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Congress shall make
A Parent's
no law respecting an
Guide to
establishment of religion
Religion
or prohibiting the free
in the
exercise thereof, or
Public
abridging the freedom
Schools
of speech, or of the press,
or the right of the people
peaceably to assemble,

and to petition the

National PTA
Government for a redress

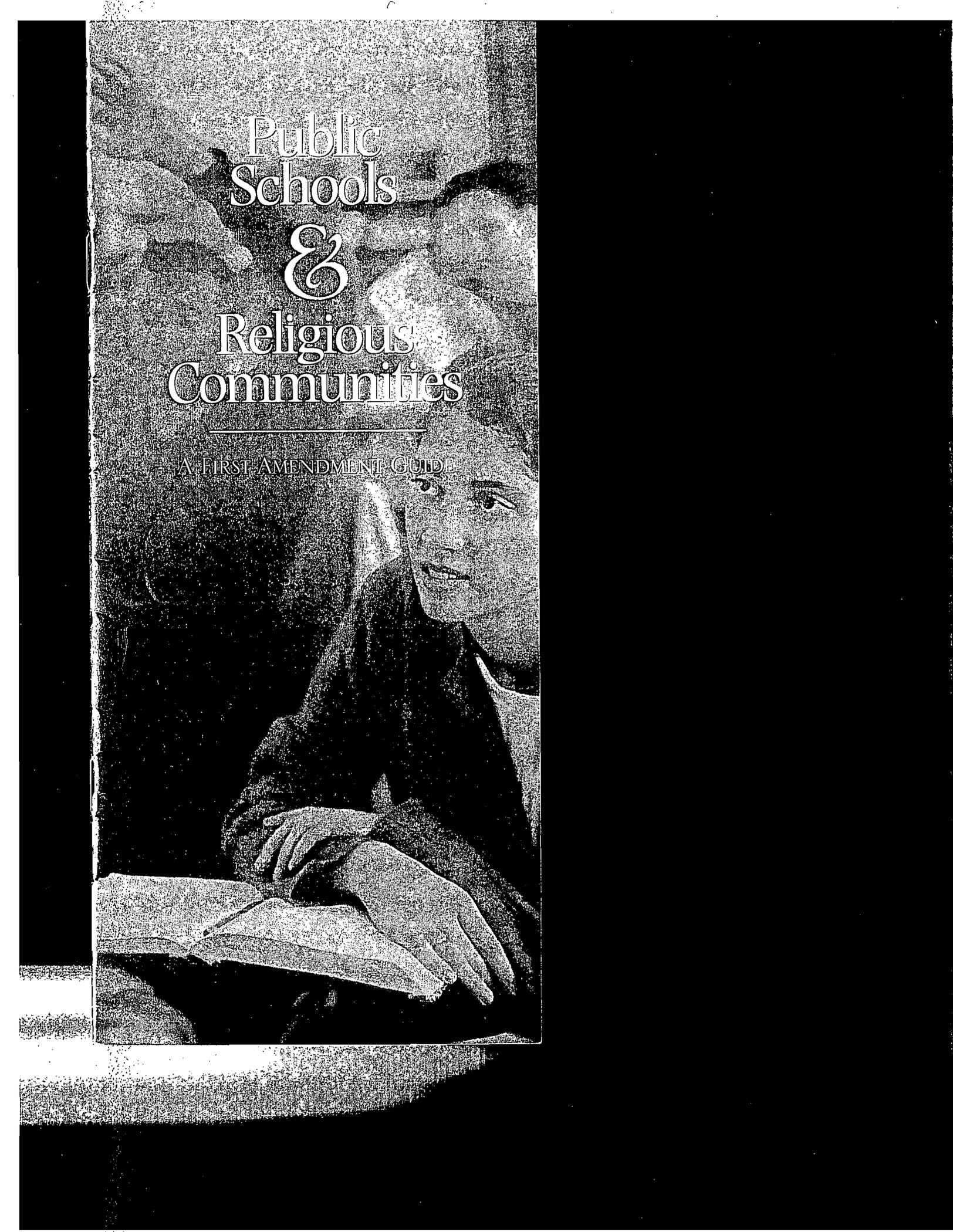
 **FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER**
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of grievances.

