

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 · MADISON, WI 53701 · (608) 256-8900 · WWW.FFRF.ORG

December 9, 2016

**SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL:
luebker@osceolak12.org**

Mr. Mark Luebker
Superintendent
Osceola School District
331 Middle School Drive
Osceola, WI 54020

Re: Religious radio in school front office

Dear Superintendent Luebker:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to alert you to constitutional concerns regarding a school in your District playing a religious radio station to students and parents. FFRF is a Madison-based national nonprofit organization with nearly 25,000 members across the country, including more than 1,300 members in Wisconsin. FFRF's purpose is to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church.

A concerned District community member contacted us to report that a radio in the front office of Osceola Intermediate School regularly plays a Christian radio station loudly enough for visitors to identify it as St. Paul radio station 98.5 KTIS. We understand that this front office often has students and parents present throughout the day.

98.5 KTIS describes itself as a "ministry" that "communicat[es] God's message in the Twin Cities" in order "to lead people to Christ and nurture believers in their faith through Christ-centered media."¹ In addition to Christian music, the station promotes "biblical worldviews"² and features segments on "Growing In Faith" and "Sharing Your Faith."³

The Osceola School District must ensure that evangelical religious broadcasts like 98.5 KTIS are not being played to students and parents who must visit their school's front office for school purposes.

¹ <http://myktis.com/who-we-are/>.

² <http://myktis.com/programs/ktis-morning-show/>.

³ <http://myktis.com/> ("Articles" drop-down menu).

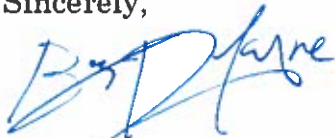
It is well settled that public schools may not advance or endorse religion. *See generally Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38 (1985); *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97 (1967); *Sch. Dist. of Abington Twp. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).

District employees may not promote Christian or other religious messages to students or parents. “[S]chool sponsorship of a religious message is impermissible because it sends the ancillary message to members of the audience who are nonadherents ‘that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community.’” *Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290, 309–10 (2000). When an agent of the school district promotes Christianity, it alienates non-Christian students and parents.

Students in their school’s front office are a captive audience and cannot avoid listening to broadcasts that front office staff select. Given the content of the programming and its proselytizing nature, young and impressionable students cannot be forced to listen to such programs.

We request that you inform appropriate staff members that they may not play 98.5 KTIS or other religious programming while students or parents are present. Please inform us promptly in writing of the steps taken to remedy this violation and protect the rights of conscience of your students.

Sincerely,



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