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August 30, 2019

VIA U.S. MAIL AND EMAIL (chris@ffrf.org)

Christopher Line
Patrick O'Reiley Legal Fellow
Freedom From Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, Wisconsin 53701

RE: Response to Inquiry Regarding the School Chaplaincy Program

Dear Mr. Line:

This letter responds to your June 28, 2019 correspondence regarding the Fresno Police Department's School Chaplaincy Program. The Fresno Unified School District ("District") and the Fresno Police Department have been working together to find new and innovative ways to provide social and emotional supports to the City of Fresno's earliest learners. To that end, the District and the Fresno Police Department have established the Resilience in Student Education ("RISE") Mentorship Program which will replace the School Chaplaincy Program.

The RISE Mentorship Program will provide age appropriate curriculum around resiliency, coping with bullying and impulse control. The lessons taught by the RISE Mentorship Program are completely secular and reflect approved curriculum aligned with the state's and District's course framework.

Staffing for the RISE Mentorship Program is provided by Fresno Police Department volunteers and the District's payments for the program will go to the Fresno Police Department. There is no requirement that RISE Mentors have any religious affiliation, and the motivations for volunteering to support the young school-age children of this community are entirely personal to the volunteers. The District respects the individual motivations of the RISE Mentors and acknowledges that everyone has a right to their own personal beliefs as to why they choose to give back to our students.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.
Superintendent