

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

January 20, 2017

SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL:
bschneider@warrick.k12.in.us

Mr. Brad Schneider
Superintendent
Warrick County School Corporation
300 East Gum Street
Boonville, IN 47601

Re: Religious Flyers

Dear Superintendent Schneider:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) regarding Yankeetown Elementary School's policy of distributing religious flyers. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 26,000 members across the country, including many members in Indiana. 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 staff at Yankeetown Elementary School distributed a flyer promoting "Pop Girls" to female third- and fourth-grade students earlier this school year. The flyer describes Pop Girls as a Christian ministry that promotes "the wisdom of Christ" and "cultivates girls," meaning converting them to Christianity. The ministry's website reveals that its lessons of "purity" to young students include homophobic and anti-transgender views.¹ An image of this flyer is enclosed for your review.

Public elementary schools should not be used as religious recruiting grounds, nor should they take part in promoting divisive and intolerant views. Certainly you would agree that public schools should strive to be welcoming and inclusive to *all* students, regardless of their religion, including members of the LGBT community. We write to encourage the District to amend its flyer policy. The simplest solution would be to prohibit all third-party take-home flyers. At a minimum, the District should require that all flyers include disclaimers and prohibit flyers that promote discrimination.

¹ See poppopgirls.org/StatementofFaith (stating that homosexual behavior is "sinful" and that rejection of one's biological sex "is a rejection of the image of God within that person.").

The practice of distributing religious flyers by public schools is objectionable on many different grounds. First, school-sponsored distributions of religious material carry the stamp of official endorsement. Certainly, small children are apt to confuse official school notices with religious propaganda. Second, even if the school disassociates itself from the religious activity through a disclaimer, which was not included in this instance, the distribution of literature for religious organizations and activities wastes the time and resources of paid school personnel, while depriving students of instruction. Policies that allow these third parties to distribute their literature forces teachers of diverse views and beliefs to distribute religious promotional materials. It also offends or confuses parents already burdened with school forms and paperwork about what is and is not school-sanctioned. We have taken complaints in some school districts that non-English speaking parents have assumed their children had to participate in religious events.

This sort of entanglement between religion and public schools is inappropriate. Many enlightened school districts across the country have sought to avoid this entanglement by prohibiting third parties from using the take-home flyer system altogether. We respectfully request that you amend your take-home flyer policy to restrict this invaluable and time-consuming service to school-sponsored or co-sponsored events. If the District is unwilling to make this change, the District should require that all third-party flyers include disclaimers and adopt an anti-discrimination policy that prohibits flyers promoting a message of discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

We ask that you inform us at your earliest convenience, in writing, of the steps you are taking to remedy this matter so that we may notify our local complainant.

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

PURITY • MODESTY • BULLYING • MEDIA • HYGIENE • BODY IMAGE • FRIENDSHIP

POP Girls



Cultivating Girls 4 Him

PEARLS OF PURITY

Girls 3rd - 4th Grade & Parents

STARTING IN
JANUARY 2017

What is POP Girls?

POP Girls, officially Pearls of Purity, is a non-denominational Christian ministry for 3rd – 4th grade girls and her parents. Through life-lessons and the wisdom of Christ, Pearls of Purity cultivates girls and their families living in this challenging culture to live a pure life in body, mind, and heart. We have over 50 Life-Lesson Topics for parents and girls!

PARENTS • 3rd-4th Grade • FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017
6:00 - 8:00 p.m. every month, Location TBD,
Led by Chandra Maxheimer

Parents hear firsthand the life-lesson their daughter will hear plus ponder how the topic affects their personal life as a parent and as an adult.

GIRLS • 3rd/4th Grade • JANUARY 12, 2017
6:00 - 7:30 p.m. every other week thru mid April
Led by Tami Tenbarge

Girls learn they have a community of like-minded friends who desire to live a pure life in body, mind, and heart for the Glory of God.

**Strings of
Pearls are
Starting
NOW in
Newburgh!**

Register Today!

Deadline is Dec. 26.

For more questions contact POP President, DeAnna Bennett @ 812-430-8135
www.popgirls.org • FB @pearlsofpurity • pearlsofpuritygirls@gmail.com

REGISTRATION AT WWW.POPGIRLS.ORG