



NY High-school Teacher Suspended for Showing Students a Fox News Documentary

A New York high-school teacher committed the unthinkable act of offering his students the opportunity to experience a more balanced perspective on a hotly debated issue and is now paying the price.



In the final days of the school year, Fox Lane High School economics teacher Mike Poplardo presents a two-day “mini-unit” to his seniors on college preparedness, which includes a Fox News documentary entitled [The Truth About Sex and College](#) to discuss due process involved in campus procedures related to sexual assault for both the victims and the accused.

The Daily Wire reports,

The documentary (which includes commentary from this reporter), hosted by Fox News anchor Martha MacCallum, tells the stories of several male students who say they were falsely accused of sexual assault, in one instance also talking to the female accuser for her perspective. It also debunks some common myths surrounding sexual assault statistics.

Poplardo uses the documentary as a jumping point to discuss due process as well as sexual assault on campus. His lesson plan featured questions such as, “What strategies can you put in place to avoid being in the ‘mess’ depicted in the video as a victim of sexual violence or a person accused of sexual violence?” and “Can the victim of sexual violence be a male?” “Can a female be accused of sexual violence?” and “How can the administration of a college or a manager of a business or a leader in the military protect the rights of the person who believes they are a victim of sexual violence while also protecting the rights of the accused?”

His lesson concludes by asserting that both men and women are at risk of both sexual assault and being accused of sexual assault, and that the students should plan to use one or more of the strategies discussed in class to avoid either scenario.

Poplardo showed the documentary to five classes in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school year without complaint, but in May of last year, an anonymous tip was sent to school officials claiming that Poplardo showed a “graphic sexual video” because it featured a few sentences that describe an alleged rape that had taken place.

Despite Poplardo’s excellent record and near-perfect evaluations he’d received over the nearly 30 years he has taught, he has now been accused of “misconduct and conduct unbecoming a teacher, misconduct, incompetence, and insubordination” for showing the video.

In fact, Bedford Central School Superintendent Dr. Christopher Manno wanted Poplardo suspended for six months for showing the video, but the district granted just a one-month paid suspension following his hearing. But that changed when Manno learned that Poplardo sent notice to parents to explain his absence and included a copy of his lesson plan, which included a link to the video. In response, Manno has brought seven new charges against him, and Poplardo has yet to receive a hearing for those new charges.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 30, 2019

And without any further due process, Poplardo's suspension has become indefinite.

"After your disciplinary suspension ends on February 1, you will be placed on a paid administrative leave of absence. This leave will continue until further notice," Manno wrote in the letter.

Additionally, Manno informed Poplardo that he is still "not to communicate with students about the circumstances surrounding the two sets of disciplinary charges against you and other issue relating to your legal issues and personal employment with the District."

Poplardo contends that he believes he is being targeted because he is the only known conservative at Fox Lane High School.

"They just don't like me because in the work room when everyone else is complaining about every single thing Trump does, I don't participate. I don't fight back if I'm outnumbered nine to one, but I don't chime in," Poplardo said.

Poplardo's claims may not be so far-fetched. In 2009, Manno [defended](#) a school principal and teacher in his former NJ district who led students in singing President Obama's praises. In a video posted on YouTube, approximately 20 students can be seen singing a song in praise of Obama and his "great plans," Fox News [reported](#).

At the time, he argued, "There was nothing systematic or indoctrinating about this innocent classroom activity. There was no intention on the part of the teacher to make any political statement or promote a political agenda."

Poplardo also contends that the district is threatened by the outpouring of support he has received from the community. The district released a two-page statement regarding Poplardo's suspension in an attempt to mend its reputation, but Poplardo asserts the statement is full of lies and misrepresentations, Bedford Hills' *Daily Voice* reports. For example, the district claims they offered him a settlement to lose one week's salary and attend training in lieu of a suspension, but Poplardo refused.

Poplardo contends that statement is untrue. "I was offered to take six months suspension without pay and lose my coaching and advisory positions," he said. "That's crazy and I requested a hearing."

The office later gave him the one-month-without pay suspension, but the superintendent, he claims, also had him removed from all coaching and advisory positions at a loss of \$13,000, he said.

A GoFundMe page has been set up by a friend of Poplardo. It had a goal of \$8,000, but the page has raised more than \$13,000 in just three weeks, to offset the money Poplardo has lost as a result of his suspension. It has been shared nearly 800 times.

Image of Mike Poplardo: [Screenshot of GoFundMe page](#)



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