**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Roosevelt boys basketball team statement**

**MINNEAPOLIS –** In response to attention a recent game is receiving, the Roosevelt High School boys basketball team released the following statement:

We’re really surprised by all the attention this is getting, but appreciate that Coach Walker started the discussion.

The issue is what our President represents to many people of color, whether that’s what the Jordan fans knew or not. Looking back, we now wish we had the opportunity to talk to the Jordan players about what that banner represents to us here at Roosevelt. Then we could also tell them why we stay in the locker room during the National Anthem. The protest of the anthem and the lack of handshaking (we don’t do that in our conference) in pregame were not meant to be disrespectful. We get that that’s hard for some people to understand. The only way we can help each other understand is through a dialogue.

This all comes down to people trying to see one another’s point of view—and we’re coming from a place that recognizes a history of oppression for people of color in the U.S. As young people, it’s our job to bridge the divide and make the world a better place, a safer place, for every person, no matter their color or culture. We mean no harm toward Jordan or its fans, and we hope they will stand with us for change.

Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent Ed Graff released this statement:

As a school district, we support positive action that creates space for conversation and understanding among people with diverse viewpoints. Part of our role is to help our students learn how to actively engage in civic conversations—that is what education is all about.

Like we’ve said before, one of MPS’s priorities is giving students skills for critical thinking, building positive relationships, hearing diverse views and problem-solving in challenging situations. MPS hopes and expects that all people—especially our students and staff—find ways to collaborate and approach one another in a respectful manner, even when they disagree. These are the conversations we need to be having, and that have already begun with the Jordan school district.

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