

Former Los Banos Teacher Gary Bettencourt Sentenced to 8 years and 4 months in Prison

Bettencourt pleaded no contest last month to a dozen felony sex crime charges involving three high school girls beginning more than a decade ago.

SAN JOSE, CA, USA, September 27, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Merced County Superior Court Judge David Moranda sentenced Gary Bettencourt, former Pacheco High School drama and English teacher, to eight years and four months in prison on Friday, September 23, 2016 (Merced County criminal case number: 16CR-00639A). Bettencourt last month pleaded no contest to sexually abusing two former students more than 10 years ago and, more recently, to having sexually abused another student in 2015.

The Bettencourt case led police to also charge Dusty Norris, a former Los Banos high school teacher turned police officer with similar crimes. Norris is charged with sexually abusing one of Bettencourt's victims.

Both Bettencourt and Norris along with the Los Banos Unified School District are named in a civil lawsuit filed by the San Jose law firm of [Corsiglia McMahon & Allard](#).

According to attorney [Robert Allard](#), "Bettencourt has now been held criminally responsible for what he did to these young girls. It's now time for the school district to be held accountable for allowing Bettencourt to harm these young women in the worst of ways."

Two of Bettencourt's victims submitted statements to the court about how the abuse and violation of their trust has impacted their lives. One shared how she was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder, PTSD, and an eating disorder. She poured her heart out in a public courtroom, telling Bettencourt, "I trusted you, and you took advantage of me—, my goodness, and more than anything else, my innocence. And no one at school protected me from you. My feelings and thoughts are not my fault. The sadness that weighs so heavy on my heart and mind that sometimes that I feel like I'm going to die, the desperation I still feel to try and maintain emotional stability through restricting foods, and the intrusive and dark thoughts I still have ...none of this is my fault." Another shared not only the effects the abuse has had on her to this day and her fears for the future, "Now, having a daughter of my own, even though she has brought the greatest happiness my life will ever know, there are horrible memories and the fear that someday the same pain could happen to her."

Allard stated, "multiple warning signs or "red flags" were presented but District employees either ignored them or were not sufficiently trained to identify them. As such, Bettencourt and Norris were allowed to do what they wanted with minor students, including allegedly sexually abusing them on school grounds. It is only when this district is forced to accept full responsibility for its actions, or more



Attorney Robert Allard

appropriately inactions, that other school districts across our country will take the steps to ensure that this never happens again to another student."

Norris faces an October 17, 2016 preliminary hearing date on four felony sex abuse charges.

About Corsiglia McMahon & Allard

Since 2009, the child molestation lawyers at Corsiglia McMahon & Allard have dedicated their lives to helping sex abuse victims and their families. As a result, we understand that the effect of sex abuse on victims is lifelong. Thus, we use the law and civil litigation to hold accountable those that fail to protect children.

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