



FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 750 • Madison WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • www.ffrf.org

September 17, 2007

Supt. Art Rainwater
Madison Metropolitan School District
545 W Dayton St
Madison WI 53703-1995

Dear Supt. Rainwater:

We have taken complaints about the distribution of overtly religious, Christian flyers via the MMSD and your hardworking staff. (See flyer enclosed) Most members of the community would be shocked to realize these were distributed courtesy of our public schools.

This practice is objectionable on so many counts. Teachers of diverse views and beliefs are forced to distribute a religious tract: "Plant the Seeds of Faith in Jesus in Your Child at our Sunday School." Small children are apt to confuse official school notices with religious propaganda. They are being targeted for recruitment—regardless of their background and parents' views—by churches taking advantage of overly broad District policy. Busy parents opening backpacks to review school papers are being assaulted with a religious message and invitation, "Don't Neglect the 3 R's: Religion, Relationships and Rejoicing!"

The pro forma disclaimer on flyers is virtually meaningless, because in fact the schools have been turned into ripe recruitment tools for churches and religious societies. The distribution of these flyers by overworked teachers is being subsidized by taxpayers. The District should not act as a PR machine for nonschool enterprises.

We and many parents in the community have objected for years to the District policy which makes teachers and aides conduits for every enterprise, religious or commercial, which seeks to sell itself to schoolchildren and their parents. Let these churches and groups do their own legwork: pay for advertising, leaflet neighborhoods, buy the available lists from the Department of Public Instruction.

It is my understanding that the typical elementary school teacher in our District probably passes out up to 100 flyers a week, which amounts to 4,500 and 5,000 flyers every year! This is on top of necessary paperwork for the District, not to mention all-important homework, notices to parents, etc. This is not only costly in dollar amounts, but it reduces instruction time and wears out (and undoubtedly often offends) your professional staff.

We formally ask, again, that the MMSD take-home flyer policy be amended to restrict this invaluable service to school-sponsored or co-sponsored events.

Sincerely
Annie Laurie Gaylor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Annie Laurie Gaylor".