

SEP 11 2017



Daniel Harper, General Counsel- Legal Services
9361 S. 300 East Sandy, UT 84070
T: 801-826-5061 | F: 801-826-5098 | Daniel.Harper@canyonsdistrict.org

September 7, 2017

Freedom from Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Christopher Line,

Thank you for your letter dated August 30, 2017, regarding a student being forced to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance. It was reported that Maureen Howe told a student to be respectful and stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. When Ms. Howe was called to Greg Leavitt's, the Hillcrest High School principal, office, she admitted making that statement to one of her students. In addition, the student was subsequently sent to the office, but not for refusing to stand during the Pledge of Allegiance. Instead, the student was sent to the office for not wearing any shoes, which is a violation of the school's dress code.

Principal Leavitt retrained Ms. Howe that although state statute and state board of education regulation requires the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, "participation in the Pledge of Allegiance is voluntary and not compulsory." Utah Code 53A-3-101.6(3)(d)(1)(A) and R277-475-5(C)(1). In addition, Ms. Howe was retrained that state statute and state board of education regulation also provides that "not only is it acceptable for someone to choose not to participate in the pledge of allegiance for religious or other reasons, but students should show respect for any student who chooses not to participate." Utah Code 53A-3-101.6(3)(d)(1)(B) and R277-475-5(C)(2) & (3). Teachers need to teach students to show respect for any student who chooses not to participate by modeling that respect themselves. Ms. Howe has indicated that she will not require students to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance in the future. Principal Leavitt has sent out an email to all of the teachers at Hillcrest High School reviewing Utah law regarding the Pledge of Allegiance.

Thank you again for your letter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Harper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Harper
General Counsel

cc. Superintendent Jim Briscoe/Principal Gregory Leavitt