

Statement of Don and Cherie Layshock, Justin's Parents

January 31, 2006

People we know in the valley were probably shocked to see our names in the headlines and its not something we take lightly to file suit against the Hermitage School District. Although we could have pulled Justin out of school right away and put him in Kennedy Christian, thereby saving embarrassment for everyone involved, we decided to do what was right in our minds. Justin was given ten days out-of-school suspension with the remainder of the year to be spent three hours a day in the very limited teacher supported Alternative Curriculum Education program, a punishment for something that was created at his maternal grandmother's house and for which he was punished by us, his parents.

Justin was the only student in the school to have admitted creating one of the four websites. He has apologized twice to Mr. Trosch, once in person and once in writing. He did this without prompting from anyone else. He is sorry and embarrassed by what he calls a dumb mistake. My wife and I had made several attempts to convince District officials that if they felt Justin needed more than a ten-day suspension he should be allowed to do something like community service; anything that would not take him out of his regular classes. Only after hearing for the final time that the District would not change the punishment did we decide to take legal action.

One of the main reasons for the school punishments was for alleged disruption of the school process, which is the same thing as saying that if a girl gets pregnant she should be suspended because the whole school is talking. Or the football team should be suspended because everyone is talking about the big game. We pay teachers to teach and keep order in classes, and they do a good job of that.

We think that Hermitage tax payers will rest easier knowing the District is paying computer forensic experts \$375.00 per hour to testify in court and tear computers apart piece by piece for the sole purpose of proving that Justin may have accessed www.myspace.com at school, which would possibly lead to another half-day-in school suspension. That is, if he gets the same punishment as other students who have done the same thing. But we're not holding our breath. It seems to us that the school district is trying to crucify our son just to set an example. We regret that they have chosen this path.