

Brittan School
2340 Pepper Street
Sutter, CA 95982

January 30, 2005

This is a formal written complaint against the Brittan Elementary School Board and the Superintendent/Principal of Brittan Elementary School, Mr. Ernie Graham. This Board has implemented mandatory ID Cards and RFID tracking of elementary and junior high students without consulting the parents of these students and without any attempt to obtain parental consent. We are writing to appeal the decision of this Board to the next level of review.

On January 13, 2005 a Weekly Information Bulletin was sent home with our children announcing the implementation of a new ID badge to increase the safety of all students at Brittan Elementary School.

On January 18, 2005 our [redacted] grader came home from school wearing an ID card that displayed [redacted] picture, name and grade. This ID card was in a plastic case that measures 5 ½ inches by 4 inches and is equipped with a break-away lanyard. On the back of the card there was a completely sealed tube that contained an unknown object approximately the circumference of a roll of dimes and 4 inches long. There was no mention in the bulletin of what was in the plastic tube or what purpose it served. Although the unknown contents of the tube initially caused some apprehension, the most glaring concern was the name and grade of the student plainly visible on a badge that was required to be worn outside the clothing at all times.

On January 19, 2005 my wife and I requested a meeting with the Principal of Brittan School, Mr. Graham, to obtain more information and voice our concerns. At this meeting we were told that these badges would help identify people who didn't belong on campus and that the tube on the back contained an RF transmitter. We voiced our most immediate concern, which was about student's names being displayed. Brittan School has an open campus and as is typical with most public schools there are a lot of people on the grounds in the mornings and afternoons when students are dropped off and picked up. Additionally, many of these junior high age children walk to and from school and leave their badges displayed. They may stop anywhere en route which would allow any person to walk up to a child, on or off school grounds, and immediately know the child's name and what grade they are in, completely violating their right to privacy. If a predator wanted to target a specific child/family, or wanted to use their name to lure a child into a dangerous situation, the ID card has just made that task easier.

We then inquired about the contents of the plastic tube on the back of the ID card and were told it contains an RF transmitter that was being tested as part of a pilot program to track students on the school grounds. It was explained that readers were installed above the doors in the school, including the bathrooms, which would register when a student went in or out of that door. Again, we were concerned about privacy issues, especially tracking children in bathrooms. We asked Mr. Graham if we had missed the parent meeting about the implementation of this new program since this is our first year in the district. Mr. Graham informed us that there were no parent meetings on the new program and that he had the support of the School Board and that was all that was needed.

On January 26, 2005, at our request, the President of the Brittan School Board, Mr. Don Hagland, facilitated a meeting with Principal Graham, Vice Principal Garofalo, Florrie Turner and Bernie DiDario, President of InCom Corporation. Mr. DiDario gave us a detailed description of the RFID transmitters and how the program is used to aid teachers in taking attendance and how the school will be able to complete reports with new software being developed. I voiced my concerns about the safety of my children, the invasion of privacy, and access to confidential information about my children. I told Mr. Graham that this was a pilot program that was implemented without any

parental consent and that it was our desire that our children not participate in the program. