



December 11, 2024

Via E-Mail

Subject: ***Letter of Reprimand (Teacher/DiLoreto)***

Dear Ms. Marisol Arroyo-Castro,

Yesterday you met with DiLoreto Principal, Dario Soto, Assistant Principal, Andrew Mazzei, AFT Union Representative Ed Leavy and me. At this pre-disciplinary meeting we discussed the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment that says that the government cannot establish a religion.

Prior to yesterday's pre-disciplinary meeting your building administration met with you and informed you the following:

- Per legal statutes, schools should remain neutral when speaking of religion, so as to not have a perception of endorsing a particular religion.
- The placement of religious artifacts is not permitted in the workplace unless the artifact is being used within a BOE approved curriculum.
- This same principle holds true when speaking to students about a particular religion.
- You need to take the cross down.
- Further insubordination may lead to disciplinary consequences.

Because public schools are run by the government, this means that public schools are not allowed, legally, to take any actions that would be seen as establishing or promoting a religion.

The following was discussed with you at yesterday's pre-disciplinary meeting pertaining to you as a CSDNB employee and the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment:

- The Establishment Clause includes *employees* of the public schools, including administrators *and teachers*.
- When a public school employee hangs a religious artifact in their classroom, it sends the message that the school district (which is an arm of the government) is promoting that religion, so putting that religious artifact on the wall of the school building is not legally permissible.
- You have told the administration that you are hanging this cross permanently.
- You have also told the administration that this cross is not tied to a specific curricular unit.
- This means that there is no pedagogical justification for hanging this cross.
- The Board of Education owns and controls the classroom walls.
 - So, by hanging this on the classroom wall, you are, in effect, saying that "the New Britain Board of Education endorses this religion."
 - That violates the Establishment Clause.

At yesterday's meeting we discussed your personal religious beliefs and strategies to support you in the classroom. Upon the conclusion of the meeting you were observed taking the cross off of your wall in the classroom and agreed to use it privately so it doesn't look like the school is endorsing or advancing that religion. This morning you communicated to the administration, stating you returned the cross to its original place (classroom wall).

Mr. Soto will meet you in your classroom at the end of the day and assist you with removing the cross from your classroom wall.

Outcome:

The district finds your actions to be insubordinate. This letter is to serve as a documented reminder, specific to your employee obligations, so as to not violate the Establishment Clause. We expect all of our employees to follow our Service Excellence Standards: Integrity, Respect, Professionalism, Communication, Teamwork, and Accountability. Future insubordination that does not adhere to above, will result in further disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Sincerely,
Maryellen Manning
 Maryellen Manning
 Chief of Staff|Relationships & Accountability

Cc:

Dr. Tony Gasper, Superintendent
 Evelise Velazquez, Deputy Superintendent
 Dario Soto, Principal
 Tyrone Richardson, Academics & Accountability Officer, 6-12
 Sue Saluru, Local 871 Union President
 Talent

Personnel File