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Dear Superintendent Jefferson

It has come to my attention that on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, during the Health Technology class at the High School, a yoga instructor directed a yoga session with young impressionable teenage students. It is my understanding that all the students were given yoga mats and participated in the exercise.

There is no doubt that yoga is a practice of Eastern Religion. The 1995 Self-Realization Fellowship Church vs. Ananda Church of Self Realization Federal Court case classified the "Hindu-Yoga spiritual tradition" as a "religious tradition."

(See: <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-9th-circuit/1224987.html>)

Additionally, a study was done finding over sixty-two percent of students in secular yoga change their primary reason for practicing. "Most initiate yoga practice for exercise and stress relief, but for many, spirituality becomes their primary reason for maintaining practice" the study stated.

(See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25030795> )

Incidentally, I have several families in my congregation that live inside the Mansfield City School District. As Shepherd of my congregation, I am called to protect the families of my congregation, especially when teaching is propagated that runs counter to the truths found in the Bible.

As Acts 20: 28-31 (KJV) says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

With this in mind, it is my firm belief that Mansfield City Schools is in violation of the establishment of religion based on current court

interpretation. Because of this endorsement of Eastern Religion during school hours, the district could be subject to potential litigation.

Case in point, in 2016, the Pennsylvania' Board of Education found a yoga-based charter school was in violation of laws prohibiting public schools from providing religious instruction.

(See: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K12/Charter%20Schools/Charter%20Board%20Appeal%20Opinions/2013-10,%20Education%20for%20New%20Generations%20Charter%20School%20-%20recon.pdf> )

Claims about health and educational benefits of yoga seldom note weaknesses in empirical evidence. Many studies are not peer-reviewed, therefore poor quality, using small sample sizes, without randomized controls and based on self-report data.

With media fanfare about the latest Hollywood celebrity or Washington D.C. politician promoting the benefits of yoga, parents may be unaware of more readily available alternatives thru scientific research that provide similar benefits, like napping, music, healthy lunches, or even aerobic exercise.

It is my opinion that the Mansfield City School District can utilize these healthy alternatives rather than the indoctrination of yoga. Thank you for your careful consideration. I am looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Pastor James Spencer  
Peoples Baptist