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Public
Schools
&
Religious
Communities

A FIRST AMENDMENT GUIDE

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RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

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*How Faith
Communities
Support Children's
Learning in Public
Schools*

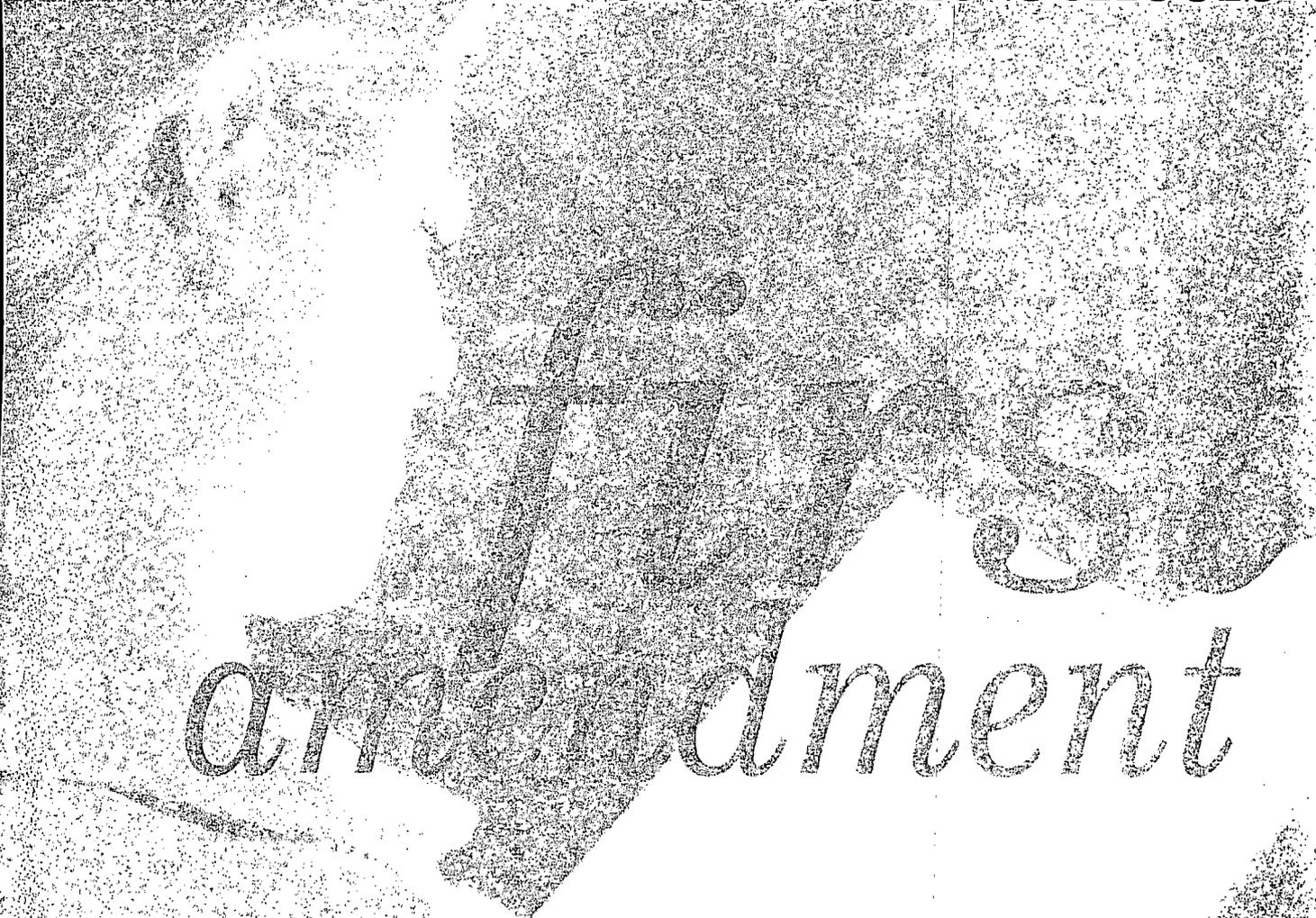
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A Teacher's Guide to Religion
in the Public Schools



