe.

Rowe, 14, arrived on the bus at School 12 but never entered the building. Instead he walked away on South Avenue and was later found in the Genesee River.

Depending on his state of mind at the time, that qualifies as either wandering or elopement, meaning he intentionally ran away from school.

The state Education Department in 2013 directed all schools to incorporate policies around wandering and elopement into their safety plans. Those plans are confidential, so there is no way of knowing whether schools in Rochester or anywhere else followed the state guidance.

The new regulations, to be considered this week by the Rochester school board, would be the board's first district-wide policy and would require schools to adopt a number of anti-wandering procedures:

- Informing staff about students with a history or risk of wandering or eloping, including recent photographs and a description of possible triggers.
- Notifying the police, family members and central office.
- Cooperating with police, including in sharing video footage and building maps.
- Specifying staff assignments for cases where a student wanders or elopes.
- Requiring students with a history of wandering or eloping to carry basic identification at all times.

That is in addition to any specific guidelines written into the individualized education plans of students with disabilities.

The proposed board policy adds: "School administrators are expected to strategically and specifically assign staff around the school building during arrival, dismissal, recess, lunch and transition times in order to minimize the chance of wandering and/or elopement."

The district has also revamped its attendance-taking policies after three of Trevyan's teachers inaccurately marked him present the morning he went missing.

They focus on making sure someone in each building is responsible for attendance-taking and communicating with the parents of absent students.

The state Education Department and Attorney General's Office are conducting an investigation of what went wrong with Trevyan.

It is expected to be complete by the end of June.

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Trevyan Rowe PROVIDED