

Arm Band Case

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ARM BANDS ON BOARD AGENDA

12-19-65
A school ban against students wearing black arm bands is expected to be discussed at the Des Moines School Board's regular meeting Tuesday afternoon.

Craig Sawyer, attorney representing the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, is to speak for that organization and for five students who were suspended from school for wearing arm bands.

The students said they wore the arm bands in mourning for those killed and wounded in Viet Nam and in support of a Christmas truce.

Preliminary plans for Findley Elementary School, First street and Hull avenue, also will be presented to the board.

The portion of the board meeting open to the public is expected to begin between 1:30 and 2 p. m. Tuesday in the board offices, 1800 Grand ave.

A letter supporting the ban against wearing arm bands was sent Saturday to Ora Niffenegger, School Board president, by the Rev. Joseph W. Arnett, pastor, and other officials of the Bethel Bible Church.

The letter said that the board of elders and deacons voted unanimously Friday "to express their deep appreciation for your firm stand in discouraging the use of public school facilities and school time for 'black arm band' and other demonstrations."

School officials had decided Tuesday not to permit students to wear the arm bands on grounds that it would disturb the educational program.

Ora Niffenegger, school board president, said he personally was "absolutely opposed to this type of demonstration within the confines of the school."

Suspended

At Roosevelt High School, Chris Eckhardt, 15, of 3818 Lanewood drive, was suspended Thursday morning because he wore a black arm band. He is a tenth-grade student.

Don K. Blackman, vice-principal, said that Eckhardt was the only high school student he knew of who wore such an arm band Thursday.

Blackman said there was no commotion or disturbance at the school in connection with the arm band wearing.

At Harding Junior High School, Mary Beth Tinker, 13, of 704 Grandview ave., was sent home for wearing a black arm band. She is in the eighth grade.

Chester Pratt, Harding principal, said the girl's arm band caused no disturbance, but she was sent home in line with the ban on arm bands announced earlier by school officials.