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- Local Business Action Team
- Outstanding Debt Work Group

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- Finance and Personnel Committee
- Public Safety and Health Committee



*The
Garden
District*

TERRY L. WITKOWSKI
ALDERMAN, 13TH DISTRICT

Safety for our teachers and students must be paramount

Statement of Alderman Terry L. Witkowski August 23, 2017

The brutal assault of a teacher by a student yesterday at South Division High School is shocking and disturbing. The assault – captured on video and aired widely across TV news and social media – should result in nothing less than expulsion and criminal charges for the student, in my opinion. The public should watch with care how the court system handles another case of juveniles who have no respect for authority or the law, and who appear not to be learning the lessons of civil behavior at home. I condemn this violent attack – and the reckless disregard for human life it shows – in the strongest terms possible.

The classroom must be a safe haven for discussions, experiments, debates, lectures and learning. Teachers and school staff deserve respect and a safe work environment, and our expectations for student behavior (and that of family members) in ALL schools should include zero tolerance for violence and disruptive outbursts. Respect for authority is essential to a school's mission of producing future citizens who function well in wider society.

For the most part our classrooms are great and supportive places to learn and are filled with students who are coming for the right reasons. Elected officials and other leaders care about them and their right to quality education and to schools that are safe for them to attend. We also must send a clear message that we care deeply about our public employees and support them in what they do and work to protect them – including our teachers and support staff helping to mold our future leaders.

Violent and dangerous behavior, like this attack, as well as chronic disruptive behavior simply will not be tolerated.

Sadly, the violence captured on the video did not just germinate out of thin air – it was behavior likely learned, seen and experienced close to home. Parents need to do a better job of emphasizing the critical importance of education and of instilling the moral code of conduct at home. And in that code violence must NEVER be seen as acceptable or no big deal.

Our schools are places of learning and the opportunity to be educated is a gift.

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