

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- The principal begins by stating, “First, this school will no longer honor race or ethnicity... The only identity this school will recognize is your individual identity – your character, your scholarship, your humanity.” Why do you think that a principal would want to do that? Would you agree with a principal doing that? Why or why not? What is the difference between respecting an individual versus respecting a class or category of people, in terms of having a place in a learning environment?
- Later, the principal reminds students that, “...the purpose of education is to get you to think beyond yourself.” Do you agree with this premise? If so, exactly how does education get you to do that? If not, then what is the purpose of education? How might thinking beyond yourself benefit you as a student?
- The principal later shares reasoning for changes he plans to make by stating that, “... because I regard learning as a sacred endeavor, everything in this school will reflect learning’s elevated status.” What do you think the principal means by ‘sacred endeavor?’ Do you think that formal learning should have an ‘elevated status?’ Why or why not?
- Further on, the principal decrees that, “Fifth, we will end all self-esteem programs. In this school, self-esteem will be attained in only one way – the only way self-esteem can be attained – by earning it.” How might one earn self-esteem? Do you think that current self-esteem programs in schools work at all? Why or why not?
- Towards the end of the video, the principal declares that, “I am reorienting the school toward academics and away from politics and propaganda. No more time will be devoted to racism, sexism, Islamophobia, homophobia, global warming, tobacco, or gender identity. No more classes will be devoted to condom-wearing and teaching you to regard sexual relations as no more than a health issue. And there will be no more attempts to convince you that you are a victim because you are not white or male or heterosexual or Christian.” Why do you think that ‘politics and propaganda’ have crept so deeply into formal school learning over the years? Why do you think that some schools openly condone the faux victimization mentality? Does the school that the principal describes is coming sound like a school that you would like to attend? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Live Oak High School

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “American flag case: U.S. Supreme Court ends Morgan Hill flap over shirts,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What happened at Live Oak High School? What was this case about?
- The fictitious principal in the video cited having a proper dress code. How might the fictitious principal’s dress code in the video have affected this real-life case? Do you think that the fictitious principal’s dress code would be discriminatory? If not, why not? If so, do you think that this type of discrimination would be bad? Why or why not?
- We read in the article that, “William Becker, a lawyer for the parents, panned the Supreme Court’s decision, saying it could now set a troubling First Amendment precedent for students. ‘It essentially means that American public schools can silence patriotic expression whenever it offends anti-American students, or students who prefer to identify with their cultural or national origins,’ he said. ‘This is a tragic outcome.’” Do you agree with the lawyer’s conclusion? Why or why not? What do you think that the fictitious principal from the video would say about this case?
- What would the fictitious principal’s changes reflect, in terms of how education is valued and regarded in today’s society? Do you think that Live Oak High School would be a better learning environment if the fictitious principal put his plan in place there? Why or why not?



QUIZ

EVERY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SHOULD SAY THIS

- 1. Which of the following identities will be recognized by the school?**
 - a. Mexican.
 - b. African.
 - c. European.
 - d. American.

- 2. This school will have failed if any of its students graduate without considering him or herself _____.**
 - a. a victim
 - b. special
 - c. inordinately lucky
 - d. oppressed

- 3. How many valedictorians will each graduating class have?**
 - a. 8
 - b. 5
 - c. 3
 - d. 1

- 4. This school's clubs will be based on sexual orientation and ethnicity.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 5. How will self-esteem be attained?**
 - a. Through student counseling.
 - b. Through exercises.
 - c. Through school programs.
 - d. Through earning it.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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http://www.mercurynews.com/crime-courts/ci_27813451/american-flag-case-u-s-supreme-court-ends

American flag case: U.S. Supreme Court ends Morgan Hill flap over shirts

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Turning away a legal plea virtually wrapped in the American flag, the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday refused to intervene in a controversial case involving a South Bay high school's discipline of students who chose to wear flag-adorned shirts during a 2010 Cinco de Mayo celebration.

The high court's decision pulled the plug on a case that drew national attention for a combustible blend of issues, mixing free speech rights, school safety and student race relations -- all arising from what some local residents argued was a school crackdown on simple displays of patriotism. In rejecting the final appeal by the students' parents, the justices left intact a federal appeals court ruling last year that found Live Oak High School officials had the legal right to order students wearing the American flag shirts to turn them inside out or go home.



From left to right: Daniel Galli, Austin Carvalho, Matthew Dariano and Dominic Maciel. These boys with friend Clayton Howard were asked to turn their American flag T-shirts inside out or go home when they wore them to Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill on Cinco de Mayo.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals backed the Morgan Hill school's administrators, who argued that a history of problems on the Mexican holiday justified the decision to act against the

American flag-wearing students. School officials cited past incidents of threats and campus strife between Latino and white students that raised fears of violence on a day when many Latino pupils wore Mexico's colors of red, white and green.

William Becker, a lawyer for the parents, panned the Supreme Court's decision, saying it could now set a troubling First Amendment precedent for students.

"It essentially means that American public schools can silence patriotic expression whenever it offends anti-American students, or students who prefer to identify with their cultural or national origins," he said. "This is a tragic outcome."

Morgan Hill school district officials were pleased the case is over, saying the Live Oak campus has moved on.

"This case has never been about the American flag, which Live Oak proudly flies above our school every day," said Steve Betando, superintendent of the Morgan Hill Unified School District. "This case has always been about protecting the safety of students."

The handling of the students' shirts provoked chaos at Live Oak for days, as media crews descended to spotlight the American flag flap. The students who had worn the shirts received threats. Within a week, the campus united to hold a peaceful rally to end all the strife.

Nick Boden, then Live Oak's principal, conceded days after the episode that his discipline of the students may have been a somewhat hasty overreaction.

At the time of the incident, the legal quarrel drew nationwide attention to the parents' First Amendment argument that no circumstances warrant a school forbidding a student from wearing a shirt with the American flag. The parents have told this newspaper the students were only showing their patriotism and did not intend to incite trouble with Latino students.

But the legal challenge has stumbled, not surprising to legal experts who say school administrators have wide leeway to protect campus safety.

A unanimous three-judge 9th Circuit panel found in 2014 that the school's actions were reasonable given the safety concerns. "Our role is not to second-guess the decision to have a Cinco de Mayo celebration or the precautions put in place to avoid violence," the judges ruled.

Parents, Republican lawmakers and conservative groups last fall asked the 9th Circuit to reconsider that decision with a special 11-judge panel, but the court declined. Three 9th Circuit judges dissented from the full 29-member court's refusal to rehear the case, including one judge who warned that "the demands of bullies will become school policy" if the ruling stood.

The 9th Circuit decision relied heavily on the U.S. Supreme Court's 1969 precedent regarding when schools can cite safety concerns to justify taking action that might violate student free speech rights. The Supreme Court would have had to revisit the precedent to take the case, but there were not the four votes necessary for the justices to hear the appeal.

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