

School will allow boy to bring My Little Pony backpack

Casey Blake, The (Asheville, N.C.) Citizen-Times 8:30 a.m. EDT March 21, 2014



(Photo: Provided to The Asheville, N.C., Citizen-Times)

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ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Grayson Bruce's *My Little Pony* backpack will return (http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20140320/NEWS01/303200049/School-will-allow-My-Little-Pony-backpack?ncklick_check=1), and with it may come new initiatives to prevent bullying in local schools.

Buncombe County Schools administrators met Thursday with the mother of Grayson Bruce, the 9-year-old boy who was propelled into the national spotlight this week after saying he was prevented from carrying his "My Little Pony" backpack to school because administrators told him it "triggered bullying."

STORY: [School bans 9-year-old boy's My Little Pony backpack \(http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/03/18/my-little-pony-backpack-banned-school-north-carolina/6565425/\)](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/03/18/my-little-pony-backpack-banned-school-north-carolina/6565425/)

Noreen Bruce also said Thursday that she would work with the school system to send Grayson back to Candler Elementary, after pulling him out last week following the incident.

"We are considering all options for getting Grayson back in school," Bruce said after the meeting. "We are pleased the school system is working closely with us. All of the options include Grayson taking his My Little Pony bag to school."

The story has gone viral over the past several days, attracting the attention of national news outlets and more than 65,000 Facebook supporters rallying behind the #SupportforGrayson hashtag.

Bruce met with superintendent Tony Baldwin and director of student services David Thompson, after which she said she felt "much better."

"We had a real heart-to-heart talk," Bruce said. "I strongly feel we can work together to make things better for Grayson and all the students in our school system."

Bruce said she will work with Thompson to help organize a parent advisory council on bullying.

"It's been a whirlwind," Bruce said. "We appreciate all the support from the bottom of our hearts. That outpouring of love from everyone has been unbelievable and has given us the opportunity to shine a light on the different kinds of hurts kids experience at school."

Bruce has made several national media appearances in the last 48 hours, including the Glenn Beck show in Dallas and an interview with "Good Morning America."



Noreen Bruce and two friends set up a Facebook page to support her son Grayson.(Photo: Screenshot of Support For Grayson)

Thousands of followers from around the world posted photos of My Little Pony memorabilia and supportive comments under the #SupportforGrayson hashtag on Facebook and Twitter. One of the television show's creators, Lauren Faust, even weighed in on Twitter Tuesday, saying, "#standwithgrayson 'nuff said."

Buncombe County Schools administrators released a joint statement Thursday, saying they would work with Bruce to make "a safety transition plan and an allowance for Grayson to bring the bookbag to school."

"We have appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Bruce family and discuss the issues. We sincerely regret that the issue of being told to leave the bookbag at home was perceived as blaming Grayson. While that was not the intent, the perception became reality. We support Grayson bringing the bookbag to school." the statement said.

"Every situation with young children is a teachable moment and we will use this example in our efforts to address a wider issue of bullying. We ask for everyone's patience and understanding as we continue to work collaboratively with the family toward a resolution that is best for Grayson and his classmates at Candler Elementary School."

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Apr 01, 2014