



Texas Home School Coalition ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to Serving and Protecting the Home School Community of Texas
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September 16, 2008

Mr. S. Anthony Safi
P.O. Box 1977
El Paso, Texas 79950-1977

Dear Mr. Safi:

I am in receipt of your letter dated September 12, 2008, in response to my letter of August 20 to Mr. Oscar Ontiveros, Principal at Dr. Nixon Elementary School in El Paso ISD. Thank you for including the "Home-Schooling Notification Form" from your client, El Paso ISD. While I understand that EPISD prefers that parents withdraw their children by completing and signing the district form "...to provide assurance to the School District that the parent is home-schooling the child using a curriculum that meets the basic requirements of the *Leeper* case," virtually all of the information requested in said form was included in either the letter of withdrawal dated August 11, or the assurance letter dated August 14, provided by Mrs. H___ and received by the district. Since Mrs. H___ has already presented this information to EPISD, it does not appear necessary for her to complete the form, sign it, date it, and then return it to the district.

I appreciate your assurance that EPISD has not intended "to cause undue concern to Mrs. H___" and that it is "simply trying to discharge its obligation to ensure that school-aged children within its jurisdiction are being educated – in one of its schools, at home or otherwise – within the requirements of the law." However, Mrs. H___ has legally effectuated the withdrawal of her child and responded to the inquiries from the school district in a manner recommended by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In spite of this, she was treated rudely and threatened by district officials for her failure to provide the information on the district form rather than in letter format as approved by the TEA. It is not difficult to understand how Mrs. H___ was caused great concern by the actions of EPISD officials.

This practice is an ongoing pattern over many years with EPISD officials who continue to disregard TEA guidelines and threaten and harass parents who choose to follow them instead of EPISD policy. Frankly, the reason THSC recommends that home school parents withdraw their children via certified mail and not make a personal appearance at schools is that, more often than not, they are confronted with uninformed and aggressive school officials demanding more than is legally required, which can often lead to the kind of confrontational situation Mrs. H___ experienced. We will continue to encourage parents to provide the legally required information to EPISD officials according to the TEA recommendations to enable them to comply with their statutory obligations while protecting the parents from hostile officials, and, if necessary, take legal action to do so.

Sincerely,

Tim Lambert

cc: Mr. and Mrs. K___ H___; Mr. Mark Mendoz, Director, EPISD Pupil Services; Mr. Robert Scott, Commissioner of Education; State Senator Eliot Shapleigh; State Representative Pat Haggerty; Member Mr. Rene Nunez, State Board of Education; Texas home schoolers