

From: Tevfik Kosar <kosar@cct.lsu.edu>
Subject: **Re: Incident this morning**
Date: May 19, 2010 8:30:43 PM GMT+03:00
To: Shirl Gilbert <Shirl.Gilbert@rsdla.net>
Cc: "Mary Posey (DOE)" <Mary.Posey@LA.GOV>, "Josh LeSage (DOE)" <Josh.LeSage@LA.GOV>, Joan Hunt <Joan.Hunt@LA.GOV>, Paul Vallas <Paul.Vallas@RSDLA.NET>, Paul Pastorek <Paul.Pastorek@LA.GOV>, Chris Meyer <Chris.Meyer@LA.GOV>, Soner Tarim <starim@harmonytx.org>, Nihat Bayhan <nbayhan@abramsonst.org>, Cuneyt Dokmen <cdokmen@kenilworthst.org>, "Dr. Karen Fontenot" <kfontenot@selu.edu>, Cynthia Bryant <cynthia_bryant@subr.edu>, Eugene Kennedy <ekennedy@lsu.edu>, sbese@la.gov



Dr. Gilbert,

I do not really find this as a "reasonable explanation" and I have to say that I am not satisfied by your response at all. I am puzzled the way you and your office handle complaint(s). I need to know what policies and procedures you follow when you receive written or verbal complaints. And I am absolutely disturbed to see a state person with your caliber would storm a school and search classrooms, cabinets and desk drawers and interrupt educational process. As a result, I have to say that you created a hostile environment and intimidated school administrators and teachers.

Contrary to your explanation, I found out that the principal "did not" invite you to make a search in the school. This was witnessed by our staff and recorded by the security cameras. You came to the school on May 18th around 9:20am in the morning without any notice and you told to the principal you wanted to search the school. Despite the fact that the principal told you that there was no such room, as you called "prayer room", in the school. Without a written consent, you went ahead and searched throughout the school, including the locker rooms, storage rooms, classrooms, special education rooms, music rooms, robotics room, and the time-out room as well as the cabinets, desks drawers where teacher's private belongings were stored. I believe that you have violated privacy by examining and taking pictures of our teacher's personal belongings. Please note that I have no control of our employee's decision if any of them takes any legal action against you or the Recovery School District due to this incident.

I also do not understand how you present a Turkish rug owned by a Turkish teacher as a proof of "hostile environment" in the school to justify your act in the morning of May 18th. I want to ask you, is it unlawful or a criminal act for a Hispanic teacher to own a Mexican rug made in Mexico? Or, if you specifically consider a school with a "Turkish rug" or with some "Turkish teachers" as an "hostile environment", that is a totally different issue, which can only be explained by "prejudice and discrimination", and I do not even want to think that you may have such thoughts.

Regarding your argument on a "prayer room" in our school, we "do not" have such a room, and clearly your search in the morning of May 18th did not result in such a room as your email states. Even if there was one, I want to know which law prohibits an individual to pray or meditate in their private time in a private room? I do not believe the school administrators can and should have total control on the private times of each employee.

Could you please provide me with the RSD policy on when an official shall visit a school and make a similar search as a result of a verbal accusation. If the accusation was presented to you in writing, could you please provide us with a copy of the accusation so that we may address any concerns in a more proper way. I hope you understand how disruptive these type of incidents can be to the peaceful and productive education environment that we are trying to create here.

Sincerely,

Tevfik Kosar, Ph.D.
President, Pelican Educational Foundation
Professor of Computer Science, LSU
Phone: (225)650-5508 Email: kosar@lsu.edu

"Pelican Schools: Transforming Education through Dedication, Innovation, and Technology"

On May 18, 2010, at 4:46 PM, Shirl Gilbert wrote:

Dr. Kosar:

My pleasure !!

We recieved over the last day or two days complaints (including a member of the BESE Baord) of the existance of a "Prayer Room" in the school with prayer rugs/clothes stored in the drawers of the desks in the room. Given that such a room could represented what could be construed as a hostile environment, and as such could not be ignored by our office. We went out to the school this morning, and I shared the complaints with Mr. Dokmen, who indicated t hat no such room existed in the school. He went on to invite us to walk and look in rooms in the areas targeted in the complaints.

I took him up on his invitation, in an effort to be thorough in my follow-up, (I shared that that was the reason I accepted his invite to walk and look) and we visited rooms in the back end of the school, with the Principal and at his invitation. As I am sure I don't need to share, since the school year was complete, most rooms and desks were all but empty, few if any personal items in the drawers.

The rooms in which I did look in drawers were the rooms, identified by the specifics of the complaints, as the location of the prayer room. The reason I looked in those drawers was, as mentioned earlier, is that the complaints indicated that prayer rugs/clothes were stored n the desk drawers. Contrary to my understanding of your question, I did not look in every desk, etc, or in every room we visited. In fact I didn't go into most rooms as they obviously did not reflect the details of the complaints.

I might share in closing, that in one of the three rooms which most closely reflected the description of the complaints, we did find a rug/cloth which was folded in a drawer of one of the desks, which could easily be construde as consistent with the complaints. Mr. Dokmen indicated that he had no knowledge of this rug/cloth, or how it is/was used. The teacher who used this desk was identified as a Turkish teacher, and the rug/cloth was labled as "Made in Turkey".

My hope is that this e-mail is responsive, and that I have given you a "reasonable explanation"

Respectfully
SEGII

From: Tevfik Kosar [kosar@cct.lsu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2010 11:21 AM
To: Shirl Gilbert
Cc: Josh LeSage (DOE); Cuneyt Dokmen; Nihat Bayhan
Subject: Incident this morning

Dr. Gilbert,

I have heard from our principal that this morning you and Josh went to Kenilworth and searched the rooms, desks, as well as personal drawers of the teachers. This is a very serious issue, and I am looking for a reasonable explanation for this.

Thank you.

Tevfik Kosar, Ph.D.
President, Pelican Educational Foundation
Professor of Computer Science, LSU
Phone: (225)650-5508 Email: kosar@lsu.edu<<mailto:kosar@lsu.edu>>

"Pelican Schools: Transforming Education through Dedication, Innovation, and Technology"