

City Of New York
**THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 8, 2024

Hon. David C. Banks
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Douglas Von Hoppe
SCI Case #: 2023-3986

Dear Chancellor Banks:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) Teacher and Librarian Douglas Von Hoppe (“Von Hoppe”), assigned to Maspeth High School (“MHS”) in Queens, engaged in gross employee misconduct when, as part of a pattern of predatory behavior, he communicated with at least 13 current and former DOE students (“Student A,” “Student B,” “Student C,” “Student D,” “Student E,” “Student F,” “Student G,” “Student H,” “Student I,” “Student J,” “Student K,” “Student L,” and “Student M”) via personal cell phones and initiated longstanding inappropriate relationships with several of these students.¹

I. Investigation & Findings:

A. Initial Complaint to SCI and Prior SCI Investigation Into Von Hoppe

The investigation began when Assistant District Attorney (“ADA”) Garret Baldwin (“Baldwin”), of the New York County District Attorney’s Office (“DANY”), contacted the office of the Special

¹ Von Hoppe was not reassigned during this investigation and does not, at present, have a problem code assigned to his personnel file.

Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) and shared a document containing the chat history between a defendant in a DANY criminal case (“DANY defendant”) and Von Hoppe.² The text messages discussed relationships between Von Hoppe, then 57-years-old, and former DOE students (most of whom attended MHS) from 2018 to 2021.³

DANY’s investigation also involved a construction industry consulting and management services firm Andromeda Advantage (“Andromeda”). SCI investigators contacted Andromeda’s outside legal counsel, [REDACTED] who provided a list of Andromeda interns who were recruited by the DANY defendant and had personal ties to Von Hoppe. Investigators identified several former DOE students who served as interns, including: Student A, Student B, Student C, Student H, Student I, Student J, Student K, Student L, and Student M.

Previously, in 2021, SCI received a complaint alleging that Von Hoppe had multiple inappropriate friendships with his students and had “hung out” with students – who were not named – at museums and other off-campus sites while the students were still enrolled at MHS. The complainant further asserted that Von Hoppe isolated these students from their families so that they were emotionally dependent on him. Von Hoppe allegedly justified his behavior by claiming to be their “mentor” and “friend.” Subsequently, SCI opened a case into Von Hoppe, and investigators interviewed Von Hoppe about his behavior and relationship with Student G. During his interview, Von Hoppe declared that he acted as Student G’s mentor and that he assisted her family, even after she graduated from MHS. He admitted that he took Student G to an art show while she was still a student; however, Student G would not cooperate with the investigation, therefore, investigators were unable to determine if Von Hoppe received permission from Student G’s parents to take her to the art show. SCI investigators ultimately unsubstantiated the allegations.

Investigators attempted to interview Von Hoppe again, this time regarding the allegations discussed herein, however, on October 27, 2023, through his attorney, Von Hoppe declined to be interviewed citing his tenured status.

B. Interview with the [REDACTED]

SCI investigators first conducted an interview of [REDACTED] who confirmed that Von Hoppe served as a librarian at MHS. [REDACTED] told investigators that while she never witnessed Von Hoppe behave inappropriately with any students, she frequently heard MHS teachers repeat a joke that “the Asian students love Von Hoppe.” To investigators, she asserted that after reflecting on Von Hoppe’s behavior, she found some of it to be odd – for example, in March 2023, the school had a cultural celebration where students and teachers grouped themselves into the continents they

² The documents were shared with SCI pursuant to an order signed by New York County Supreme Court Justice Felicia Mennin on April 11, 2023. The text messages contained in the document Baldwin shared with SCI were extracted from a seized cell phone, pursuant to a search warrant. Investigators completed a database search and confirmed that the phone number in contact with the DANY defendant matched the phone number that the DOE had on file for Von Hoppe.

³ The 13 students were all female, of varying ages.

identified with and walked around the school to celebrate diversity. Von Hoppe reportedly joined the Asian students in walking around the school.

Investigators then probed ██████████ for information about Von Hoppe's use of student assistants, and ██████████ responded that while it was common for MHS teachers to use student assistants, she observed that most of Von Hoppe's student assistants were Asian. She told investigators that there was no formal record of who served as a student teacher or assisted Von Hoppe in the library. ██████████ also told investigators that MHS had a program stationed in the library through which college students from the City University of New York ("CUNY") provided free tutoring to any MHS student who requested help. The CUNY-MHS partner program was organized by a former assistant principal, however, Von Hoppe had assumed responsibility for the program and its operations. ██████████ explained that the program was recently ended because the only college students who attended were Asian, and MHS students had trouble communicating with them due to the CUNY students limited English fluency.

C. Interviews with Von Hoppe's Former Students

Investigators spoke with then 20-year-old Student B, who served as Von Hoppe's library assistant at MHS for several years. Student B confirmed that "Mr. Von Hoppe" was the only teacher she remained in contact with after leaving MHS. During the time she served as his library assistant, Student B – along with many of her friends who also worked as library assistants – would assist Von Hoppe around the library and would stay late after school to do homework assignments. She stated that Von Hoppe would offer support and assistance if requested, however, she denied that, other than these afterschool study sessions in the library, she had spent time with Von Hoppe outside of school hours. She further claimed that when she attended MHS, she did not communicate with Von Hoppe other than speaking with him "in person," and denied that she had his personal email or phone number when she was still a MHS student. As she explained to investigators, it was only when she graduated from MHS that she asked Von Hoppe for his personal email so she could contact him for help with her college work.

While at college, Student B reached out for assistance, and after they exchanged a few messages and Von Hoppe provided assignment help, he gave Student B his phone number. Per Student B, Von Hoppe said he received many emails and might miss an important email from her so it would be better to text him. Student B stated that she contacted Von Hoppe via text, and he soon began engaging her in more personal conversations, asking her about how she was doing and other general small talk topics – conversation which, at the time of her interview, they still engaged in almost daily. She told investigators that she did not find these conversations to be weird or inappropriate.

Over the next year in which she conversed with Von Hoppe, she also began to spend more time with him in social settings, including parties and functions that Von Hoppe invited her to attend. At these parties, she would "network with his friends and some of his other past students who were in similar fields as [her]." Von Hoppe also reportedly extended invitations to play tennis, which Student B said she declined. Student B approximated that nearly two years earlier, Von Hoppe helped her obtain a job at Andromeda, working under Von Hoppe's friend, the DANY defendant. She reported that she left Andromeda after one year, but continued to stay in touch with the DANY defendant since he was Von

Hoppe's good friend. She added that she saw him in July 2023, when she accompanied Von Hoppe to the DANY defendant's July 4th party. Von Hoppe provided Student B with rides to both the July 4th party and a birthday party for Student G. To investigators, Student B maintained that she viewed her relationship with Von Hoppe as a friendship and that she enjoyed spending time with him, in part because he was able to provide connections for her future. She added that Von Hoppe was a great teacher who spoke at length about wanting to help students who worked hard, and he stayed in contact with these students to help them achieve success. Regarding other students that Von Hoppe may have been in contact with, Student B informed investigators that she attended multiple events to which Von Hoppe had also invited Student D, Student H, and Student G to attend. According to Student B, Von Hoppe spoke about Student G often, spent a great deal of time helping her, and seemed to be very involved with Student G's family.

Investigators also interviewed a 26-year-old former student of Von Hoppe, Student H, who graduated from MHS in 2016. She estimated that she had known Von Hoppe for 10 years – longer than any other student with whom Von Hoppe spent time. Student H told investigators that she moved to Seattle, Washington, and the only teacher she remained in touch with was Von Hoppe. She, like Student B, volunteered as Von Hoppe's assistant in the library to earn extra credit points towards graduation. She admitted that she texted Von Hoppe while still a student at MHS – she and multiple other male and female students were in a private group chat with Von Hoppe. As the only non-student in this group, Von Hoppe reportedly used this chat to organize tennis sessions with students at Juniper Park after school hours. During her first two years of college, Student H was not in contact with Von Hoppe, however, she explained that in her junior year of college, she emailed Von Hoppe for help writing an essay. Since then, she remained in contact with Von Hoppe, and asserted that she considered him to be a close friend. She stated that she did not believe Von Hoppe's behavior was inappropriate, declaring that “[she] would not allow that to happen,” further characterizing Von Hoppe as a mentor, father figure, and family friend to her. She maintained that he was very caring and friendly, having also helped her family over the time they had known each other. Per Student H, Von Hoppe organized events which his former students attended, and she and her 25-year-old sister, Student F, spent time with Von Hoppe playing tennis and vacationing together.⁴

Investigators then interviewed Student I, who stated that after graduating from MHS, she did not remain in touch with any of her teachers – including Von Hoppe. Student I told investigators that a few years later, while a student at university, Von Hoppe reached out to her about interning at Andromeda with his friend, the DANY defendant.⁵ As an intern at Andromeda, Student I reportedly had limited contact with Von Hoppe, and never texted him. She added that since graduating from MHS, she has never met with Von Hoppe in person. Like Student B and Student H, she maintained that Von Hoppe never said anything inappropriate to her or made her feel uncomfortable.

⁴ Student H would not provide investigators with Student F's address, instead promising to have Student F contact investigators via phone or email. Investigators also arranged a time for Student H to participate in a follow-up Zoom interview to obtain additional information about her relationship with Von Hoppe, however, she failed to attend this meeting and stopped responding to investigators' phone calls or text messages.

⁵ Student I could not recall how Von Hoppe contacted her, if by phone or email.

Although investigators attempted numerous times to contact Students A, C, D, E, F, G, J, K, L, and M for interviews, none responded to investigators' calls, visits to residences, or certified letters.

D. Review of Von Hoppe's Text Messages with the DANY Defendant and Former MHS Students

In the text messages provided by ADA Baldwin, between Von Hoppe and Von Hoppe's self-declared best friend, the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe discussed his female students at length.⁶ Von Hoppe mentioned taking various students on vacation, tennis lessons, and dinners; organizing tutoring sessions; aiding in moving apartments; buying gifts like clothing, and so forth. He made both comments specific to individual students and broader statements about finding young, Asian women attractive. For example, Von Hoppe wrote that he wanted to date only women aged 18 to 40, and added, "After the vaccine rollout, I will be around thousands of young Asian women in Elmhurst; I'm one of the few white men here."⁷ On another occasion, he stated "I had two other Vietnamese students in the past. They were both petite, white skin, very hot young ladies."⁸ One other, particularly lecherous comment, worthy of note was, in response to the DANY defendant informing Von Hoppe they would be eating Asian food for dinner, Von Hoppe responded, "Oh! I love to eat Asians."

Investigators also obtained two sets of phone records for Von Hoppe's cell phone number from T-Mobile. The earlier set of phone records, from May 23, 2017 through August 21, 2021, were archived and thus no records of text messages were available, and only records for phone calls existed; however, for the set of Von Hoppe's phone records dated from August 4, 2021 through July 25, 2023, data on both text messages and phone calls was available. These records demonstrate that Von Hoppe engaged in extensive communication with seven of his current and former students.

1. Student A

Student A, who is 25 years old, graduated from MHS in 2016, and was employed by Andromeda for a few months in 2018. Von Hoppe's phone records document the two texting 23 times between August 2021 and July 2023, and, beginning in June 2017, making 74 phone calls to one another.

In his texts with the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe wrote that he became close with Student A in 2015, prior to her graduation from MHS, and his wife had been suspicious of Student A since 2016. Von Hoppe expressed surprise that his "shy Asian" complimented him, and further stated that Student A idolized him, and it was his duty to honor her.⁹ Von Hoppe divulged other details about his relationship with Student A, including that they messaged on Instagram, took a trip together, played tennis, and had dinner together – both alone and with her family. In total, Von Hoppe mentioned dining with Student A at restaurants on at least 16 occasions.

⁶ The text messages demonstrated that the DANY defendant and Von Hoppe had a close relationship, playing tennis, bike riding, vacationing together, and having dinner.

⁷ Von Hoppe sent the message discussing his dating preferences on January 28, 2021, and the comment regarding the COVID-19 vaccine rollout on January 6, 2021. Henceforth, the dates of the selected, quoted text messages from Von Hoppe's conversations will be noted in the footnotes of this letter.

⁸ Sent on March 23, 2021.

⁹ Sent on August 8, 2018.

2. Student B

Despite claiming in her interview with SCI investigators that she did not communicate with Von Hoppe via personal phone or email while she was a student at MHS, Von Hoppe's phone records revealed – prior to Student B's high school graduation in June 2020 – Student B and Von Hoppe called each other 21 times. After graduation, 660 more calls were made, and Student B and Von Hoppe exchanged 434 texts.

Von Hoppe discussed Student B – his “monitor of four years at Mhs [sic],” who he saw “every school day” – numerous times, first in late June 2019, when he asked the DANY defendant about open positions for interns at Andromeda, stating that he had a “hard working high school student who was interested in a summer internship,” although Student B did not intern at Andromeda until 2021. In later conversations, Von Hoppe made increasingly inappropriate comments about Student B, including multiple references to a crush Student B purportedly had on Von Hoppe. He described this crush as “innocent” and stated that he did not intend to end his relationship with Student B because of it. Other pertinent texts of Von Hoppe's, which investigators identified to be about Student B, copied with their original and spelling, included:

- “Even worse, [Student B's] openly flirting with me on IG. I'm already helping the Asian community in many ways. Does ogling & flirting count. Or is that “hurtful?”¹⁰
- (after surgery Von Hoppe underwent) “Guess what? My equipment still works. Anesthesia didn't knock it out. And there was no porn involved. It happened during chat Plus the lady sent me a very classy present today.”¹¹
- “The flirting with [Student B] is back on. Oops. We are celebrating her birthday, early, this Sunday in flushing.¹²
- “A lot of women are all fertile at the same time, such as right now. It matters. Much friendlier. I was with [Student H] all day. And I called [Student B] up, she called/video back after her shower, she was lying on her bed with long wet hair, being flirty and seductive. [Student G] was here, even she noticed.”¹³
- “[Student B] has nice legs. Nice thighs. [Student B] has about 30 pounds on [Student H].”¹⁴
- “She was hungry today so I brought popcorn shrimp and pork dumplings to eat in the Honda. [Student B] started feeding me from her chopstick. Biggest turn on I've had all year. [Student B] seems cold but she's the most caring young person I know. She's very very loyal too.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Sent on February 27, 2021.

¹¹ Sent on March 25, 2021.

¹² Sent on August 6, 2021.

¹³ Sent on August 8, 2021.

¹⁴ Sent on August 18, 2021.

¹⁵ Sent on August 18, 2021.

While Von Hoppe may have declared his relationship with Student B to be innocent and harmless, his actions – such as taking her out to dinner for her birthday or buying her “cute tops” from Macy’s – are not typical behavior of a mentor or former teacher, which the DANY defendant even noted, joking to Von Hoppe about him “courting women so young.”¹⁶ Not mentoring, but “courting.”

3. Student C

Student C, a 22-year-old former MHS student, interned at Andromeda from 2021 to 2022. Von Hoppe referenced Student C several times in his messages with the DANY defendant, mentioning that he had not seen Student C for about 2 years, but indicated they reconnected and were engaged in regular, extensive communication. Von Hoppe told the DANY defendant of a crush that he believed Student C had on him and that he and Student C “hit it off like nothing [Von Hoppe] ever encountered.”¹⁷

Von Hoppe’s phone records showed that on March 12, 2021, he and Student C called each other three times.

4. Student D

Twenty-six-year-old Student D, the sister of Student A, did not appear to have prolonged communication with Von Hoppe, however, the messages retrieved from the DANY defendant’s phone revealed that Von Hoppe stayed in touch with Student D after she graduated from MHS in 2015. He attempted to get her a job in 2018. Around that time, he also made an inappropriate comment as a response to the DANY defendant hinting at Von Hoppe having sex with his former students:

Von Hoppe: “Funniest thing [Student A] ever texted me: ‘will you ride me in your car?’ Reply, ‘yes, I would love to!’”
DANY defendant: “I dont [*sic*] think that simple. How about 2 on 1.”
Von Hoppe: “Never. You don’t get it at all. Both of them idolize me. It’s my duty to honor them. I know honor is important to you, too”¹⁸

5. Student E

After Student E, now 24 years old, graduated from MHS in 2017, she and Von Hoppe appear to have stayed in contact with one another. Although Von Hoppe’s phone records did not show communications with Student E, he discussed her appearance with the DANY defendant in 2021, stating that he believed Student E was prettier than Student K.¹⁹ Von Hoppe also very clearly expressed his interest in Student E beyond that of a mentor or friend when he wrote, “I still daydream about [Student

¹⁶ Sent on September 18, 2021.

¹⁷ Sent on March 28, 2021

¹⁸ Sent on August 9, 2018.

¹⁹ Sent on August 8, 2018.

E]. I saw her once without makeup.”²⁰ Then, in a series of messages discussing Student E, as well as Students B, F, and H, Von Hoppe said:

“Every one of [Student E]’s friends are smart & curvy. I’m going to avoid getting attached to young women in 2021. That’s the plan for now and it’s almost a done deal with stupid Covid. I only get frisky and stupid in Spring, summer. I calm down and lick my wounds in fall, Winter. I already know I’m going to remarry an Asian woman, have another child and die in 2055 or 2053.”²¹

6. Student F

Student F did not attend MHS but graduated from another DOE high school in June 2016; Von Hoppe met Student F through her sister, Student H, who attended MHS. Beginning on June 12, 2019, Von Hoppe and Student F called each other 438 times in just two years, and they exchanged 965 text messages. While investigators did not speak to Student F and, therefore, could not hear her account of their relationship, from Von Hoppe’s text messages, it is abundantly clear that he did not think of her in an innocent manner or as a former student’s younger sister. His comments about Student F’s appearance included that she was flawless without makeup, looked stunning and gorgeous, and was too pretty to handle.

Von Hoppe’s comments about Student F were frequent enough such that, when he made a comment to the DANY defendant about being aroused by a woman (Student B) but did not mention her by name, the DANY defendant assumed Von Hoppe must have been referring to Student F because of the language he had used to discuss Student F in the past.²² When recounting a vacation he took with his former students, Von Hoppe said “I took [Student H] and [Student F] to beach last summer and 2019. It scarred my soul. And [Student F] slipped out of top when the wave hit her knocked her over. I felt bad and we helped her up.”²³ Shortly after, Von Hoppe added “[Student H] and [Student F] took a outdoor shower at beach w bathing suits on. [Student F] was flawless w/o makeup. I pretended I didn’t notice but I can’t forget that. When a beautiful woman comes out of the shower, relaxed, it’s the sexiest thing in the world.”²⁴ Another time, Von Hoppe messaged, “wearing a petite, feminine top with two straps. Wow! [Student F]’s upper body is amazing.”²⁵ He also told the DANY defendant that he bought her Valentine’s Day presents and went on vacation with her.

²⁰ Sent on January 5, 2021.

²¹ Sent on January 5, 2021.

²² Sent on March 28, 2021.

²³ Sent on December 14, 2020.

²⁴ Sent on December 14, 2020.

²⁵ Sent on June 2, 2021.

7. Student G

Both Von Hoppe's phone records and the DANY defendant's retrieved text messages confirm that the allegations made earlier in the 2021 complaint to SCI, regarding Von Hoppe's relationship with Student G, were true.

Student G, now 21 years old, graduated from MHS in June 2020, however, Von Hoppe maintained personal communication with Student G beginning in June 2018. Phone records showed that on June 6, 2018, Von Hoppe and Student G started to speak over the phone. From that point on, they called one another 497 times and texted nearly 6,800 times. Before she graduated from high school, Von Hoppe and Student G had made 101 phone calls to each other.

