



North Texas School Officials Reverse Policy that Denied Students’ Right to Pray During Lunch

Middle school students had been told to go behind curtain, outside, or in empty gym during lunch to pray for their fellow classmates and teachers

Honey Grove, TX—After receiving a [letter](#) from First Liberty Institute, Honey Grove (TX) Independent School District officials reversed a decision that forced students praying together to hide behind a cafeteria curtain, move to an empty gym, or relocate outside to pray.

“We are grateful to Honey Grove school district officials for acting swiftly to ensure that students can freely exercise their right to pray,” said Keisha Russell, Associate Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “Students are free to pray together at school as long as it’s not disruptive. Our client is very pleased that she and her friends can continue to pray together for each other, their fellow classmates, and their teachers.”

In early September, Hannah Allen and a group of other students at Honey Grove Middle School prayed together during lunch for one of their former classmates who had recently been in an accident. Their principal told them they needed to stop. No school officials were involved with the prayers. When Hannah and her friends decided to continue their prayers during lunch the next day, the principal told them they had to move behind a curtain in the cafeteria, remove themselves to the gym, or meet alone outside.

In its letter to school officials, First Liberty explained that student led prayer during non-instructional periods of the school day is squarely protected by the U.S. Constitution and offered to assist the District to conform the school’s policies on student

religious expression to the [guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Education](#) on the subject.

“During a time of so much conflict in schools, it’s good when students come together to support their fellow classmates, including praying for each other,” added Russell. “We trust the school district will continue to conform to the law and ensure that the students’ right to pray is protected.”

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.