

ABERNATHY  
ROEDER  
BOYD &  
JOPLIN P.C.

1700 Redburn Boulevard, Suite 300 - P.O. Box 1210 • McKinney, Texas 75070-1210  
Metro 214.544.4000 - Fax 214.544.4040

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

CHARLES J. CRAWFORD

ccrawford@abernathy-law.com  
Direct Dial 214.544.4009

October 12, 2011

VIA FACSIMILE: (606) 204-0422

Mr. Patrick Elliott  
Staff Attorney  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
P. O. Box 750  
Madison, WI 53701

Re: Seven Project Assembly at Byron Nelson High School

Dear Mr. Elliott:

This firm represents Northwest Independent School District. I write in response to your October 6, 2011 letter addressed to NWISD's Superintendent, Dr. Karen Rue, regarding the "Seven Project" assembly scheduled for October 12, 2011 at Byron Nelson High School. In your letter you state that "[g]iven the overtly religious nature of this program, Northwest ISD must refrain from hosting these types of assemblies." You also request that the District notify you in writing of the steps it has "taken to remedy this matter."

Although NWISD appreciates your concern that the District not violate the Establishment Clause, the assembly at Byron Nelson High School has a secular educational purpose that is consistent with the school's curriculum - - promoting good citizenship and character. This is not a religious program that gives the appearance that NWISD is endorsing or promoting a religious message. Simply because a presenter at a curriculum - based program has sincerely held religious beliefs is, in the District's view, insufficient to cancel the assembly and/or bar the presenter.

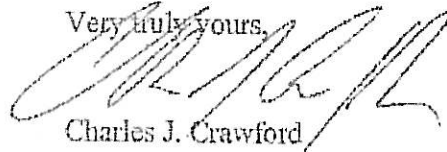
The District has done its due diligence and has confirmed with both the school's PTSA and with Youth Alive North Texas in writing that none of the information presented at the assembly is religious or faith based in any way and that there will be no religious proselytizing. Prior programs presented by the Seven Project within NWISD has further confirmed that the program is entirely secular and consistent with school district curriculum. Based on these written confirmations, the District does not believe the assembly poses the Establishment Clause concerns identified in your letter and therefore declines your request that the assembly be cancelled.

Mr. Patrick Elliott  
Page 2  
October 12, 2011

Notwithstanding the above, please be advised that the District intends to have an official present at the assembly who is authorized to step in and immediately stop any (unlikely) attempt by any presenter to cross the line and venture into religion or proselytizing. The District is taking this action to ensure that the Establishment Clause concerns in your letter do not arise at the assembly.

Again, the District appreciates your concerns and will monitor the assembly in an appropriate manner consistent with the Establishment Clause.

Very truly yours,



Charles J. Crawford

CJC/ea

cc: Dr. Karen Rue  
Linda Parker  
Richard Abernathy