

# 'Silent Night' Silent No More



On October 8, Todd Starnes at Fox News reported that the Wausau, Wis. School District was cracking down on the religious music preformed at Christmas concerts. They proposed three options: 1. A strict five-to-one ratio of secular to sacred songs, 2. Eliminate all sacred songs, or 3. Postpone the December concerts.

In response, choir director Phil Buch announced the terms were unacceptable and that he was temporarily disbanding the school's elite choir.

"This group sings at Christmas programs," he said. "We sing for nursing homes, grade schools, businesses. To do that without Christmas music doesn't make sense."

The district also defended the cancellation of all elementary school Christmas programs and said it had nothing to do with religion. They said teachers needed more class time to prepare the children for testing.

However, today OneNewsNow reported that after the parents and community raised their voices, the school district "backed off that completely" and are "going to do the right thing," ADF attorney Jeremy Tedesco explained. The school district will now allow principals and music directors the freedom to determine music in programs.



*Tedesco says it's unfortunate that many public school administrators and school boards believe that religious songs can't be performed at public schools. "Every court that's looked at this issue has said as long as those songs are included as part of an objective aspect of a holiday or Christmas program, it's not constitutionally problematic," say Tedesco.*

The FAMIly LEADER encourages parents and everyday citizens to consider running for school board because these decisions directly impact the education of the next generation. This story also shows that by working together, you can make a positive, conservative difference in your community.

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## DMACC's "Free Speech Table" Folds

**DES MOINES, Iowa** – Des Moines Area Community College has agreed to no longer enforce its policy of limiting its approved student speech zone to a table in the student center. It has also agreed to no longer require students to get permission to distribute fliers 10 school days in advance.

The agreement is enshrined in an agreed-upon court order issued Monday in a lawsuit Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed last month on behalf of a student. The college prohibited him from distributing fliers that protested the use of college funds for a conference on sexuality.

“Colleges should be the marketplace of ideas. The college has done the right thing in recognizing this by agreeing to end its problematic policy concerning the free speech of students,” said Senior Legal Counsel David Hacker. “Free speech should not be censored or limited to a tiny area on campus, and college students should not need permission to hand out fliers—a classic exercise in constitutionally protected free speech.”



In March, college officials barred Jacob Dagel, a Christian student at Des Moines Area Community College, from distributing fliers containing religious and political messages in the open-air quad on campus. The fliers protested the allocation of college funds to subsidize student tickets to the Iowa Governor’s Conference on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. A campus security officer informed Dagel that students must use the speech zone and obtain a permit 10 school days prior to the activity.

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing Dagel filed suit against the college on April 15 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa. The suit argued that the college’s speech policy unconstitutionally prohibited students from speaking spontaneously in reaction to news and current events on the public sidewalks and open spaces of the campus. In response to the suit, college officials agreed to a permanent injunction against the bad speech policies while a settlement of the case is finalized.

Timm W. Reid, one of more than 2,200 allied attorneys with Alliance Defending Freedom, is serving as local counsel in the case, *Dagel v. Des Moines Area Community College*.

Source: Alliance Defending Freedom

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