



Brandon Young  
Frank A. Baker, P.A.  
204 N. Harvey Ethridge St.  
Bonifay, FL 32425

November 2, 2007

VIA U.S. Mail & Email:  
brandonjyoung@embarqmail.com

**Re: Request for Clarification of the School Board of Holmes  
Co.'s Policies on Pro-Gay Expression and Clothing**

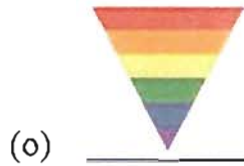
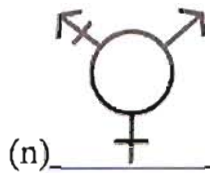
Dear Mr. Young:

We represent Heather Gillman and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was recently suspended for five days for reasons related to her support for gay rights. Based on Ponce de Leon High School Principal David Davis's explanation to [REDACTED] and her parents as to the reason she was suspended and the telephone conversation that you and I and my colleague Robert Rosenwald had on September 25, 2007, it is our understanding that under the policies of the Holmes County School Board, ("School Board") pro-gay speech is considered inherently disruptive and/or inappropriate for the school environment. For example, you mentioned in our Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> conversation that the School Board considers pro-gay speech as similar or equivalent to a confederate flag, and thus may be prohibited as a matter of course. It is on this basis, we understand, that the School Board refused to overturn Principal Davis' suspension of [REDACTED].

We disagree with your and Principal Davis' assessment of the students' rights to express pro-gay messages. [REDACTED] and Heather continue to care about gay and lesbian equality and they want to express their beliefs at school. They would like to express themselves without being punished again, however, so your guidance is appreciated. We seek permission for and on behalf of [REDACTED] and Heather to express themselves through the following phrases, symbols, or images (1) printed on a T-shirt, belt, armband, button, bracelet, or another article of clothing or accessory, (2) written, tattooed, or drawn on their arms, bodies, personal notebooks, or other un-graded, personal class materials, or (3) affixed as a sticker to personal notebooks or other un-graded, personal class material:

- "Gay Pride" or "GP"
- "Gay? Fine by Me!"
- "I'm Straight, but I vote Pro-Gay"

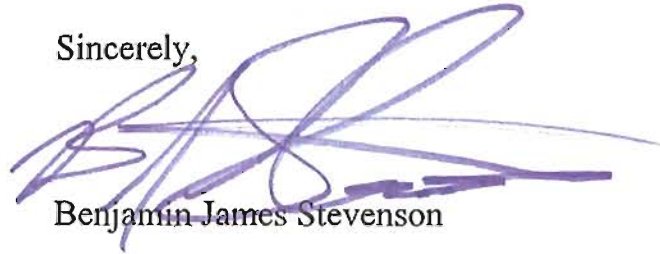
"I Support Equal Marriage Rights"  
 "Equal, Not Special Rights"  
 "God Loves Me Just the Way I Am" (in rainbow colors or in a rainbow)  
 "Pro-Gay Marriage"  
 "Sexual Orientation is Not a Choice. Religion, However, Is."  
 A rainbow in the shape of an arch or flag  
 A triangle with one corner at the bottom, rainbow or pink colored  
 A pink armband or an armband with a triangle on it  
 "I Support My Gay Friends"  
 "I Support Gays"



Please advise which of the above forms of expressions may be prohibited as a matter of course under the School Board policies, and if any or all of them are not absolutely prohibited, the reasons behind that assessment. We would appreciate receiving your written response on or before November 16, 2007, so that we may properly advise our clients regarding the specific forms of expression for which they may be reprimanded or punished. If we do not receive a timely response, we will understand that the general prohibition of pro-gay expression under the School Board's policies applies to each specific example above, and we will proceed accordingly.

Please contact me directly at 786.363.2738, if you wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin James Stevenson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Benjamin James Stevenson

cc: Rickey D. Callahan, Vice-Chairman, District 1 (via email)  
Gary Scott, District 2 (via email)  
Jason Motley, District 3 (via email)  
Anthony Register, Chairman, District 4 (via email)  
Vernon Lewis, District 5 (via email)  
Steve Griffin, Superintendent (via email & U.S. Mail)