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Anti-Semitism Still the Topic After Remarks During Game

By TAMAR LEWIN

Two weeks after a parent from the Dalton School sent the headmaster of the Trinity School a blistering complaint about anti-Semitic remarks at a basketball game between the two private schools, the uproar continues, amid strong disagreement about what actually happened.

One of the Trinity students involved in the incident, who was disciplined by the school this week - and who is himself Jewish - said in an interview yesterday that he and a friend had made three Jewish references during the basketball game: they had called a turnover a "passover," termed a shot "not kosher" and said, after a basket, "Dalton scored; light the menorah."

Then, he said, the Dalton parent, Shelly Palmer, shouted and cursed at them and got into a physical altercation with him and other Trinity students. Several parents and students seated in the rows behind the boys supported that account.

Mr. Palmer rejected that description yesterday, saying that the incident involved a long litany of Jewish references chanted by a growing group of onlookers.

"I lost my temper, but the accusations that I physically assaulted anyone are patently false," Mr. Palmer said. "I would never hit a kid."

Trinity disciplined two 10th-grade students this week. While the school would not disclose the form of discipline, those close to the students said they were put on probation, required to perform community service and prohibited from attending Trinity sporting events as spectators for the rest of the year.

"I know Trinity had a difficult situation, and that seems reasonable," said the student who was disciplined, whose parents agreed to the interview on the condition that he not be named or photographed.

In his letter to the Trinity headmaster, Henry C. Moses, Mr. Palmer condemned Trinity officials and families for what he called anti-Semitism and intolerance.

At Trinity, officials and families both say Mr. Palmer's characterization is off the mark.

"The behavior of two Trinity students at the basketball game is unacceptable, and we've dealt with that behavior," Dr. Moses said this week. "To suggest that the behavior of those two students is in any way characteristic of Trinity - or its teachers or its students or its families - is utterly reprehensible, and anyone who knows us knows that."

In Internet postings on the incident, and in e-mail messages and conversations, Jewish Trinity families said there was no anti-Semitism at Trinity, where a survey two years ago found that 51 percent of the students had at least one Jewish parent.

"The Trinity School, when it comes to getting along between Jews and non-Jews, is a success story," said Nancy Chaffetz, a Trinity parent.

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