

DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

HAYS CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Contact: Tim Savoy, Public Information Officer
(512) 268-2141 ext. 6090
tim.savoy@hayscisd.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Update: Monday, April 22, 2024:

The district's Human Resources Department met with the substitute Monday following the late Friday afternoon suspension of the substitute. The investigation has not been able to determine which of the conflicting accounts of the assignment is correct, whether it was for puppets to be murdered or be part of a death scene similar to a Shakespearian play. One group of students did perform a brief scene involving a mass shooting. While the district has determined there was no nefarious intent on the part of the substitute; not providing proper parameters, correcting, intervening to prevent, or interrupting that performance was improper and not acceptable. Accordingly, the substitute teacher will not be invited back to work in Hays CISD. The district maintains its apology to students and parents in the original statement, but does not believe any other action is warranted regarding the substitute except that he no longer be assigned to any jobs in the district.

Original Statement Date: April 19, 2024

JHS Substitute Teacher Suspended Pending Investigation

Johnson High School and Hays CISD placed a substitute theater arts teacher on suspension status and removed the teacher from campus on Friday afternoon following concerns expressed by students about an in-class assignment.

Students report that the substitute assigned them to perform a puppet show in which at least one puppet had to be murdered. Additionally, one group of students reports that their performance would have involved a mass shooting, though it is not clear if that was the specific assignment or a scene created to meet the parameters of the assignment. Either way, assigning or allowing this type of performance, if proved to have occurred, would be disturbing and unacceptable conduct for an educator in Hays CISD.

The school and the district apologize to the students and their parents for any distress this has caused and pledges to ensure that it does not happen again.

The substitute teacher was hired by Hays CISD in January 2024. In addition to the investigation alleged in today's incident, the district will also be reviewing potential other general classroom management concerns. Based on the investigation, the substitute could be asked not to return to Hays CISD schools. And, if warranted, appropriate reports and referrals would be made to law enforcement and the Texas Education Agency educator misconduct portal.

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