

From: dwhite@retiredjudges.org
To: Jim Gardner
Subject: Draft letter to editor of Advocate
Date: 11-Sep-2012 16:17
Attachments: TEXT.htm [\[Save\]](#) [\[Open\]](#)
Mime.822 [\[Save\]](#) [\[Open\]](#)
Message Id: 504F641B.do1.po1.200.20000FD.1.1830E.1

Gentlemen:

Here is the text of a draft letter to editor for The Advocate. It could issue from any one of you. If Dr. Keith Holmes sends it, perhaps he could personalize same by adding a sentence that he appreciates the academic freedom that the policy should afford those who will teach his children.

When The Advocate recently covered the evolution academic freedom policy adopted by Central Community School System, the article suggested Louisiana's 2008 Science Education Act (LSEA) "opens the door to teaching creationism." It further quoted a critic of Central's policy stating it would "give the teachers in Central some cover for teaching creationism." Critics must not be reading the policies they attack—their arguments are refuted by the language of the LSEA and Central's new policy.

The LSEA clearly states it "shall not be construed to promote any religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion." If you promote religion in the classroom, you're not protected by the LSEA.

Central's new academic freedom policy is in complete agreement with the LSEA on this point. It aims to "help students understand, analyze, critique and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught." Like the LSEA, this language only protects the teaching of science, and in no way protects the teaching of religion.

Critics of academic freedom are trying to mislabel scientific critiques of evolution as "creationism" in a bid to censor from students the right to learn about current scientific controversies.

May I respectfully suggest that, when you post the Policy on Central's website, it might be helpful to be able to view the "Whereas" clauses such as Ouachita School Board did. Certainly it would facilitate better understanding on the part of other school district leaders as to why this action is justifiable. If you think that would clutter up your Policy directive, perhaps you could link to it under a "History and Justification" tab.

Judge Darrell White (Retired)

225 603-2544

On 9/11/2012 1:24 PM, Jim Gardner wrote:

> I will defer to Judge White on this. I think he should write the response if one is desire but your idea of it coming from a parent has a great deal of merit. I will wait till all respond.

> Jim Gardner

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: keithholmes@cox.net [mailto:keithholmes@cox.net]

> Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 8:45 AM

> To: Retired Judge Darrell White

> Cc: jgardner@centralcss.org

> Subject: Re: OPSB Science Education Policy Educators' Support Letter

>

> I am sure both of you have read the article in the Advocate regarding the approval of the science policy. I was just curious if you thought it might be beneficial or harmful for a rebuttal in the form of an Letter to the Editor. If so, would it be better for the letter to come from a parent, School Board member, or from Judge White?

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> I was thinking myself that a letter from a parent endorsing the idea of freedom of education might be helpful if getting traction to get Zachary and other local school systems on board as well. With a 6-0 vote by the Board, there was obviously no objection at that level which is why I thought a letter from a parent would be helpful.

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> Then again, saying nothing and letting it die so as to not stir controversy has it's merit as well. Curious to get your inputs.

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> Thanks again for leading Central to be at the forefront of this effort. I am very proud to have my children in the CCSS.

>

> Keith

> ---- Retired Judge Darrell White <dwhite@retiredjudges.org> wrote:

>> September 10, 2012

>>

>> MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Jim Gardner and Jim Lloyd

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>> SUBJECT: Ouachita Parish Science Curriculum Policy

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>> I understand that the Central Community School Board has an item on
>> tonight's agenda to consider adoption of subject Policy. Attached for
>> your review is a letter of support signed by Ouachita Parish School
>> Board (OPSB) Superintendent Bob Webber, Ph.D. and twenty (20) OPSB
>> science teachers attesting to the usefulness of the Ouachita Parish
>> School Board's Science Curriculum Policy adopted November 29, 2006:

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>>

>> [http://www.opsb.net/downloads/forms/Ouachita_Parish_Science_Curriculum
>> _Policy.pdf](http://www.opsb.net/downloads/forms/Ouachita_Parish_Science_Curriculum_Policy.pdf)

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>> Also attached is a letter from Alliance Defense Fund Senior Counsel,
>> Michael Johnson confirming the legal sufficiency of subject Policy.
>> Please let me know if I may be of further service to you or the
>> Central Community School Board.

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