



CARMEL CLAY SCHOOLS

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Teens for Life Poster to be Rehung at Carmel High School District Reinforces Club Signage Rules

Carmel, IN – Carmel Clay Schools will permit Carmel High School’s Teens for Life club to rehang its poster in the school’s main cafeteria. The poster was removed in November because the school did not believe it met club signage guidelines and had not received the proper approval by administration.

Some members of the club disagreed with the school’s decision and enlisted the help of a legal advocacy group, claiming that their first amendment rights were violated.

“While we fully support our students’ First Amendment rights, the law does not treat school buildings and grounds as public places open to unfettered exercise of free speech,” says David Day, general counsel for the Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education. “Schools are allowed to determine the time, place and manner of student expression and can prohibit expression as long as it applies that prohibition equally.”

Carmel High School has long allowed school clubs to advertise their meetings with signs on the cafeteria walls, but those signs are not allowed to advocate a club’s agenda or cause.

“Our decision to allow the sign to return is not the school’s endorsement of the message any more than our decision to remove the sign was the school’s rejection of that message,” Day says. “While we believe

our decision to remove the sign can be supported if challenged in court, we prefer to use the time and resources of the school district focusing on education, not litigation.”

Carmel High School has improved its signage rules and the approval process, further clarifying what will and will not be allowed on cafeteria walls.

Teens for Life has a long and successful history at Carmel High School. The school has more than 150 student clubs that span a large variety of interests. Each is led by a faculty sponsor who volunteers their time to serve as a mentor. Teens for Life’s sponsor when this incident occurred, a pro-life supporter and decade-long sponsor herself, has chosen to step down. Another high school teacher has volunteered to serve as club sponsor and the club remains active.

The Teens for Life poster will be allowed to hang for 10 days starting the week of February 20th.