



**Roma ISD
608 North Garcia Street
Roma, Texas 78582
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August 26, 2020

STATEMENT FROM ROMA ISD REGARDING ROMA HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER TAYLOR LIFKA

Ms. Taylor Lifka has been reinstated to her classroom teaching position at Roma High School. Roma ISD recognizes the importance of initiatives that promote the equal treatment and acceptance of all students in the District.

It is District's goal to provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming educational environment for every student. Roma ISD supports progressive educational policymaking and training programs aimed at accomplishing these goals. Schools, teachers, and students all have a part to play in ensuring that schools maintain an educational setting free from discrimination and harassment. Roma ISD has existing anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies in place and appreciates the importance of continuously evaluating and developing those programs for the health and benefit of our students.

On Sunday, August 23, 2020, Ms. Lifka was temporarily placed on paid administrative leave after the District received concerns from community members and parents regarding a digital graphic that Ms. Lifka indicated she planned to post on her virtual classroom page the following morning. It is the practice of Roma ISD to diligently review all parent concerns. In this case, the timing in which information was received by the District (over the weekend) made it necessary for the District to place Ms. Lifka on leave until we could fully and responsibly review this matter. This action was not intended to reflect any form of punishment or admonishment towards Ms. Lifka but was purely driven by a need to review the circumstances and come to a sound resolution for all persons involved. Out of concern for Ms. Lifka, Roma ISD wishes to state again that she has not been reprimanded in any way concerning this matter. The District appreciates the importance of advancing sensitivity regarding equality and inclusivity.

On August 25th, the District contacted Ms. Lifka to communicate that this matter had been reviewed, and notified her that she was no longer on administrative leave.

At that time, Ms. Lifka was also advised that she would be allowed the choice to keep the graphic background for her virtual classroom as proposed. She is being allowed that opportunity, provided that the use of the virtual classroom background space in this instance does not come to overly disrupt or detract from the educational process or the learning environment.

Roma ISD was happy to have the opportunity to better understand Ms. Lifka's viewpoints and welcomes Ms. Lifka back to the classroom. The District stands behind the concepts of equality and inclusivity. Roma ISD has committed itself to further evaluating and, if needed, putting into place new and more extensive written policies promoting equality, acceptance and student welfare. The District is also committed to evaluating and conducting supplemental staff and employee training on these subjects.

"Roma ISD regrets that this matter has become a point of controversy. It was never the intention of the District to indicate anything less than full support for the concepts of equality and student safety," said Roma ISD Superintendent Carlos Guzman. "As educators and community members, Roma ISD has an obligation to carefully listen to parent concerns and respond to them, taking into consideration the rights

of employees and students. As a school district, we must create a safe environment for our teachers and students that fosters and respects everyone's beliefs in a manner that does not discriminate or disrupt the learning environment. I want to affirm that our District is filled with caring and committed educators that give 100 percent of themselves every day to the education and development of our students."