



Council on American-Islamic Relations-MN Chapter

1821 University Ave. Saint Paul, MN 55104

Office 651.645.7102 Fax 651.645.7175

www.cairmn.com

Enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

June 4, 2009

Dr. Steve Jordahl
Superintendent
District 742 Schools
1000 44th Ave. N., Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56303

cc: Charles Eisenreich
Principal
Apollo High School
1000 44th Avenue North
St. Cloud MN 56303

Dear Dr. Jordahl:

The Council on American-Islamic Relations Minnesota (CAIR-MN) advocates on the behalf of Muslims in Minnesota who feel they have been discriminated against because of their religion and national origin. **It is our duty to report to you a complaint of discrimination by a student in your school district, specifically at Apollo High School, -----.**

-----, is sixteen and currently a sophomore at Apollo High School; she is Somali and Muslim. ----- has faced verbal and physical attacks during her two years at Apollo High School. She reports being followed and taunted with degrading comments about her national origin and religion. She also reports having food thrown on her and her friends while eating lunch. Furthermore, she also reports students waiting for her at school prepared to physically attack her. Some of these are students whom ----- has had no interactions with prior to these incidents and ----- believes that these attacks are prompted by the fact that she is Somali and Muslim. ----- has explained that she has reported over 15 incidents of harassment to the principals, and usually to Assistant Principal Shawn Gambos. However, Ms. Gambos has not only consistently failed to take any action against her harassers, ----- believes that her reports have been deleted.

Moreover, Ms. Gambos has used her position and office to force ----- to endure being berated and insulted further by her harassers. On May 13th of this year Ms. Gambos permitted students ----- and ----- to yell profanities at ----- in her own office. When ----- asked that they stop yelling and cursing at her Ms. Gambos explained that this was a method of conflict resolution. Furthermore, Ms. Gambos put her hand in front of -----'s face and told her to "shut up." ----- and ----- have not been disciplined nor has -----, another student of whom ----- has filed complaints about.

Washington, D.C.

Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland/Virginia, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington

Furthermore ----- has written formal complaints to you Dr. Jordahl, detailing incidents that have taken place. These documents were delivered to you by a worker of the school district named Gary Locke who confirmed to ----- that they had been successfully delivered. ----- has not received information that any action has taken place based on these reports.

CAIR-MN finds this situation to be intentionally discriminatory on its face and in blatant violation of Minnesota Human Rights Act Section 363A.13. This situation is discriminatory both on the part of the perpetrating students as well as school administration who have allowed such egregious acts to continue.

----- has been forced to endure significant damages to both her emotional state and her educational career as a result of this harassment and discrimination. Therefore, we demand an investigation into the students and faculty involved in this situation and that appropriate disciplinary action be taken for offending students and school administrators. This investigation and disciplinary action should be done immediately and a resolution must be sought to this situation to ensure that -----will not face any further harassment and discrimination before the beginning of the next school year. CAIR-MN is acting as - ----- advocate in this situation.

Lastly, we request diversity training provided by CAIR-MN to the faculty and staff of the schools in the 742 District and the students of your school.

CAIR-MN awaits your response by June 29, 2009. If we do not hear from you by this time, our client may be advised to take further action.

Sincerely,

Taneeza Islam, Esq.
Civil Rights Director