

Where is the report on Trevyan Rowe death?

Education Dept.: No 'firm timeframe' for its release

Justin Murphy

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

On March 19, 2018, 11 days after 14-year-old Trevyan Rowe went missing from James P.B. Duffy School 12 and eight days after his body was found in the Genesee River, state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and

Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia announced an investigation.

The goal, Schneiderman said, was "to get to the bottom of what happened and ensure the district's policies protect our children moving forward." Elia said doing so was "imperative"; Joseph

Morelle, then the state Assembly majority leader, pledged the state would "do everything in (its) power."

That was 318 days ago. State investigators have spent months poring over video footage, conducting interviews and reviewing relevant documentation at the Rochester City School District, but representatives of the Education Department said last week that their work is still underway, with no "firm timeframe for its completion and release."

A contradiction

That contradicts what Elia said at a community forum in Rochester Jan. 10, when she announced then that the report would be released within two or three weeks. Before that, it had been expected by the end of the 2017-18 school year. Neither the Attorney General or Education Department offered any further explanation for the delay. Schneiderman was forced to resign last May over sexual assault allegations, but the staff in place for the Trevyan Rowe investigation and others was not disrupted. The delay means that Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams, whose last day in the job was Jan. 31, will no longer be in office to receive it. It also puts some pressure on the district's budget process, in particular if some of the state's recommendations require additional funding in 2019-20.

No review by the district

The investigation was first launched at the request of the Rochester school board. As a result, the district has not studied the incident further on its own. "We haven't done any review or interviewed any witnesses because

Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley already completed her own criminal investigation and decided against pressing charges. It is very possible, though, that the report will recommend adding staff, buying new software or conducting further review, all of which would need money allotted in the upcoming budget. White said he hopes that any such directives would come with funding attached. "If they (add something), we'll say, 'It's an unfunded mandate and if you think it's so important, we'll need some support to do it,'" White said. "There are other things we think are also important that, if we don't do them, could lead to another tragedy." The lawyer for Trevyan's family, Jason Brown, did not respond to a request for comment.

JMURPHY7 @Gannett.com

Carrie Houston, mother of Trevyan Rowe, is embraced by many after the vigil for her son, whose disappearance brought an outpouring of community support. MAX SCHULTE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

we thought it would be best not to have any redundancy and just let them do it,” board President Van White said.

The district has adopted new policies meant to prevent similar incidents in the future, including reviewing its wandering and elopement policies, making more proactive calls regarding truant students, taking attendance earlier in the school day and installing a blaring alarm system on top-level administrators’ cell phones that goes off for a variety of exigencies.

The attorney general’s report is civil, not criminal;