

Spencerport assistant principal denounces police

Explicit video made after being pepper sprayed

Justin Murphy

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

Steve Lysenko, an assistant principal at Spencerport High School, has been one of the district’s leaders in advocating for anti-racist curriculum and other actions in the spirit of the Black Lives Matter movement.

At a rally in downtown Rochester Friday, though, Lysenko went too far for the district’s liking.

In a one-minute selfie video, Lysenko summarized his experience at the rally: “In an act of protest this evening, we marched west on Court Street, and we didn’t do anything but chant and sing all the way halfway across the bridge, at which point we met the Rochester Police Department,” he said. “And guess what happened? Our peacekeepers ended up shooting pepper spray at us for singing and chanting and telling them what a (expletive) job they were doing.”

“They can (expletive) right off, America,” he continued, his voice rising. “(Expletive) the police; (expletive) the Rochester Police Department. Thank you.”

The video quickly circulated on social media, drawing condemnation for both the foul language and the message from an educator. At the same time some in Spencerport defended him, focusing on his work in the district.

As Lysenko noted during the video, he is president of the local chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education and the past state president. He is also a member of Spencerport’s Equity Committee.

He told the Democrat and Chronicle in 2018 about the district’s work: “It’s a larger conversation when we look at racism and civil rights; it’s bigger than this moment in time and it’s a bigger issue than just Spencerport.”

It continued: “However, when a District employee uses language in public or on social media that does not align with our Code of Conduct or demonstrate appropriate role modeling for students, that is something that we will not condone. These statements by our administrator have caused disruption within our school community. We apologize to our students, parents and community that you had to hear this language from one of our employees.”

The district said it would address the incident with Lysenko “as a confidential, personnel matter.”

A Change.org petition demanding Lysenko not be fired had more than 3,500 signatures as of Sunday afternoon. Another Change.org petition calls for Lysenko’s firing.

Lysenko, who has worked at the district since 2011, did not respond to a request for comment Sunday.

Rochester has had protests each night since video footage was released showing the arrest of Daniel Prude, who died after being restrained by police in March.

Contact staff writer Justin Murphy at jmurphy7@gannett.com or at 585-258-9886. This coverage is only possible with support from our readers. Sign up today for a digital subscription.



Lysenko

In a statement Sunday, the district said it “stands in solidarity in support of racial equality and systemic change ... (and) peaceful protesters.”

[Copyright © 2020 Democrat and Chronicle 9/7/2020](#)
[Powered by TECNAVIA](#)
