

Module 3 Crisis Management:
Scenario 2 Response, The Attendance Dispute

Max Swartout

Department of Teacher Education and Leadership Studies

Youngstown State University

EDAD 7022- Principal Clinical

Dr. Charles Jeffords

January 26, 2026

My initial instinct was to immediately invite the parent into my office to de-escalate the scene and remove the audience. However, after consulting with my cooperating administrator, I realized that while removing the disruption is necessary, granting immediate attention to an irate parent sets a dangerous precedent. It suggests that loud or aggressive behavior is the "fast pass" to the principal's attention and not necessarily something we want to accommodate.

Therefore, my approach would be to step out of the office to address the parent calmly but firmly in the reception area. I would acknowledge his frustration but state that I am currently attending to other scheduled duties (or student matters). I would ask him to schedule an appointment with the secretary so that we can discuss the matter properly when he is calm and I have had time to gather the necessary facts. If he refuses to leave ("promises not to leave until justice is served"), I would calmly repeat that I cannot meet at this moment and that he is disrupting the school environment. If he continues to cause a disturbance, I would follow standard building security protocols for a disruptive visitor, but I would not reward the behavior with an immediate, impromptu meeting.

Once an appointment is set and the parent returns (or if the situation de-escalates enough that a brief conversation happens), I would follow a strict verification process. I would listen to his perspective and acknowledge the family's pride in the 8-year attendance streak. I would then check with the attendance secretary or teacher about the situation; gathering their perspective.

If the student was not in the room by the bell, I would stand by the record. I would explain that "the bell is the bell" and that to be fair to all students, we cannot alter

the record if the student was not present. I would frame this not as a punishment, but as an objective record of fact.

Regarding the demand to see the video footage, I would address this with two points: policy and logistical reality. Firstly, I would explain that our school policy does not allow for the review of security footage for attendance disputes; these reviews are reserved for safety investigations, misconduct, or criminal activity. Secondly, as my cooperating administrator noted, building-level administration often does not even have the technical capability to "scrub" or pull footage on-demand in the main office. Access is often restricted to security directors or central office staff.

I would explain to the parent that I physically do not have the ability to pull up a replay of the morning arrival on my computer. This logistical reality often helps de-escalate the demand because it is not a refusal of will, but a lack of capacity.

If the parent remains unsatisfied and insists on seeing the footage, I would provide him with the contact information for the district's public records custodian to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. This moves the dispute out of the main office and into a formal legal channel, allowing me to return to the management of the building.