Furthermore, in August 2018, Von Hoppe told the DANY defendant that he picked Student G up from Starbucks. The following year, in 2019, he discussed playing tennis with her and the DANY defendant. He also texted the DANY defendant about a dinner he attended at Student G's house prior to her high school graduation, and Von Hoppe mentioned that he paid for her graduation. Shortly after she graduated from MHS, Von Hoppe took Student G on vacation, with Student H joining them. While in his 2021 interview, Von Hoppe acknowledged one trip he made to an art show with Student G, his messages with the DANY defendant revealed that he misled investigators. Von Hoppe spent an extensive amount of time with Student G beyond the MHS grounds and outside of school hours.

Von Hoppe often talked about the time he spent with Student G and with her family, the vacations they took, and the nights he dined at her house. He also mentioned that he invited Student G over to his house to be tutored by other former students.²⁶ While Von Hoppe never spoke about Student G explicitly, in the same manner that he spoke about other former students, he discussed Student G and their relationship at length, referring to her as a daughter.²⁷

8. Student H

In June 2016, Student H graduated from MHS, and from 2018 to 2020, she worked at Andromeda. The text messages SCI received from ADA Baldwin date back to only August 2018, however, it is clear that by then, Von Hoppe was already spending time with Student H. From Von Hoppe's texts, investigators confirmed that Von Hoppe's relationship with Student H extended beyond that of a teacher and a former student.

Investigators counted at least 12 times that, in his texts to the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe referenced playing tennis with Student H, and another 30 times that they spent personal time together. He also discussed vacationing with Student H, going to the beach and hiking Mount Beacon together, spending time with her family at her home, dining out together at restaurants, and sailing. Von Hoppe performed more mundane activities with Student H as well, taking her to the dentist and tutoring her at his house. In one text, he even told the DANY defendant that Student H and Student F were going to

²⁶ Sent on September 5, 2020.

²⁷ Sent on August 22, 2020.

clean his apartment.²⁸ Their relationship, however, was not limited to just time spent together; in addition to dinners, Von Hoppe purchased Student H numerous items including a bike, a bike helmet, a phone case – he even paid a deposit for her apartment. Von Hoppe also asked the DANY defendant to give Student H a pay raise for her role at Andromeda. After the DANY defendant declined this request, Von Hoppe told the DANY defendant that he would provide his own money to cover her pay raise so that she could earn more money. Notably, Student H possessed keys to Von Hoppe’s house and car.

While he called himself a father and brother figure to Student H in several texts to the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe also stated that he was attracted to her and that his relationship with her was different from the one that he shared with his daughter.²⁹ Indicative of their close relationship was Von Hoppe’s substantial knowledge of Student H’s personal life and her boyfriend, who, according to Von Hoppe, was once jealous of Student H and Von Hoppe’s closeness.³⁰ Von Hoppe frequently contemplated his feelings for Student H, asserting to the DANY defendant that he must protect himself emotionally because Student H was not interested in him. In one series of texts, he debated confessing that he had feelings for her, writing:

“I’m Going to admit to [Student H] this week that I like her personality and caring and quick mind so much, and I’m trying hard not to get a crush on her. We have been speaking and laughing so much this week. It’s kind of confusing that she doesn’t see the value and connection in that. [Student H] must be forcefully looking away from the success we have together. Our chemistry is there. We get a lot done and have fun together. These women are definitely crazy. They make up excuses when they have something perfect right in front of their eyes.”³¹

Additionally, in another message, in which he also references a nine-day trip in Vermont, Von Hoppe acknowledged that he was “emotionally involved” with Student H, asserting that it was “definitely not normal.”³² He once went as far as to say they “belong together.”³³ At certain points throughout the three years that Von Hoppe and the DANY defendant texted, Von Hoppe seemed to accept that Student H was not interested and wanted only to spend time and talk with him. Nonetheless, Von Hoppe still sent numerous inappropriate messages about Student H, including that he found her age to be “perfect,” and that he was attracted to Student H, “despite her skinny body,” calling his interest “emotional and verbal.”³⁴ He also criticized his wife’s body, then stated he was “ready for small and firm,” and launched into a discussion of his admiration of Student H and Student F’s appearances. Von Hoppe made jokes to the DANY defendant about Student H that carried sexual undertones, for example, after Von Hoppe underwent surgery, the DANY defendant texted Von Hoppe that he should have Student H and Student F

²⁸ Sent on January 4, 2020.

