
STUDENT ACCUSED OF HITTING TEACHER ; ARMSTRONG EDUCATOR WAS TAKEN TO HISPITAL; BOY, 15 WAS ARRESTED; [City Edition]

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Full Text (377 words)

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A veteran Armstrong High School teacher was hospitalized yesterday afternoon after a 15-year-old male student assaulted her, officials said.

The student, who was arrested, knocked down LaVerne Hamlin, who teaches physics and biology at the East End school, after she took a classroom telephone from him, according to a school incident report. He then repeatedly kicked and hit her face and body.

The confrontation started about 12:30 p.m. when Hamlin asked the student to end his telephone conversation three times, and he refused, the report says.

Hamlin was taken by ambulance to Medical College of Virginia Hospitals, where she was treated and expected to be released last night, Richmond schools spokeswoman Treeda R. Smith said.

The student was charged with aggravated assault and sent to the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center. He also has been suspended pending a hearing before a school-system panel, Smith said.

"Richmond public schools is very concerned about the safety and security of its staff and students," Smith said. "An incident of this nature alarms all of us. We are very concerned about her and her family. This is the kind of thing that upsets us all. It hurts the entire Richmond public schools family."

Reginald M. Malone Sr., the School Board's 7th District representative, said that while the student's alleged actions were not appropriate, it is possible the teacher could have done more to keep the situation from turning violent.

"You've got to be careful who you take the phone from," Malone said. "He could say, 'I was on the phone with my mama and she had an accident.'"

Smith said teachers and students are regularly trained in conflict-resolution techniques.

Hamlin is in her 32nd year of teaching, and her seventh at Armstrong. Last spring, she received the Exemplary High School Teacher Award from the National Science Teachers Association and Ciba Specialty Chemicals Foundation.

The award recognized her creative teaching methods. Last year, she taught some of her students fingerprinting and other forensic techniques as part of "CSI: Richmond," a class project named after the television show. She also took students to Richmond International Raceway as part of the NASCAR Physics Competition.

Last night, Smith said Hamlin "is beloved by all her fellow teachers. She is an outstanding person."

Credit: Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

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People: Hamlin, LaVerne, Smith, R

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