

Brighton police, school probe 'white student union'

Georgie Silvarole

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

The Brighton Police Department and the Brighton Central School District are investigating an Instagram account supposedly representing a white student union at Brighton High School. Brighton Police Chief Mark Henderson said he believes the school may have an idea of who is behind the account and is trying to learn more about what the intent might be. "Never heard of a white student union," Henderson said. "Right now is the 'What if?' What is a white student union? What is the purpose? Is it kids being kids? Is it more than that?" On Tuesday afternoon the account had nine followers. It also had posted one photo — a picture of Ben Shapiro, a conservative political commentator, with the caption, "This man will lead us into the new age. His thoughts and philosophies are 100 percent encouraged by WSU." The account has since been deleted. Dan Goldman, the district's communications coordinator, said in a statement that the school learned of the account Tuesday evening and immediately notified Brighton Police.

Goldman said the account appeared to mirror an account for Brighton High School's Black Student Union, which is an organization formally recognized by the school. "The account promoted the ideas of a particular commentator but did not express a threat or direct comments at any individuals," Goldman said. "The account has since been removed. We will continue to investigate this matter and support students in every way possible."

Henderson said the police department is taking the account very seriously, and police are not yet sure whether the account is related to stickers representing white nationalist groups that were recently found in Brighton and Pittsford.

"This is alarming," Henderson said. "We are using the methods that we can to try and find out who's doing this."

GSILVAROLE @Gannett.com