

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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January 23, 2017

SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL:
jperkoski@robbins-schwartz.com

Joseph Perkoski, Esq.
Robbins Schwartz
55 West Monroe, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60603-5144

Re: OPRF high school gospel choir

Dear Mr. Perkoski:


I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. We are in receipt of your letter dated January 19, 2017, regarding the gospel choir at Oak Park and River Forest High School.

Thank you for clarifying that the gospel choir is an extra-curricular student club, and for assuring us that the District will “ensure alignment with the guidelines and limitations set forth in Section (c) of the Equal Access Act [20 U.S.C. § 4071].”

We write again only to seek clarification that District staff will not direct or participate in gospel choir activities, as required by Section (c)(3) of the Equal Access Act (“employees or agents of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a nonparticipatory capacity.”). The gospel choir must be not only student-initiated, but also entirely student-run. Since Latonia Jackson has violated this provision in the past, we urge the District to provide the gospel choir with a new faculty sponsor who can be trusted not to participate in the religious student club.

If the District provides assurances that no District staff will participate in the OPRF gospel choir in the future, FFRF will consider this matter resolved.

Sincerely,



Ryan D. Jayne, Esq.
Elaine & Eric Stone Legal Fellow
Freedom From Religion Foundation