

APR 11 2016

James A. Garfield Local Schools

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Ted A. Lysiak, Superintendent

Tracy L. Knauer, Treasurer

April 7, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Jayne:

I am in receipt of your letter of March 30, 2016.

Prior to receiving your letter, we received a parental complaint regarding a concern that Mr. Walker was teaching intelligent design and had crosses in his room.

The next day the parent, teacher and the Principal met to discuss the concerns. It was explained that Mr. Walker did not endorse any particular religion and it was agreed that Mr. Walker would no longer teach intelligent design and the science involved in it.

To my knowledge, since that date, Mr. Walker has followed Board Policy regarding his method(s) of teaching. Enclosed please find a copy of Board Policy 2270 RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM.

If you have any further questions or concerns please address them to our legal counsel: Mr. Leigh Herington at Reitz, Paul and Shorr, 215 West Garfield Road, Aurora, OH 44202. Mr. Herington is well versed on this matter.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,



Ted A. Lysiak
Superintendent

Enclosure

RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM

Based on the First Amendment protection against the establishment of religion in the schools, no Board employee will promote religion in the classroom or in the District's curriculum, or compel or pressure any student to participate in devotional exercises. Displays of a religious character must conform with Policy 8800 and AG 8800 A-C. Instructional activities shall not be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religion or religion generally.

An understanding of religions and their effects on civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, curriculum may include as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the students, instruction about the religions of the world.

The Board acknowledges the degree to which a religious consciousness has permeated the arts, literature, music, and issues of morality. The instructional and resource materials approved for use in the District's schools frequently contain religious references or concern moral issues that have traditionally been the focus of religious concern. That such materials may be religious in nature shall not, by itself, bar their use in the District. The Board directs that professional staff members employing such materials be neutral in their approach and avoid using them to advance or inhibit religion in any way.

The Board recognizes that religious traditions vary in their perceptions and doctrines regarding the natural world and its processes. The curriculum is chosen for its place in the education of the District's students, not for its conformity to religious principles. Students should receive unbiased instruction in the schools so they may privately accept or reject the knowledge thus gained, in accordance with their own religious tenets.

Accordingly, no student shall be exempted from attendance in a required course of study on the grounds that the instruction therein interferes with the free exercise of his/her religion. However, if after careful, personal review of the program's lessons and/or materials, a parent indicates to the school that either the content or activities conflict with his/her religious beliefs or value system, the school will honor a written request for his/her child to be excused from a particular class period for specified reasons. The student will be provided with alternate learning activities during the times of such parent requested absence.