

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

August 10, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL: ojhall@lcboe.net

Superintendent Otha J. Hall
Laurens County Schools
467 Firetower Rd.
Dublin, GA 31021

Re: Unconstitutional prayer walk event

Dear Superintendent Hall:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) regarding a constitutional violation that recently occurred in Laurens County Schools (“the District”). As the District may recall from past letters, FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with nearly 41,000 members across the country, including over 600 members in Georgia. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

A concerned student reports that the District organizes and promotes a “prayer walk” every year before the start of school. Per a promotional post from the District’s official Facebook account, this year’s prayer walks occurred on August 5th and 6th at each of the District’s schools. The flyer for the events invites students and families to:

Join us for a time of WORSHIP and PRAYER as we walk the halls of our campus and each school to pray over the staff and students who will enter these buildings.

Please see the enclosed screenshot of the post. The post and flyers heavily suggest that the prayer walks are organized and sponsored by the District itself. The flyers also include crosses, indicating that the prayer walks are specifically Christian events.

The student who contacted us further explained that:

I go to this school district because it is public, free, and doesn’t/shouldn’t officially endorse any religion. I constantly feel uncomfortable because I follow a spiritual path different from everybody else. I feel as though the staff, students, and community are showering me with negative energy from their Christian god, just because I happen to enter the school building . . . I just wish I could get my education without having religion shoved down my throat.

We write to request that the District immediately cease organizing, promoting, and encouraging attendance at this annual prayer walk and any other religious events, and ensure that all future school-sponsored events are entirely secular.

Public schools may not show favoritism toward or coerce belief or participation in religion. *See generally Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290 (2000); *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); *McCullum v. Bd. of Ed.*, 333 U.S. 203 (1948). Here, the District displayed blatant favoritism toward religion over nonreligion and Christianity over all other faiths by using official social media to invite the entire school community to participate in school-sponsored Christian prayer walks through each of the District's schools.

The District serves a diverse population that consists of not only Christian students, families, and employees, but also those who are nonreligious as well as members of minority faiths. When the District continually organizes, promotes, and invites students to participate in "WORSHIP and PRAYER" at an annual on-campus Christian event, it sends an exclusionary message to students who are non-Christians, such as our complainant. Thirty-eight percent of the American population is non-Christian, including the almost 30 percent who are nonreligious.¹ More than half of Generation Z (those born after 1996) is non-Christian, including 43 percent who are nonreligious.²

To comply with the First Amendment and protect students' constitutional rights, the Laurens County Schools must immediately cease organizing, promoting, and encouraging student attendance at prayer walks and any other religious events. All school-sponsored events must be secular going forward. Please respond in writing with the steps being taken to address this constitutional violation so that we may inform the student who contacted us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha F. Lawrence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Samantha" and last name "Lawrence" clearly legible.

Samantha F. Lawrence
Staff Attorney
Freedom From Religion Foundation

Enclosure

¹ Pew Research Center (2024), <http://bit.ly/3W6Cl3m>.

² Pew Research Center (2024), <http://bit.ly/48Drzce>.



Laurens County School District's post



Laurens County School District added 5 new photos — with Southwest Laurens Elementary School and 7 others.

AI content · 1d · 🌐

LCBOE PRAYER WALKS !!! 🙏📖

NORTHWEST LAURENS ELEMENTARY

Prayer WALK



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6TH
4:30 - 6:00
OPENING PRAYER AT 4:30

— ❤️ PRAYING FOR OUR SCHOOL ✝️ —

PRAYER Walk ✝️

LET'S COVER OUR SCHOOL, STUDENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY IN PRAYER.



THURSDAY AUGUST 6TH
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

PRAYER WALK

for Our School, Our Students, Our Future



AUGUST 5
6:00 PM

PRAYER Walk

Join us for a time of **WORSHIP** and **PRAYER** as we walk the halls of our campus and each school to pray over the staff and students who will enter these buildings.

COME TOGETHER TO PRAY
schools as a new year begins!

📍 **EAST LAURENS H**
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

— WEST LAURENS HIGH SCHOOL —

BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER WALK



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6TH
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
OPENING PRAYER IN THE COMMONS AREA AT 5:00 PM

— Pray Together. — Cover Our School. — Start the Year Strong.