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November 29, 2010

Mr. Patrick C. Elliot
Freedom From Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, Wisconsin 53701

Dear Mr. Elliot:

We represent Independent School District No. 116, Pillager Public Schools. This letter is in response to your correspondence, dated November 19, 2010, regarding the Veteran's Day Program and Graduation ceremonies at Pillager Public Schools. After reviewing your allegations, we disagree with many of the assertions contained your letter. However, it is the position of the Pillager Public Schools that there will be no prayers led by religious figures at school-sponsored events in the future.

Turning specifically to your allegations regarding the Veteran's Day Program, we disagree with your assertion that the inclusion of an invocation in the program, delivered by an individual with no affiliation with the School District, constitutes coercion or endorsement of religion by Pillager Public Schools. The case law you cite in your letter is, in our opinion, distinguishable on its facts. There is a significant difference between graduation ceremonies and the Veteran's Day Program you referenced in your letter, namely, that attendance or participation in the event, particularly the invocation, is not compelled, even in an implicit or subtle manner.

Next, your allegations regarding past graduation ceremonies are, in our opinion, without factual or legal support. You have provided no facts other than the assertion that it is your understanding that these events include a prayer that is "mostly Christian-based."

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As you requested, we have investigated your allegations. While we disagree with many of the assertions contained in your letter, in the future, school-sponsored events, including graduation ceremonies and Veteran's Day programs, will no longer include prayer led by religious figures.

Best regards,



Margaret A. Skelton
Tim A. Sullivan

cc: Superintendent Chuck Arns