

Sex scandal: Richmond school officer placed on leave

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RICHMOND -- A Richmond police school resource officer has been placed on leave as an investigation of officers who allegedly had sex with a teenager appears to change course.

Chief Allwyn Brown, in an email sent to city leaders, said Officer Jerred Tong was placed on paid administrative leave on Thursday, pending the outcome of an investigation. He had already been reassigned from school duty.

"We understand the heightened anxiety that many are experiencing, and we're working hard to move things along as quickly as we can," Brown wrote.

Five Richmond officers have been named in the probe, but Tong is the first Richmond officer to be relieved of duty as part of the ever-widening sexual misconduct scandal involving a woman who goes by the name Celeste Guap. Guap has claimed to have sex with about 30 officers in various Bay Area police departments, some while she was underage, which would be a crime, and with others who gave her confidential information or paid her.

The first hints of the sex scandal came to light in a suicide note left by Oakland police Officer Brendan O'Brien, who fatally shot himself in September not long after Guap said she threatened to expose their relationship to police officials.

The Richmond woman has named Tong and four other officers who work in her hometown, claiming they had sex with her after she turned 18.

Brown, who has known about Guap's claims for at least three weeks, did not explain his decision. He previously said that the officers had not engaged in criminal behavior because the woman was 18 when the liaisons occurred. Top Richmond officials also said none of the five officers would be put on leave unless new information surfaced, despite calls from a prominent organization and politician to do so.

Those calls continued Friday.

Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia said Richmond's handling of the sexual misconduct investigation has run contrary to police agencies in Oakland, Livermore and Contra Costa County. All three have placed officers implicated in the sexual misconduct scandal on leave. An Alameda County District Attorney inspector was fired Thursday for allegedly exchanging inappropriate messages with Guap.

"There have a number of officers publicly named," said Gioia, who represents West Contra Costa. "To maintain public trust it is important to place the officers on leave. Having trust between the community and law enforcement is important for the success of law enforcement and for public safety."

"From our vantage point, they should have taken swifter action," said Kimberly Aceves, executive director of the RYSE Youth Center. "We are still waiting to hear a public statement that this is not tolerated in our community, it's not tolerated in our schools."

On July 1, RYSE sent out a statement calling for the department to reassign Tong and Officer Terrance Jackson, who worked at De Anza High School when Guap was a student there a few years ago. The next day, Mayor Tom Butt announced in an online post that Lt. Andre Hill was removed from his assignment as a manager over the Youth and Special Services Division, and Tong was removed as a resource officer at Lovonya DeJean Middle School.

Tong also voluntarily stepped down from his duty advising youths in the police department's Explorers program, Butt said. Guap has also claimed to have had sex with Richmond Sgts. Armando Moreno and Mike Rood.

Councilwoman Jovanka Beckles said that putting officers on paid leave was tantamount to a paid vacation for violating department policy, an opinion shared by Councilman Nat Bates.

"We need all of our staff people fully in uniform," Bates said earlier this week, before Tong was put on leave. "If you put them on paid leave, you're looking at overtime and it's a waste of taxpayer money."

Staff writer Karina Ioffe contributed to this report. David DeBolt covers Oakland. Contact him at 510-208-6453. Follow him at [Twitter.com/daviddebolt](https://twitter.com/daviddebolt).