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Fired STM teacher appeared in court after arrest for allegedly attempting child porn

By: Ashley Hamilton

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Lafayette,La(KADN)- Jacob Conrad De La Paz, the former St. Thomas Moore High School teacher, and coach who was fired last week appeared before a federal magistrate today via Zoom for a detention hearing.

De La Paz was booked into the St. Martin Parish jail last week on hold by federal authorities. This after he allegedly sent a sexually-themed video message to a female student at north vermilion high school, where he used to teach prior to stm.

He appeared before the judge to let the court know if he has an attorney or needs one appointed for him. Federal records show he is being charged with enticing a minor to engage in the creation of child pornography. Here is that exact video.

"Hey I want you to send a video to me of you pleasing yourself by thinking about me and to the sound of my voice I want you to imagine that you get to do all the things that you wanted to do to me while I am tutoring you. You imagine unbuckling my belt buckle.. Pulling down my pants," says De La Paz in the video.

De La Paz attorney Joseph Burke out of Lake Charles did accompany him during the hearing. He was read his rights and told if convicted, the charge carries a sentence between 15 years and 30 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine, and at least five years of supervised release. After reading the charge and allowing Del La Paz and his attorney time to review it, he waived a formal initial hearing.

"This is very disheartening, the video is disheartening. The situation is disheartening," says Vermilion Parish Superintendent Tommy Byler.

As previously reported Del La Paz was a coach and teacher at St. Thomas Moore High School until last week when he was escorted off the school campus. NEWS15 did reach out to the Diocese of Lafayette who have not responded. Although we did speak to Byler who confirmed De La Paz worked for Vermilion Parish School System from August 2017 until June 2022.

Byler says nothing illegal was done by the hiring but the situation is truly disheartening. "He was hired in Vermilion, he very well could have been hired in any other district in the state of Louisiana because he didn't have any disqualifying charges. Does that mean we need to look at our hiring practices across the state? Does that mean we need to do a little more due diligence? It's also difficult because this is seven years after the hiring."

De La Paz w is being held without bond pending his next court hearing. The fired educator will appear in person in Lafayette federal court for a detention hearing. Prosecutors want him to remain jailed without bond.