



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

Timeline of Incidents at Apollo High School

May 2009

a) INCIDENTS:

- May 11, 2009: [Somali Muslim Student] calls CAIR-MN to complain about alleged racial and religious teasing, bullying and harassment by other students at Apollo High School. [Student A] allegedly threw food at her and other Somali Muslim students during lunch. [Student B] allegedly makes disparaging remarks such as, “something smells un-American,” when she and other Somali Muslim students walk by. Most alleged incidents involve Caucasian boys bullying Somali Muslim girls.
- May 15, 2009: [Student C] allegedly threw a marker at [Somali Muslim Student]’s religious head scarf, causing it to stain. Later that day, [Student C] and [Student D] allegedly tried to physically attack [Somali Muslim Student].

b) SCHOOL OFFICIALS NOTIFIED:

- On May 11, 2009, [Somali Muslim Student] told CAIR-MN that she had already reported approximately 15 incidents, including alleged incidents involving [Student A] and [Student B] to Apollo Assistant Principal Shawn Gombos.
- On May 15, 2009, [Somali Muslim Student] notified Gombos about incidents involving [Students C and D]. Gombos has a meeting with [Somali Muslim Student], [Student C] and [Student D]. She allegedly allows [Students C and D] to swear and yell at [Somali Muslim Student], calling it “conflict resolution.” When [Somali Muslim Student] objects, Gombos allegedly puts her hand in front of [Somali Muslim Student] and tells her to stop talking and let [Students C and D] finish. Gombos allegedly tells [Somali Muslim Student] she cannot leave her office during the “conflict resolution” meeting. [Somali Muslim Student] leaves anyway and Gombos sends school security guards to find her.
- On June 2, 2009, [Somali Muslim Student] sent St. Cloud Schools Superintendent Steve Jordahl a letter, which was hand delivered by the school’s Cultural Navigator, detailing the anti-Somali/anti-Muslim incidents that have happened to her at Apollo High School.
- On June 4, 2009, CAIR-MN sent a letter to Apollo Principal Charles Eisenreich and Superintendent Jordahl informing them about the reported incidents involving [Somali Muslim Student] and the alleged hostile school environment.
- On June 16, 2009, Tracy Bowe, Director of Human Resources, replied to CAIR-MN’s letter asking for a meeting. On August 17, 2009, CAIR-MN representatives, [Somali Muslim Student] and her guardian meet with Bowe,

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Eisenreich, and the school district's Director of Equity Services, Luis Saenz, to discuss the incidents and the hostile school environment.

c) SCHOOL/CAIR-MN PROPOSED ACTION STEPS:

CAIR-MN asks for an investigation into [Somali Muslim Student]'s complaints. CAIR-MN offers diversity training to school. Eisenreich said he would be starting a Principal's Advisory Group and that he would ask [Somali Muslim Student] to be a part of it. Additionally, listening sessions will be scheduled with students, and based on feedback, action items would be implemented.

d) SCHOOL ACTION TAKEN:

To CAIR-MN's knowledge, no investigation into [Somali Muslim Student]'s complaints was conducted and no advisory group was formed. One listening session was conducted with students in November 2009, but no clear plans to follow-up or take action to create safe, hostile-free school were implemented.

November 18, 2009

a) INCIDENTS:

- Four (4) students report that a teacher allegedly handed students a can of air freshener and instructed them to spray the room when Somali Muslim students walked into class.
- Five (5) Somali Muslim students report that a bus driver left approximately thirty (30) Somali Muslim students waiting at a bus stop for bus #43 that stops on 33rd Street on several occasions, driving past them when she saw them and telling them: "Catch me if you can." Students report that they will often have to find other means of getting to school and that sometimes they will be unable to find alternative means of transportation and will miss school.

b) SCHOOL OFFICIALS NOTIFIED:

- The air freshener incident is reported to CAIR-MN and Saenz during a listening session CAIR-MN and Apollo High School conducted with approximately twenty-five (25) Somali Muslim students.
- The bus incident is reported to CAIR-MN and Saenz during the same listening session.
- Students at the listening session reported that they have told Eisenreich about the bus incident.
- Students at the listening session reported that their parents have met with Jordahl about the bus incident. On March 25, 2010 Jordahl, in a phone conversation with CAIR-MN, admitted he was already aware of this incident.

c) SCHOOL/CAIR-MN PROPOSED ACTION STEPS:

CAIR-MN tells Saenz the school must immediately investigate and address both the bus driver and air freshener incidents.

d) SCHOOL ACTION TAKEN:

To CAIR-MN's knowledge, no immediate action was taken. Three months later, in February 2010, CAIR-MN is notified by Somali Muslim students that the bus driver is no longer driving past waiting Somali Muslim students. On February 9, 2010, CAIR-MN conducts diversity training for support staff (cooks, security

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officers, custodians, cultural navigators, office assistants) from Apollo High School and North Junior High School.