amendment

**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF RELIGIOUS GUIDELINES:
CULMINATION OF FOUR YEARS OF WORK**

December 18, 1999

In August of 1995, President Clinton directed Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, to provide every school district in America with a statement of principles on religious expression in our public schools. It was the first step in an ongoing effort to bring clarity to the rights of religious expression in public schools and to encourage greater cooperation within constitutional limits between public schools and faith-based organizations. Today, in the culmination of the work begun four years ago, the President (announced the release of) (directed Secretary Riley to release) a comprehensive packet of religious guidelines to every public school in America and key national religious organizations. The packet contains information and guidance for parents, teachers, volunteers and the faith community on issues of religious expression, religion in the classroom, and partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations. The guidance was endorsed by a broad spectrum of religious, school and civil rights organizations. The President said that while schools and faith communities have different missions, they share many of the same moral and civic values and goals and that they should work to support common goals.

New information provided for teachers, parents, volunteers and faith communities. In addition to an updated version of the 1995 publication, *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*, the packet contains more targeted religious guidance. Included are a guide for parents on religion in the schools, guidance for teachers about teaching religion and the incorporation of religious expression, information on the first amendment for schools and faith communities, and two guides for volunteers and faith-based partnerships on the allowances and limits for religion in their efforts.

Packet highlights how faith-based organizations can support children's learning in schools. Faith-based organizations can and are playing effective roles in helping support the goal of children's learning and school success. The President stated that schools and faith communities should be reaching out to each other to support their common goals for children and families and working together within constitutional limits. (The President cited efforts highlighted in the packet of) (The packet highlights) effective cooperation in areas such as after-school programs, school safety, college planning and reading support such as:

- The Shiloh Baptist-Seaton Elementary partnership in Washington, DC which offers after school activities and reading help to children served by the church and school.
- The Chicago Public School Interfaith Community Partnerships, which assists local schools in addressing safety and discipline problems in and around schools.
- The National Jewish Coalition for Literacy's work to recruit 100,000 reading tutors for the America Reads Challenge over five years.

OR INSTEAD OF BULLETS, ONE EXAMPLE:

(The President cited the Shiloh Baptist Church-Seaton Elementary School partnership, here in Washington, DC, as an example. The partnership offers reading tutoring and after-school activities to the children served by both the school and church.)

(DO WE NEED THIS NEXT GRAPH OR SHOULD WE WORK IT INTO THE ABOVE GRAPH?)

Packet advises on obligations of the First Amendment and protected freedoms. The comprehensive packet seeks to provide clarity on both the freedoms of religious expression guaranteed by our Constitution and the bounds of religious activity that the First Amendment permits. Each document includes discussion of the protection of private religious expression and broad instruction on religious issues. They also discuss limits, including prohibitions against endorsing religious activity, coercing participation or compelling a "captive" audience to be involved in religious expression.

Endorsement by twenty-two religious, school and civil rights organizations demonstrates emerging consensus on religious guidelines. The guidance in the packet released today has been endorsed by a broad spectrum of organizations including the National Association of Evangelicals, the National PTA, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, and associations of teachers and administrators. The President called the broad support for the guidelines the beginnings of a new consensus on the role of religion in schools. He called on political leaders to resist from the polarizing language of old and to unite in fashioning a common ground upon which more appropriate partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations could be built.

Public schools, and the programs operated in partnership with them, can neither foster religion nor preclude it. Our public schools must treat religion with fairness and respect and vigorously protect religious expression as well as the freedom of conscience of all students. Volunteer mentors and tutors must uphold these constitutional protections when assisting children in the public school setting. In doing so, public school programs reaffirm the First Amendment and enrich the lives of their students.

Resources from the U.S. Department of Education (1-877-4ED-PUBS)

- *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*
- *How Faith Communities Support Children's Learning in Public Schools*
- *Faith Communities Joining Local Communities to Support Children's Learning: Good Ideas*
- *Guidelines for Volunteers and Mentors Participating in Partnerships with Faith-based Communities*
- *Yes, You Can: Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College*

Information about the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education can be found at <http://pfie.ed.gov> or via e-mail at Partner@ed.gov.

