

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has cleared Linn-Mar football coaches and administrators of all complaints that were filed by some Linn-Mar families this winter.

Dr. Quintin Shepherd, the superintendent of Linn-Mar schools, confirmed early Wednesday morning that the BoEE investigation has ended with no charges being filed.

"Yes, the BoEE has dismissed all complaints against all employees of Linn-Mar," Dr. Shepherd replied in response to an e-mail from the Metro Sports Report.

Linn-Mar head football coach Bob Forsyth and assistant coach Matt Casebolt had been accused by Linn-Mar families of abusive behavior toward their children. Scott Mahmens, who retired as the Linn-Mar athletic director in June, and Dr. Jeff Gustason, the Linn-Mar principal, also were accused by the families of not taking effective action in response to their complaints.

The Linn-Mar school district investigated the complaints this winter and dismissed all the complaints due to insufficient evidence. The families then filed their complaints with the BoEE, which investigated the matter and decided not to file charges.

BoEE officials do not comment on cases, according to a board spokesman who also said that no documents related to the investigation will be released to the public.

The Linn-Mar school district issued a release on the investigation Wednesday morning.

"The Linn-Mar Community School District is aware that the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, BOEE, has closed outstanding cases involving complaints against licensed employees who work with the athletic department at the District," the statement said. "The District takes such complaints seriously and cooperated with the BOEE as they conducted their

investigation. The District is committed to providing a safe and positive learning experience for its students."

Dr. Gustason offered the following remarks in the release:

"We will continue to address the concerns raised in the BOEE complaints in a manner so that all students are able to have a positive opportunity to develop as a player and person through a competitive team experience," Dr. Gustason declared. "The decisions of the BOEE do not change this focus or responsiveness to addressing needs and growth for our programs and staffs."

David Brown, who succeeded Mahmens as the school's athletic director this summer, offered this statement:

"I'm really energized after meeting with our current staff and hearing the great things that have been accomplished at Linn-Mar over the past several years," he remarked.

The district's press release stated that Brown plans to introduce new concepts in the athletic department that focus on "second level' coaching strategies such as team-building concepts, leadership initiatives and culture development. These concepts build upon "first level" coaching strategies such as fundamentals and the basic components of the games.

"All of our coaches have been very receptive to this," Brown said in the release. "They are excited to implement these into their programs."

Dr. Shepherd said in the release that all of the district programs, staff and students are on a path of continuous improvement and this has brought to light some areas where the district can improve.

"We have set ourselves on this path of improvement in an effort to always be living our mission

to inspire learning, unlock potential and empower achievement,' he declared.

Forsyth and Casebolt could not be reached for immediate comment by the Metro Sports Report.

Mark Henrichs, a Linn-Mar parent who has acted as the spokesman for the group that filed the complaints, also could not be reached for immediate comment.