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Multnomah County jury convicts former substitute teacher of sexual abuse

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that upon the conclusion of a nine-day trial, a jury convicted 54-year-old Dale Arnold Buckendahl of sexual abuse in the first degree.

At trial, the state presented evidence to show that in 2008 the defendant was a substitute teacher for a third grade class at Alder Elementary School, located in Fairview, Oregon.

In 2011, the victim, who was then in sixth grade, reported to a school counselor that a substitute teacher, in 2008, put his hands up her skirt and touched her in a sexual manner.

The jury found that the defendant unlawfully and knowingly subjected the victim, who was under the age of 14 at the time of the offense, to sexual contact by touching her leg.

The evidence presented at trial showed the offense occurred while the victim was seated at a table inside a classroom, with other students, during a reading group.

"[The victim] endured an emotional struggle after this [incident] and it was long-lasting," Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Amity Girt said during closing arguments.

This trial, which started December 3, 2018, was presided over by Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Kelly Skye.

Upon the verdict, the defendant was remanded into the custody of the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office pending sentencing, which is set for January 2, 2019 at 2 p.m. Mr. Buckendahl was acquitted of one count of sexual abuse in the first degree.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office will have no other comment on this case at this time.

This case was investigated by the Multnomah County Child Abuse Team and the Multnomah County Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team, which includes representatives from local law enforcement, public schools, hospitals, courts, health departments, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Oregon Department of Employment Child Care Division.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team is responsible for reviewing and coordinating all child abuse and neglect cases in Multnomah County. The team also handles all child homicides, felony child physical abuse cases, felony child abandonment cases, custodial interference cases, and felony sex crimes where the victim is currently under the age of 18 and where the perpetrator is considered a family member.

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