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Veterans target teacher who stomped on flag

'Grotesque ... misjudgment' should cost instructor his job, board told

By TIM FLACH

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Military veterans demanded the dismissal Monday of a Chapin High teacher who stomped on the U.S. flag as part of a lesson.

The incident is "the height of disrespect" to America, Navy veteran Michael Copeland told the Lexington-Richland 5 school board.

Teacher Scott Compton — on leave with pay — has until Jan. 24 to appeal the termination recommended by superintendent Stephen Hefner.

The final decision is up to the seven-member school board. Chairman Robert Gantt said Monday no action can be taken unless an appeal is made.

Compton is under fire for taking a flag off the wall and stomping on it during three honors English classes in mid-December. The incident has attracted national attention.

Compton's lawyer, Darryl Smalls, has said his client's action was in no way intentionally disrespectful but part of a lesson on symbolism, trying to show America is greater than its national emblem.

But others at Monday's meeting disagreed.

Compton's action is "contemptible and disgusting," Scot Sheely of Irmo told the board.

Linda Larsson-Wheeler also condemned what Compton did as "a grotesque display of misjudgment."

Hefner recommended the firing after complaints from parents and veterans.

But Smalls said school officials overreacted.

No one defended Compton before Monday's board meeting. He has taught at Chapin High for seven years, officials said.

Representatives of the local chapter of the American Legion recommended that a flag disposal ceremony be held at the school.

"It would bring closure to this awful incident," said military



Tom Fincher, a retired U.S. Army colonel who served two tours of duty in Vietnam, speaks against the actions of Chapin High School teacher Scott Compton during a Lexington-Richland School District Five Board of Trustees meeting. The teacher allegedly threw down the American flag and stomped on it in front of his classes.

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Linda Larsson-Wheeler speaks against the actions of Chapin High School teacher Scott Compton during a Lexington-Richland School District Five Board of Trustees meeting. The teacher allegedly threw down the American flag and stomped on it in front of his classes.

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veteran Tom Fincher, a spokesman for the group. “It is not a piece of cloth — it is in the marrow in our bones and planted in our hearts.”

That idea quickly drew support from board member Kim Murphy, who said it would “place the remedy back where it all began.”

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