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“
Raising Expectations”

October 16, 2009
Elizabeth Gill, Staff Attorney
ACLU of Northern California
39 Drumm Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

Ms. Gill:

I am responding on behalf of Visalia Unified School District to the email sent by your office dated October 8, 2009 to Principal Nancy Powell of Golden West High School. In that email, you provide a number of references to both the Education Code and case law that you believe support a request to change district policy relative to the nomination and selection of students for Homecoming Queen.

We have reviewed the policies at each of our high schools and guidelines for the nomination and selection of both the homecoming court and the spring school spirit award winner and determined that the guidelines will be changed. Specifically, the fall activity which has historically been a part of homecoming festivities which includes the selection of the Homecoming Queen, will be changed to reflect that the nomination and selection process will be open to all senior students beginning the 2010-11 school year. In addition, the annual selection of a male student in the spring honoring school spirit will be changed to reflect that the nomination and selection of "Mr. Golden West" (or "Pioneer", "Ranger", "Miner") will be open to all senior students beginning the current school year. Students must also meet the same minimum standards required to participate in any extra-curricular activity.

The site principal for Golden West High School, Nancy Powell, will be personally apologizing to Jimmy Ruiz on Friday, October 16. It is never the intent of any of our staff to offend or discourage a student. If that has occurred in this case, I would add an apology to Jimmy on behalf of the District.

It is my hope that this resolves your concerns regarding this issue. Feel free to contact my office for further clarification or if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Drew S. Sorensen, Area Administrator