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Indian Wells teacher denies sexual assault claims

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An Indian Wells elementary school teacher suspected of sexually assaulting at least one female student "vehemently denies" the allegations, according to his attorney.

Fourth-grade teacher Robert Keith Bryan, 59, was taken into custody at his Palm Desert home in the 72800 lock of White Drive last Wednesday and booked at the county jail in Indio on suspicion of a lewd act with a child under 14 and annoying or molesting a child.

He was released from jail the following day, after posting a \$220,000 bond, and given an Oct. 1 court date, but no criminal charges had been filed as of late this morning.

"Mr. Bryan vehemently denies the allegations, and he has been an outstanding educator for over 30 years," Tustin-based defense attorney Paul Wallin said. "Mr. Bryan has never been convicted of any criminal offense in his entire life, and has been a local homeowner for 26 years. He has taught thousands of students over these almost three decades."

Bryan's arrest stemmed from an investigation by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department into allegations of a sexual assault on a fourth-grade female student at Gerald Ford Elementary School, sheriff's Deputy Albert Martinez said.

"The investigation revealed additional victims," said Martinez, who didn't give a number or say if they were also students at the school or where the alleged molestations occurred. He said the investigation was ongoing.

Bryan has worked for the Desert Sands Unified School District since 1986, Wallin said. Officials at the district could not be reached about Bryan's employment status.

"As are all persons in this country, Mr. Bryan is presumed innocent of all charges at this time. We urge the community to reserve judgment and to wait until the evidence is presented in a court of law," Wallin said.



Booking photo of Robert Keith Bryan. (Riverside County Sheriff's Department)

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