

Dean Spooltra's reprimand from Superintendent

Punishment fitting, but why the secrecy?

SouthtownStar Editorial Jan 5, 2011 02:30AM

Rich Central High School Dean Helga Spooltra earned a two-day unpaid suspension for hosting a party at her Indiana home last summer where guests burned a photo of Maceo Rainey, the school's former principal.

The school district chose to keep Spooltra's suspension under wraps, which prompted the SouthtownStar to dig for the details.

The SouthtownStar on Monday learned of Spooltra's Dec. 1 to 3 suspension, and we feel it was a fitting punishment. It is our sincere hope she never condones such behavior at her home or at her workplace again.

We continue to be frustrated, however, that taxpayers must fight to ferret out even the most basic information from Rich Township High School District 227.

By refusing to reveal how or if the district was addressing the problem, the administration shows it is more interested in autonomy than honesty. District 227 could have avoided months of negative rumor and speculation had officials dealt with the Spooltra matter efficiently and openly.



TO: Helga Spooltra
FROM: Donna Simpson Leak, Ph.D.
Superintendent
DATE: November 23, 2010
RE: Suspension Without Pay

I am writing to advise you of my disciplinary decisions regarding your involvement in the events taking place at a party at your house on June 17, 2010. You have acknowledged that on the day of the party, you took, without permission, a poster from Rich Central that contained the image of District Night School Principal Maceo Rainey. You took the poster to your house and it was observed by several people placed in your living room.

At some point during the party, this poster was placed in an outdoor fire pit at your house and was destroyed in the fire. While you have denied placing the poster in the fire, because you took the

poster from Rich Central you are at least partly responsible for its destruction. Finally, I note that you failed to come forward with your knowledge of these events until you were interviewed by the District's legal counsel on November 8, 2010. Much of the rancor that our schools and students have endured may have been prevented if you had come forward sooner.

As a result of your actions, you are suspended without pay for three days effective to be served on Wednesday, December 1, 2010, Thursday, December 2, 2010 Friday December 3, 2010. During the period of your suspension, you are not to be on District property. I will also be recommending that the Board approve a Notice to Remedy at the Board's December 21st meeting. Any additional incidents of misconduct will result in additional discipline, up to and including termination of your employment.

If you have questions, please contact my office. _

Cc: I. Hampton, Assistant Superintendent

D. Mason, Payroll

Personnel File

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/EDUCATOR

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NOTICE TO REMEDY

December 21, 2010

Ms. Helga Spoolstra
8565 West 105th Avenue St. John, IN 46373

Dear Ms. Spoolstra:

You are hereby informed pursuant to Section 24-12 of The School Code of Illinois, 105 ILCS 5/24-12, that your conduct as a teacher in this School District is found deficient and unsatisfactory in the respects listed in Exhibit A, attached hereto and made a part hereof. These deficiencies were discovered after an investigation with regards to removing school property without permission and failure to report your knowledge -

This Board of Education informs you that the Board has determined these deficiencies to be causes, charges, reasons, and defects that, if not removed, may result in charges against you and your dismissal as a teacher in this School District. You are hereby instructed to remove and remedy each and every reason, cause, charge and defect stated on such Exhibit, and to follow all directives contained therein.

Please feel free to request the assistance and aid of members of the supervisory staff, as you may wish, to bring about a correction of the deficiencies. It is our hope that these deficiencies will be promptly remedied and never reoccur.