Resources from the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center (615-321-9588)

- *Public Schools & Religious Communities: A First Amendment Guide*
- *A Teacher's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools*
- *A Parent's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools*

For a list of organizations that can answer questions about religious expression in public schools, consult *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*, pages 11–12.



Guidelines for School Officials, Volunteers and Mentors Participating in Public School Community Partnerships

Children and schools gain a great deal when every part of a community comes together to support education. This is why we encourage the growing partnership efforts between our nation's public schools and families, community groups, faith-based communities and employers. In 1994, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley began the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) with 40 organizations. Today, close to 6,000 groups and organizations are part of this dynamic and growing effort.

Every part of the community can do its part to encourage adults to take time out of their busy schedules to support the work of our nation's schools. Faith communities can be important participants in these partnerships. For example, members of faith communities can act as tutors and mentors to help children learn to read and write. They can also work with other members of the community to ensure the safety of children in positive after-school activities.

However, it is not appropriate for members of faith communities to use their involvement in public schools as an occasion to endorse religious activity or doctrine or to encourage participation in a religious activity. Adults who choose to volunteer in public schools must respect both the rules established by the school and the strong constitutional protections that children have from becoming a captive audience.

In August 1995, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, in consultation with Attorney General Janet Reno and at the direction of President Clinton, released guidelines entitled *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*. These guidelines were released again in June 1998, and most recently in December 1999. In his original cover letter to these guidelines, Secretary Riley pointed out that the guidelines for religious expression in public schools reflect two basic and equally important obligations of the First Amendment.

"First, schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature. Schools may not discriminate against private religious expression by students, but must instead give students the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity... At the same time, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity... [t]he right of religious expression in school does not include the right to have a 'captive audience' listen, or to compel other students to participate."

When members and leaders of faith communities volunteer in schools or volunteer to work with students and their families, they should and must act with the same understanding of the First Amendment as school officials have. A volunteer's faith may have motivated him or her to participate in the school volunteer program, but the Constitution does not allow the volunteer to infringe on the religious freedom and beliefs of the students being helped.

An adult who acts as a mentor may not, for example, seek in any way to encourage or discourage the religious faith of the student whom they are mentoring for educational purposes. Suggestions on the best ways to recruit, screen and support mentors can be found in *Yes You Can: Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College*, a 1998 publication produced by the Department.

A religious leader who is asked by school officials to participate in crisis counseling should respond to the direct concerns of the students at a time of great sensitivity. At the same time, a religious leader cannot use the occasion to proselytize on behalf of his or her own faith or encourage a student to attend the following week's service.

When public schools develop partnerships involving religious communities they must do so with particular care. The following is a helpful checklist for school officials and members and leaders of faith communities who are developing or participating in educational partnerships. This checklist should be seen and used as a companion piece to *Public Schools & Religious Communities: A First Amendment Guide* (see Resources below). These guidelines only address partnership programs that are jointly sponsored by faith-based community groups and public schools. They do not apply to programs run solely by faith-based communities.

Partnerships Involving Public Schools And Faith-based Communities

Public schools forming partnerships including faith-based communities should consider and adhere to the following in developing and supporting such activities:

Things to Do:

Make sure the program has a secular purpose.

In selecting partners remain neutral between secular and religious groups and among religious groups.

Select student participants without regard to the religious affiliation of the students.

Make sure any jointly sponsored activities provided within the partnership program, wherever located, are purely secular.

Make sure any space used for the program is safe and secure for the children.

Make sure any space used by the public school for instructional purposes is free of religious symbols.

Put the partnership agreement in writing.

Things Not to Do:

Do not limit participation in the partnership, or student selection, to religious groups or certain religious groups.

Do not encourage or discourage student participation with particular partners based on the religious or secular nature of the organization.

Do not encourage or discourage students from engaging in religious activities.

Do not condition student participation in any partnership activity on membership in any religious group, or on acceptance or rejection of any religious belief, or on participation in, or refusal to participate in, any religious activity.

Do not reward or punish students (for example, in terms of grades or participation in other activities) based on their willingness to participate in any activity of a partnership with a religious organization.

