

**SUPERINTENDENT/
PK-12 PRINCIPAL**
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ANIMAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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April 22, 2019

SENT VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL: Chris Line <chris@ffrf.org>

Christopher Line
Patrick O'Reiley Legal Fellow
Freedom From Religion Foundation
PO Box 750
Madison, WI 53701

Re: Unconstitutional Religious Promotion in Animas Public Schools

To: Christopher Line

I am the superintendent of the Animas Public Schools and I am writing in response to your letter dated April 4, 2019 regarding an alleged constitutional violation.

I attended the game in question. When I observed the players wearing the t-shirts during pregame warmup, I immediately questioned the coach and activity director. I was told that a local religious youth group had provided the t-shirts and the coach did hand them out to the team members a day or two prior to the game. I gave specific instructions at that time that this was not permissible and was not to happen again.

Although I had already addressed the issue of the t-shirts, upon receipt of your letter, I commenced a more formal investigation into each of your concerns with the following findings:

- Many of our students did wear the t-shirts in question while warming up prior to a basketball game on February 27.
- The t-shirts were provided by a local religious youth group and given to the students by the basketball coach.
- The administration, through me as superintendent, did address the situation and direct that it is not permissible for individuals to promote religion while serving in any capacity representing the school district.

It was also made clear that even if given by an outside organization, the team was not to wear the t-shirts (or any item) that could give the message of endorsement by the district.

- Although many of our students attend the local (religious) youth group, it is in no way sponsored or endorsed by the school district. It is my understanding that the coach often attended and at times lead the various activities, including Bible study or lessons.

The coach is not holding Bible studies for groups of players and/or other students separate from the youth group.

- The coach has submitted his resignation from the district.

We will address each of the areas of concern during our staff in-service training at the start of the next school year.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or through our counsel, Cuddy and McCarthy LLP, M. Karen Kilgore.

Sincerely,



Loren R. Cushman, Superintendent
lrcushman@animask12.net