Very truly yours,

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 227, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS


Secretary, Board of Education

, Board of Education

By:

President, Board of Education

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RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION OF RICH TOWNSHIP
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 227, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
AUTHORIZING A NOTICE OF REMEDIATION

WHEREAS, this Board of Education has received reports from the administration regarding the conduct of HELGA SPOOLSTRA ("SPOOLSTRA"), a tenured teacher of this School District; and, WHEREAS, this Board finds and determines that such reports state causes, charges, defects, and reasons in the conduct of SPOOLSTRA, which, if not removed and remedied, are causes, charges, defects, and reasons warranting discharge and dismissal of SPOOLSTRA as a teacher in this School District; and,

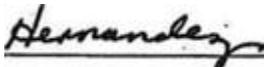
WHEREAS, this Board finds and determines that the conduct of SPOOLSTRA to date in _ this District has been inappropriate and unsatisfactory;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 227, Cook County, Illinois as follows:

SECTION 1. That the President and Secretary of this Board of Education are hereby authorized and directed to sign and serve, or cause to be served, on behalf of this Board of Education, on HELGA SPOOLSTRA a Notice to Remedy substantially in the form of Exhibit A, attached to the closed session minutes and made a part thereof, which notice enumerates causes, charges, reasons, and defects that this Board determines, if not removed and remedied, may result in the discharge and dismissal of SPOOLS TRA as a teacher in the School District.

SECTION 2. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon its adoption.

Member



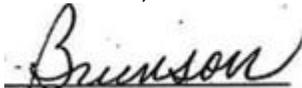
moved adoption of the resolution, Member

seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the members voted as follows:

AYES: 5 NAYS 0 ABSENT: 2

ADOPTED this 21st day of December, 2010.

BORD OF EDUCATION OF RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, . NO. 227, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS



President, l3o d of Education


Secretary Board of Education

oard of Education Attest:

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EXHIBIT A

I. Deficiencies in the conduct of Helga Spoolstra:

A. You have engaged in inappropriate and unprofessional conduct as follows:

1. On or about June 17, 2010, you took, without permission, a poster from Rich Central containing the image of former Rich Central Principal Maceo Rainey.

2. You took this poster to your house for display during a private party attended by other District 227 employees on or about June 17, 2010.

3. During the party, the poster was destroyed by being burned in an outdoor fire pit at your house.

4. Despite knowing the controversy and disruption caused by your actions, you failed to acknowledge your actions until interviewed by the District's legal counsel on November 8, 2010

2. Required corrective-action

A. You will not take District 227 property for your personal use.

B. You will not remove District 227 property from any of the District's schools without prior permission.

C. You will return any District 227 property that you are permitted to take from the District's schools in the same condition in which you received the property.

D. You will be immediately forthcoming to your building principal in the event you violate any of the directives set forth above.

E. You will abide by all Board of Education policies, administrative procedures and administrative directives for the remainder of your employment in Rich Township High School District No. 227

F. The requirements of this Notice to Remedy shall remain in effect until further written notice from the Board of Education. Your failure to comply with each and

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STATE OF ILLINOIS, SS

COUNTY OF COOK CERTIFICATION

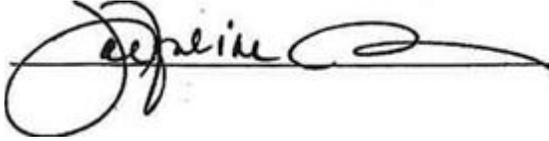
I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting Secretary of the Board of Education of RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 227, and that as such official I am the keeper of the records and files of the Board. I do further certify that the foregoing is a full, true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Board of Education at a meeting of said Board held on the 21st of December, 2010.

I do further certify that the deliberations of the Board of the adoption of said Resolution were conducted in closed session, that the vote on the adoption of said Resolution was taken openly, that said meeting was held at a specified time and place convenient to the public, that notice-of-

said-meeting was-duly-given to-all-newspapers,-radio-or television-stations and-other news media requesting such notice, that said meeting was called and held in strict compliance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act of the State of Illinois, as amended and with the provisions of the School Code of the State of Illinois, as amended, and that the Board has complied with all of the provisions of said Act and said Code and with all of the procedural rules of the Board in conduct of said meeting.

1N WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto affixed my official signature.

SECRETARY, BOARD OF EDUCATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devin", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

CLICK THE FOLLOWING LINK FOR MORE ON SD 227

<https://sites.google.com/site/sharpwatchsite>