



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARATHON

204 EAST STREET • MARATHON WI • 54448-0037 • (715) 443-2226

December 5, 2011

Richard T. Parks
Administrator

David Beranek
HS Principal

Jeff Reiche
ES/MS Principal

Mr. Patrick Elliott, Atty.
Freedom From Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, WI 53701

Re: Correspondence of Nov. 17, 2011

Dear Mr. Elliott:

I am in receipt of your letter dated November 17, 2011, pertaining to the Veterans Day program held at our Marathon Area Elementary School on November 11, 2011. In your letter you stated that a concerned parent objected to the School District holding an event where a prayer was included.

Our local Veterans, members of American Legion Post 469, contacted the School District about holding their Veterans Day program at the school. This offers their Post an opportunity to hold a Veterans Day program where teachers, students, parents and community members can attend if they wish. Our staff and students typically do attend and in the event anyone asks to be excused for their personal reasons, it would always be honored. This was not a Veterans Day assembly organized and sponsored by the School District.

Regardless, I too see your organization's concern about the invocation and closing prayer listed on their program. I also understand that though we do not sponsor the program, we do allow for our local Veterans to offer the program, and therefore should review the program content prior to the event. I apologize that this did not occur and was not addressed before the event.

I have already contacted our school district principals to inform them that they will need to review all programs provided by outside groups to assure that we do not have a situation similar to this occur in the future when student attendance will be expected. In addition, I have also contacted the Post 469 Commander to make him aware of this concern and your correspondence. He will be taking the necessary steps within his Post to discuss and address your concern.

Sincerely,

Richard Parks
District Administrator

Cc: Jeff Reiche, MAES/MVA Principal
Dave Beranek, MHS Principal
William Buttke, Post 469 Commander
Dean Dietrich, Attorney Ruder Ware

