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NEWS

Teacher sex scandal not first faced by school district

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Four years ago, the local school district dealt with Santa Monica High School employees tried on sexual molestation charges.

By Vicky Shere / Special to the Malibu Times

In 2004, as now, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District was reeling in the wake of teacher sex scandals.

Today it is the case of Thomas Arthur Beltran, a Lincoln Middle School teacher charged earlier this month with 14 counts of sexual molestation crimes. The district is revising its child abuse reporting policy as a result of the case.

In light of the scorching criticism the SMMUSD is receiving regarding how school and district officials have dealt with the Beltran case, SMMUSD board member Kathy Wisnicki said last week about the 2004 scandals, that the school district then had "taken the extra steps to protect students."

In 2004, the scandals involved a part-time coach and a band leader.

The case that Wisnicki referred to involved Carl Stephen Hammer, 37, a former assistant band director at Santa Monica High.

Hammer was arrested August 6, 2004 on two felony counts of allegedly performing "lewd and lascivious" acts upon a child, the Santa Monica Daily Press reported. He had worked for the school district for nine years, at Santa Monica High, and at Lincoln and John Adams Middle schools.

Hammer surrendered to Santa Monica police after the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and police conducted an investigation into allegations and issued an arrest warrant, according to a police department press release.

The alleged victim was a 15-year-old girl who was staying with Hammer and his family because she was having problems at her own home. She was apparently not a Santa Monica High student, [knbc.com](#) then reported.

Hammer was charged with two felony counts of lewd acts on a child and one count of false imprisonment on one victim, Los Angeles County District Attorney spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons told The Malibu Times.

Hammer had pled no contest to felony false imprisonment in 2005, Gibbons said. He was sentenced to five years probation, which included supervised conditions, progress reports and restitution.

However, Wisnicki said, although Hammer pled to the lesser, "non reportable" charge in an attempt to retain

his California teaching license, the school district appealed to the California Department of Education and Hammer's license was revoked. The state California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Web site confirms that Hammer's license was revoked July 1, 2005. The revocation is set to expire in 2010, at which time Hammer can reapply for a teaching credential.

The other case involved Michael David Hearn, 37, an assistant football and basketball coach, who was employed "for a few years" during the school's sports season.

Hearn was arrested June 2, 2004, as part of an ongoing sexual assault investigation, according to a Santa Monica Police Department press release. The Los Angeles District Attorney's office filed charges of one count of unlawful sex with a minor.

The charges were later upped to six felony counts of unlawful sexual intercourse with a 17-year-old girl, two more counts for allegedly having oral sex and performing a lewd act upon a 15-year-old girl, and one last count for sharing pornographic material with a third girl, also 15, the Press reported.

The incidents took place off campus between December 2003 and May 2004, according to a report by knbc.com. Two of the girls were students at the school, the report states. Hearn had a jury trial in 2005, and was convicted and sentenced on the nine counts to two years in prison, Gibbons said.

Hearn's contract was not renewed, then school superintendent John Deasy told the Press.

Deasy had then emphasized that the alleged incidents involving Hearn and Hammer did not take place at the school or on school property.

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