

Received in
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 24 1973

DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Re: [REDACTED]

April 23, 1973

Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth
State Welfare Secretary
c/o State Capitol
Harrisburg, Pa. 17120

Dear Mrs. Wohlgemuth:

I strongly object to the hasty manner in which Dr. James H. McClelland was dismissed as superintendent at Polk State School. The reason given publicly for Dr. McClelland's dismissal was the use of "playpens" to confine severely retarded and aggressive patients, but I have not heard any alternate suggestions for protection of the other children from this type of patient.

Since my daughter has been a resident at Polk for twenty years, I am naturally very concerned with anything that occurs at Polk. I have visited there on the average of once a month, and sometimes more often, and have always been impressed with the way the entire operation is geared to the welfare and happiness of the patients. Despite the many demands on his time, Dr. McClelland was always available to discuss my daughter's problems.

I also question the appointment of Dr. Wesley White as the interim superintendent, since he has already been cited for using retarded patients at Whitehaven for testing vaccines for contagious diseases. How can you logically explain that move?

I feel that an unbiased investigation is called for. If changes are necessary and beneficial to the patients, make them, but don't make a scapegoat out of a man who has dedicated his adult life to the retarded. It would be a shame if the school lost the excellent reputation which it has enjoyed under the supervision of Drs. Walker and McClelland because of the unfortunate events of the past week.

Very truly yours,

Mary B. [REDACTED]
(Mrs.) R. A. K. [REDACTED]

cc: The Honorable Milton J. Shapp
The Honorable Robert D. Fleming
The Honorable James B. Kelly III
Rev. John A. Kirk