

Harassing letters lead teacher to resign

(KMZA)--A social media post made by a longtime, former northeast Kansas teacher sheds light on his recent resignation.

According to the [post](#), made Tuesday afternoon on the Facebook account belonging to Michael Hill, the former visual arts and theater teacher at Nemaha Central High School, in Seneca, was the subject of what the post calls, “a pattern of harassment that started back in October 2017.”

In both the post and during a telephone interview with MSC News, Hill stated it was the harassment, which began shortly after he publicly revealed he's gay, that led him to make what he calls “the difficult decision” to move to Palm Springs, California. "I enjoyed my time teaching there. Unfortunately, I just felt like I had come to a place where my personal safety was outweighing the ability for me to stay. I had intended to move, but with the situation, I felt like I needed to accelerate my plans, just for my own personal safety and mental well being."

The post includes photographs of three letters received by Hill from someone identifying themselves only as “a concerned patron.”

Each of the three letters inform Hill that he should not be teaching, with the first saying "the homosexual lifestyle is not in keeping with the values of the community,” adding that Hill needed to be fired so he could "take your gay ideas with you."

The letters, which included slurs against homosexuals, grew in intensity. One of the three included threatening language, with the unidentified author saying he or she "need to take matters into my own hands...I know where you live. I know a lot about your schedule. You need to watch your back because I aint [sic]alone."

Two of the letters were mailed to Hill's home, while one was mailed to his school mailbox.

Hill told MSC News, "My biggest reason for posting [the letters] to social media was to draw attention to the hatred that was expressed, and make people aware that it still exists, and really draw attention to the work that we still have as a society to do to make life better for all people."

Seneca Police Chief Jordan Weaver confirmed that his office is conducting a probe into the harassment, but told MSC News that because it's an open investigation he can't offer further comment.

The Board of Education accepted Hill's resignation during their April 9 meeting, as confirmed by USD 115 Superintendent Darrel Kohlman. "Mr. Hill turned in his resignation to the Board. They took it under consideration and they accepted it. Since it's a personnel issue, I'm not willing to go any further than that in our discussion."

Hill's resignation became effective Tuesday.

According to school district records, Hill began teaching at Seneca in 2008. Prior to that, he taught art at Doniphan West, in Highland.

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