

Four seniors on the Linn-Mar football team told school board members Monday night that they miss assistant coach Matt Casebolt and hope he returns to the team this season.

They did not get any answers from board members or from Linn-Mar superintendent Quintin Shepherd.

Casebolt, a long-time assistant coach for the Lions, has not attended any practices since preseason drills began last Monday.

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has dismissed all of the complaints filed against Casebolt by some Linn-Mar families, but the Linn-Mar school district apparently has suspended Casebolt following the second of its own investigations into the charges.

Reese Phillips, Baylor Pree, Neme Siaway and Daylen Canty spoke at the school board meeting at district headquarters.

"It's been a lonely summer with all of our coaches not being there," said Phillips, the first to speak.

"Not having him this year has been hard," said Pree, mentioning Casebolt by name. "I trust everything he says. Casebolt was in charge of everything. I think he should come back this year."

"He taught me a lot from the first day I met him," said Siaway. "Without him this summer it's been really difficult. We have a good coaching staff, but we need Coach Casebolt to come back. We really miss him."

"Losing him for our senior season is like losing a father," said Canty, the fourth and final player to speak.

The Linn-Mar school board has a policy of not responding to comments that are made during the public comment section of their meetings. They stuck to that policy Monday night and did not respond to any of the players.

After the meeting, Dr. Shepherd said the school district will make an announcement on Casebolt's status "in due course," but did not offer a time frame.

"I would hope in the near future," he told the Metro Sports Report. "It's a process. It involves lots of people."

Some Linn-Mar families accused Casebolt of mental, emotional and physical abuse of their children, including taunting and bullying. The families complained to the school district, which conducted an in-house investigations and dismissed all complaints due to insufficient evidence.

The families then filed their complaints with the BoEE, which investigated and decided to file charges against Casebolt or anyone else at Linn-Mar, including head football coach Bob Forsyth.

The school district apparently conducted a second investigation, although Dr. Shepherd will neither confirm or deny that a second probe took place. Casebolt has not been actively involved with the football program for many weeks now, but nobody in the school district will confirm or deny that he's been suspended.