

**Letter shared with families tonight:**

Dear Woodbury High School students, staff and families,

I am writing to follow up on the communication that was sent to families on Monday about inappropriate and racially-harmful behavior involving a substitute teacher at Woodbury High School.

As I've learned more about what transpired on Monday, I want to share that this person's actions were not contained to one class period. I believe it is important for our school community to have additional information about what occurred.

Students reported that the substitute teacher said he thought students would want to hear about his life as a police officer. The substitute teacher is not a police officer in the State of Minnesota.

The following bullet points are a brief summary of things the substitute teacher said in front of four classes on Monday (English 10 and English 12), unprovoked by anyone.

The full report has been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education and PELSB (educator licensing department). We have trespassed this person from stepping foot on any district property and are collaborating with the Woodbury Police Department to investigate this incident.

During class time, some of the things students reported were that the substitute teacher:

- Put a student on the ground in front of the class as part of a reenactment of the police actions that resulted in the murder of George Floyd.
- Twisted a student's arm behind the student's back and showed pressure points on the chin and face.
- Spoke about a bar fight and fake punched a student with his fist "really close" to the student's face.
- "Invaded students' space" and mimicked holding up a gun and pointing it at students.
- Repeatedly made racially-harmful comments.
- Told sexist jokes.

- Spoke in disturbing detail about dead bodies he had seen, and shared explicit details about two sexual assault cases he investigated.
- Shared specific names of people he arrested.
- Stated that “cops would be the best criminals” and that “they know how to get away with stuff,” stating that he once got an “A” on a paper about how to get away with murder.
- Spoke at length about his gun collection.
- Stated that “police brutality isn’t real.”

**This information is being shared with you so you can have a conversation with your child about what your child may have experienced in the class, what your child may have heard at school, and any other harm as a result of these actions.**

I specifically want to acknowledge racial harm that occurred when the substitute teacher reenacted the prone restraint that resulted in the murder of George Floyd.

This reported behavior is reprehensible. I am embarrassed, and I am sorry this happened to our students. We will take as much time as students need to listen and create open space for courageous conversations that lead to healing, action and education.

The reported actions are not, and will not, be tolerated at Woodbury High School or in South Washington County Schools. We are partnering with Teachers on Call, our substitute contracted vendor, to ensure that this person is removed from the Teachers on Call substitute list and will never be allowed to fill any vacancies in our school district.

### **Steps for Healing**

Today, we met with each of the English classes that had the substitute teacher on Monday. We listened to students and gave them space to process what happened. Our staff remained available throughout the day to talk with any student who wanted to talk further about what happened.

Next week students will have additional opportunities to meet with school staff to talk through and process the impact of what happened. School staff and administration, our Director of Equity and Inclusion, and district leaders will continue working with student leaders and community partners about next steps for repairing the harm done to students and staff at Woodbury High School.

I want to thank the students who reported this incident to me. It takes courage to stand up for and uphold our school's values in the face of inappropriate and racially-harmful actions by an adult.

We value and will be working closely with the Woodbury Police Department, who we have always had a great relationship with as they serve our schools and our community.

Please reach out to any of us if you have questions or concerns. We greatly appreciate your partnership in creating a safe and inclusive school community.

Sincerely,

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