²⁹ Sent on June 29, 2020.

³⁰ Sent on July 24, 2020.

³¹ Sent on May 28, 2021.

³² Sent on September 29, 2020.

³³ Sent on March 2, 2021.

³⁴ On December 24, 2020, Von Hoppe commented to the DANY defendant about Student H’s age, and on March 18, 2021, he remarked about her body.

bath him, to which Von Hoppe responded “Please, please make that happen.”³⁵ Another time, Von Hoppe texted that he had numerous nicknames for Student H, including “mistress or master.”³⁶ Once, Von Hoppe wrote that spending three days with Student H brought his “sex drive” back.

9. Student I

While Von Hoppe did not communicate with Student I via his personal cell phone, as indicated by the phone records obtained by investigators, he contacted her about a job at Andromeda in 2018. A 2016 graduate of MHS, Student I was mentioned by Von Hoppe in texts, one of which read, “One of the most beautiful college students I’ve ever met is an accounting student at St. John’s and I’m going to email [Student I] your info. She’s [Student A]’s friend... Drop dead stunning and Even better personality.”³⁷

10. Student J

After Student J, now 23 years old, graduated from MHS in 2019, Von Hoppe established a relationship with her, facilitating Student J’s work at Andromeda in 2021. That year, Von Hoppe and Student J texted three times and called one another 10 times.

Von Hoppe indicated that, like many of his other female students, he found Student J attractive. One text message he sent read, “Texting [Student B] and [Student J]. Lots of fun. [Student J] is my student at Binghamton. She’s twice as smart, conservative but quite attractive to me.”³⁸

11. Student K, Student L, and Student M

Student K, 27-years-old, Student L, 23-years-old, and Student M, 25-years-old, all worked at Andromeda, obtaining their jobs there through Von Hoppe. Both Student K and Student L worked at Andromeda in 2018, while Student M started there in December 2019.³⁹ Although Student K did not attend MHS, having met Von Hoppe through her sister, Student E, both Student L and Student M did. Neither Student K nor Student L’s phone numbers appeared in Von Hoppe’s phone records. Conversely, Von Hoppe engaged in extensive communication with Student M, starting right around when she graduated from MHS in 2017: MHS held its graduation ceremony during the week of June 20th, and on June 16, 2017, Von Hoppe and Student M began placing phone calls to each other. In total, Von Hoppe and Student M texted 145 times and called nearly 650 times.

³⁵ Sent on March 15, 2021.

³⁶ Sent on June 2, 2021.

³⁷ Sent on August 10, 2018.

³⁸ Sent on July 25, 2021.

³⁹ In a text to the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe stated that Student L was interested in a position at Andromeda. Interestingly, Von Hoppe attempted to remind the DANY defendant of who Student L was by revealing that the DANY defendant and Student L once spent time together playing tennis.

II. Conclusion & Recommendation:

Based on the facts stated above, SCI substantiated that Teacher Douglas Von Hoppe engaged in patterned behavior that is unfit and beyond any standard of appropriate behavior for a DOE teacher. In the most egregious cases, involving Student A, Student B, Student G, and Student H, Von Hoppe engaged in inappropriate relationships with these young women while they were still MHS students. Furthermore, in 2021, when investigators questioned Von Hoppe in relation to allegations that he had an inappropriate relationship with Student G, he admitted only to taking Student G to an art show while she was a student. He made no mention of the extensive phone communications they engaged in, the tennis sessions he organized for them, or the tutoring sessions Student G attended at Von Hoppe's residence – unsupervised save for the other former students he had invited. Von Hoppe minimized the scope of his relationship with Student G, and through his lack of transparency, he deliberately misled investigators in a prior investigation about his relationship with Student G.