VOLUNTEERS NEED TO BE REMINDED

Volunteers always need to be thanked for their willingness to volunteer their time to help children learn. At the same time, it is very important to remind volunteers from faith communities that the purpose of any partnership is educational and secular in nature, not religious, and that volunteers must respect the very strong First Amendment rights of students. Remind volunteers:

Do not pray with the students and families or encourage them to pray during your volunteer session with them.

Do not preach about your faith to the children and their families while conducting your educational activity.

Do not prohibit or discourage speech or other activity simply because of its religious content or nature.

Do not infringe on the rights of students and their family members to speak about religion or to say a prayer or to read a Scripture, provided it is within the reasonable limits of rules for orderliness, talking, and congregating that are set for other speech and activities.

To: Secretary Riley

Fr: Kevin Sullivan

Re: RELEASE OF RELIGIOUS GUIDELINES

Over the past few months we have been working to develop a comprehensive packet of religious guidelines. This idea was first suggested to us by Ann Lewis at the White House. Tentatively we are scheduled to release these guidelines on Tuesday, December 14th with the President. There are three significant reasons why we have developed this comprehensive package.

1. The guidelines we released on "Religious Expression" in 1995 and in 1998 have been sent to the offices of school superintendent and many school principals still have no awareness that these guidelines exist.
2. Our increasing efforts to encourage partnerships and the growing public debate about the role of faith-based communities in public life suggests a need for guidelines about how public schools and faith-based communities can work in partnership together while respecting Constitutional boundaries.
3. The recent support in the House of Representatives to encourage the posting of the Ten Commandments suggests that now is a good time to remind the public that students have many religious freedoms and that these freedoms are well protected.

The packet we will send will include a cover letter from you and the following pieces:

1. *Religion in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles (reprint of our 1995 document)*
2. *A Parents Guide to Religion in Public Schools (reprint)*
3. *A Teachers Guide to Religion in Public Schools (new)*
4. *Public Schools & Religious Communities: A First Amendment Guide. (Freedom Forum document released last July)*
5. *Guidelines for volunteers participating in Partnerships with Public Schools (2 page list of do's and don'ts) (new)*
6. *How Faith Communities Support Children's Learning in Public Schools. (an extract from a longer Department report released in Sept) (new)*

Unlike previous mailings that only went to school superintendents this packet will be sent to all public schools in addition to a separate mailing to religious leaders. We are printing a 150,000 copies of everything. This is a joint effort of the Department and the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center. Our goal is to get good information down to the school level where the problems start to help school leaders avoid the divisive law suits that so often tear a community apart.

The three guidelines that will generate the most interest will be a new *“Teachers Guide to Religion in Public Schools”* which has been endorsed by over 21 religious and education groups including the NEA, AFT, NSBA, National PTA, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, National Association of Evangelicals, etc. This guide was developed by the Freedom Forum at our request. The two guidelines on developing partnerships with public schools and faith based communities will also be considered newsworthy.

The scope of the mailing, the timing of this release just before the Holidays when many schools have to deal with religious issues, and the recent Congressional debate over posting the Ten Commandments in schools, will generate strong press interest. None of the guidelines deal with the contentious issue of creationism but we will be prepared to answer that in the Q&A.

This comprehensive mailing is in many ways the culmination of a great deal of work that has been done over the past five to six years by many religious leaders and educators to find a new common ground when it comes to religion and public schools.

Worksheet 2: Assess Resources and Capacity for Providing Them

Capacity for...	For this Purpose...	Current Status	Obstacles/Barriers	Solutions
Physical plant	Establishing afterschool tutoring programs	Usable area could be made available during these hours.	Used for pre-school each weekday morning.	Recruit volunteers to help move aside pre-school materials daily.
Volunteers				
Equipment				
Materials				
Transportation				
Other				

Worksheet 3: Select Community/School Partners

	Possible Answers
With which educational systems (individual schools, local districts, state education agency) would you like to work?	
How would you describe the school(s), local district(s), and the community?	
What unique talents do potential partners have to offer as a community partner (for example, members who are bankers, scientists, teachers, police officers)?	
What do they have to offer (resources, time, people)?	
What are your current education activities? How are they connected to the school system?	
What steps can be taken to identify or expand your current school partnerships?	

