

April 15, 2013

VIA U.S. MAIL & EMAIL (harrisc@bay.k12.fl.us)

Sandra Harrison, Principal
A. Crawford Mosley High School
501 Mosley Drive
Lynn Haven, Florida 32444

RE: Teaching Creationism in Biology

Dear Ms. Harrison:

Chris Martello teaches tenth grade biology at A. Crawford Mosley High School. As part of his instruction on evolution, he presents a critique of it. During class he has shown to the students videos by Creation Science Evangelism, including "Creation Minute Episode 4: Six Types of Evolution,"¹ which suggests that evolution may not be "part of science." Such promotion of creationism in the public schools, whether directly or under the guise of academic freedom or presentation of "alternative" theories, is unlawful.

A classroom is not a platform for teachers to advance personal religious agendas. Teachers must adhere both to state and local curriculum standards as well as the U.S. Constitution. The current state science standard for grades 9-12 reads that "[t]he scientific theory of evolution is the fundamental concept underlying all of biology" and is "supported by multiple forms of scientific evidence." Standard No. 15. Similarly, federal courts have been unequivocal that efforts to inject religious beliefs regarding the origin of life into public school science curricula are constitutionally impermissible, no matter what form they may take. *See, e.g., Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 586, 592 (1987); *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, 400 F. Supp.2d 707, 765-66 (M.D. Pa. 2005) (striking down school board policy promoting the teaching of intelligent design in biology class). Teaching impressionable students about creationism runs afoul of both state curriculum standards and the Constitution.

¹ Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUak3YxGqBk>

Sandra Harrison, Principal
Crawford Mosley High School
April 15, 2013
Page 2

We demand that you ensure that Mr. Martello and other teachers immediately cease presenting creationism as an alternative theory to evolution.

Public Records Request

Pursuant to the Florida Public Records Law, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, the Greater Bay Area Chapter of the ACLU hereby requests a copy of each biology teacher's lesson plans, exams, syllabi, worksheets, and other instructional materials that refer or relate to evolution, creationism, creation science, or intelligent design.

Sincerely,



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American Civil Liberties Union
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cc: William V. Husfelt III, Superintendent
Bay County School District
1311 Balboa Avenue
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Franklin Harrison, Esq.