Despite Student B misleading investigators about her phone communications with Von Hoppe, which itself is indicative that Von Hoppe's behavior was outside the norm for a teacher, investigators obtained phone records that proved Von Hoppe opened a personal line of communication with her prior to her high school graduation. Although his texts with the DANY defendant describing the crush Student B allegedly had on him and their flirtatious conversations were sent after Student B's high school graduation, their extensive phone communications show that Von Hoppe integrated himself into her life while she was still his student, and it seems highly unlikely that his self-admitted attraction to Student B started only after she graduated from high school. In another instance of wanton disregard for professional boundaries, Von Hoppe started a group chat with Student H and other students ostensibly to facilitate playing tennis after school.⁴⁰ Additionally, it is clear that Student A and Von Hoppe had a relationship beyond that of a student and teacher while she still attended MHS – by his own admission, Von Hoppe stated that they became close in 2015, and that by 2016, his wife was suspicious of Student A.⁴¹

From his texts with his best friend, and the statements of ██████████, it is clear that Von Hoppe chose to spend time, both during school and outside of school hours, with a specific demographic to which he was attracted – young, Asian women. Per ██████████ Von Hoppe selected a group of students to work with him in the library who fit his preferences. He then established relationships with these students, and he ingratiated himself into their lives, as well as their family's lives, befriending parents and sisters and securing jobs for them at Andromeda. In some cases, like with Student I, Von Hoppe seemed to remember students he found most attractive and used employment opportunities as a guise to reconnect with them. Even more troubling, in the case of Student M, it appears that he waited until she was nearly graduated to insert himself into her life, as indicated by phone records.

⁴⁰ In one text to the DANY defendant, Von Hoppe mentions them splitting the cost to play with some of his former students. On many other occasions, Von Hoppe did not mention paying for the court time but displayed clear authority in organizing the tennis sessions.

⁴¹ SCI was able to obtain records of Von Hoppe's text messages from T-Mobile dating back to only 2021, therefore, investigators were unable to verify Student H's statements regarding alleged group messages, or whether Von Hoppe's personal phone communications were limited to just these group messages while Student H was a MHS student.

These young women trusted Von Hoppe, however, despite his claims that his intentions were innocent, in private, he expressed a desire for these relationships to grow into something more than friendships. He frequently discussed his former students' appearances, their physical attributes, and their personal romantic relationships, and he commented that one student brought back his "sex drive" and alluded to another causing him to have an erection.⁴² Von Hoppe's actions were grossly unprofessional, predatory, and manipulative, and his role as a high school teacher provided him with an endless pool from which to carefully select young women with whom he wanted to pursue relationships. Therefore, the DOE should terminate Von Hoppe's employment, and assign a problem code to his personnel file so that this matter be considered should he seek future employment with the DOE, with any of its vendors, or within any of its facilities.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Douglas Von Hoppe or the recommendations made herein. We are sending a copy of this letter to the DOE Office of Legal Services. We are also sending a copy of this letter to the New York State Department of Education for whatever action they deem appropriate. Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact me at (212) 510-1418 or DSchlachet@nycsci.org.

Sincerely,

ANASTASIA COLEMAN
Special Commissioner of Investigation
for the New York City School District

By: /s/ Daniel I. Schlachet
Daniel I. Schlachet
First Deputy Commissioner

AC:DS:cl

cc: Elizabeth Vladeck, Esq.
Karen Antoine, Esq.
Katherine Rodi, Esq.
Monica Davis-Thorne, Director

⁴² Between March 25, 2021 and March 28, 2021, Von Hoppe sent several messages to the DANY defendant discussing his recovery post-surgery and it was during this exchange that Von Hoppe mentioned that a former student caused him to become aroused. Later, on July 5, 2021, Von Hoppe sent the DANY defendant a message discussing his "sex drive."