Worksheet 4: Recruit and Organize Education, Business, Family, and Community Partners

Identify and Recruit Partners	Recruitment Strategies	Group/Individual	Contact Information	Contact Address	Person Who Will Contact
Education					
Family					
Business					
Community					
Other faith communities					

Worksheet 5: Create a Vision for the Partnership

Potential Priority Areas	Rank Priority for Each Partner	Goals	Consensus Ranking of Priorities
Afterschool Learning			
America Reads Challenge			
Think College Early			
Safe and Drug-Free Schools			
Family Involvement			
Other			

Partnership Vision/Statement of Purpose:

Worksheet 6: Take Stock Based on Partnership Vision

Potential Priority Areas	Alignment of Partners' Priorities with Education Goals	Where Are You Now? (Assessment)	Current Approaches Used to Achieve Goals	Level(s) of Success
Afterschool Learning				
America Reads Challenge				
Think College Early				
Safe and Drug-Free Schools				
Family Involvement				
Other				

Worksheet 7: Set Up a Steering Committee to Guide and Monitor the Partnership

Steering Committee Members	Title/Affiliation	Address	Phone/Fax	E-Mail	Priority Interests
Education					
Business					
Family					
Community					
Other faith communities					

Worksheet 8: Collaboratively Set and Prioritize Short- and Long-Term Objectives

Priority Area Goals	Short-term Objectives (define time)	Long-term Objectives (define time)
Afterschool Learning	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
America Reads Challenge	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Think College Early	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Family Involvement	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Other	Customer(s):	Customer(s):

Worksheet 9: Create Action Plans and Teams Organized Around Priorities (Duplicate for each priority area.)

Action Committees*	Members (contact information)	Committee Objectives	Tasks/ Activities Assigned	Completion Time Frame	Resources Requested	Resources Available	Resources Needed
Operations							
Development							
Communication							
Program Evaluation							
Other							

**Operations = managing daily tasks, managing resources, and monitoring quality; development = recruiting partners, recruiting resources, allocating resources; communication = marketing and public relations, outreach, and networking; program evaluation = monitoring, evaluation, data analysis, reporting, and decision making.*

Worksheet 10: Implement Action Plans (Duplicate for each priority area)

Action Committee Objectives	Activities/ Tasks	*Level of Involvement	Expected Completion	Actual Completion	Resources Allocated	Activities Accomplished	Comments
Operations							
Development							
Communication							
Evaluation							
Other							

** Levels of involvement: Low=supplemental; medium=programmatic; high=strategic/systemic*

Worksheet 11: Measure and Report Progress (Duplicate for each priority area)

Short-term Objectives By Priority	Baseline Measures	Outcomes Achieved Month/year	Check Points	Next steps	Outcomes Achieved Month/year	Check Points	Next Steps
			<p>Within budget __y __n</p> <p>On schedule? __y __n</p> <p>Communication: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Content d) Audiences</p> <p>Sufficient resources? __y __n</p> <p>Outcome measures: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Target groups d) Focus</p> <p>Partnership Quality: a) Participation b) Commitment c) Operation(s) d) Challenges</p>			<p>Within budget __y __n</p> <p>On schedule? __y __n</p> <p>Communication: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Content d) Audiences</p> <p>Sufficient resources? __y __n</p> <p>Outcome measures: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Target groups d) Focus</p> <p>Partnership Quality: a) Participation b) Commitment c) Operation(s) d) Challenges</p>	

Worksheet 12: Review Annual Results and Plan for the Future (Duplicate for each priority area)

Objectives	Measurement Tools	Annual Outcomes	Next Steps	Committee Contact
<p>Priority Area</p>			<p>1. Partnership Management --Changes</p> <p>2. Objectives --Change --Eliminate --Extend --Benchmarking</p> <p>3. Resources/Budget --Recruitment --Allocation</p> <p>4. Activities --Improve --Extend --Eliminate</p> <p>5. Overall program --Revisions --Maintenance --Expansion</p>	