February 13, 2010

a) INCIDENT:

CAIR-MN conducts an intake session with St. Cloud Somali Muslim students at the Islamic Center of St. Cloud. Approximately 15 Somali Muslim students report to CAIR-MN incidents of harassment and discrimination. One reported incident involves an Apollo High School World History teacher, [Teacher A], who allegedly makes disparaging comments about Islam and Somalis in class. Students allege that he will randomly bring up biased and inaccurate information about Somalia, Islam and Muslims in class lessons, sometimes inaccurately quoting passages from the Quran, and does not let Somali Muslim students present their view. One Somali Muslim student reported that she took out her Quran and read an entire passage, which [Teacher A] had only read partially, and he allegedly told her not to participate in the discussion.

b) SCHOOL OFFICIALS NOTIFIED:

- On February 22, 2010, CAIR-MN notified Bowe, Assistant Principals David Earp and Gombos in-person about several alleged incidents, including the allegation against [Teacher A].
- On February 25, CAIR-MN sends email to Eisenreich, Saenz, Bowe, Gombos, and Earp again informing them of this incident, “Particularly there are issues with World History and Geography teachers- [Teacher A] and [Teacher B]- who present inaccuracies on Islam and express a bias.”

c) SCHOOL/CAIR-MN PROPOSED ACTION STEPS:

At the February 22 meeting, Earps defends [Teacher A] but says he will investigate the allegations.

d) SCHOOL ACTION TAKEN:

None to CAIR-MN’s knowledge.

February 2010

a) INCIDENT:

February 12, 2010: Two Caucasian students approached a group of four Somali Muslim high school girls and asked them if they would like some pork bacon. When the girls informed them that their religion prohibited pork, the students made disparaging remarks about their religion and called them “b-----” and racial and religious slurs.

- On February 22, CAIR-MN met with the four Somali Muslim girls involved in the bacon taunting incident. At the meeting, other incidents of harassment are reported to CAIR-MN. Students report they have been called “towel head” and report the bus driver, air freshener and World History Teacher incidents previously reported by other Somali Muslim students. Students also report that [Teacher B] allegedly said, “Ugh the Somalis are back” when Somali students returned from a religious holiday celebration.

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b) SCHOOL OFFICIALS NOTIFIED:

- The four Somali Muslim students reported the bacon taunting incident to Eisenreich. On February 17, Eisenreich contacted CAIR-MN about the incident and asked for help in dealing with it.
- On February 22, CAIR-MN met with Bowe, Gombos and Earp to discuss the bacon incident and brought to their attention other incidents reported to CAIR-MN by the four Somali Muslim students.
- On February 25, CAIR-MN sent an email to Eisenreich, Saenz, Bowe, Gombos, and Earp summarizing the February 22 meeting and again informing them of the hostile school environment and the need to take action: “We were concerned because it seems to [be] much of the same harassment and rude/degrading comments that [Somali Muslim Student] first complained to us about [in May 2009]” and “The Somali students feel a lack of support from teachers and other staff when things happen in the class room.”

c) SCHOOL/CAIR-MN PROPOSED ACTION STEPS:

On February 22 meeting and in February 25 email, CAIR-MN proposed seven action items to the district and school in tackling these issues:

1. Clear policies to promote fairness and outline consequences
2. Utilize Community Dispute Response Center at St. Cloud State University
3. Diversity/Sensitivity Training for students, teachers and administrators
4. Guest Speaker in World History and Geography Classes
5. Somali presentation during Apollo High School’s Cultural Week
6. Involve Cultural Navigators in dispute resolution and reporting of incidents
7. Somali Student Association Meeting

d) SCHOOL ACTION TAKEN:

Two Caucasian male students were suspended in the bacon taunting incident and CAIR-MN is told that some of the four Somali Muslim students may get in-school suspensions for swearing back at the two boys. To CAIR-MN’s knowledge, none of the seven proposed action steps were implemented or discussed further with CAIR-MN.

March 16, 2010

a) INCIDENT:

[Somali Muslim Student] reports to CAIR-MN that two students, allegedly the same students involved in the previous bacon taunting incident, brought pork bacon to school and shoved it in the faces of Somali Muslim students and chased after them when they tried to get away. [Somali Muslim Student] reports that [Teacher C] witnessed, or was made aware, of the incident and that [Teacher C] reported it to school administrators.

b) SCHOOL OFFICIALS NOTIFIED:

- [Teacher C] allegedly reported the incident to school administrators.

c) SCHOOL/CAIR-MN PROPOSED ACTION STEPS:

- On March 16, 2010, CAIR-MN contacts Saenz to discuss the rampant anti-Muslim/anti-Somali incidents already reported to the school district and the Minnesota Public Radio story bringing to attention several other incidents of discrimination in the St. Cloud public high schools. SEE: Somali, cultural

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tension rising in St. Cloud

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/03/15/st-cloud-tensions/>

CAIR-MN informs Saenz that CAIR-MN is considering asking the U.S. Department of Education to help the school district address these incidents.

- On March 16, 2010, CAIR-MN contacts Somali Muslim students involved in the February 17 incident to see if mediation took place. It had not.
- On March 22, 2010, CAIR-MN asks the U.S. Department of Education to intervene and investigate the alleged incidents of racial and religious harassment and help the district create a safe and hostile-free environment for all students.
- March 24, 2010, CAIR-MN informs Saenz that the U.S. Department of Education has been contacted.
- March 24, 2010, CAIR-MN sends press release and makes the complaints public.

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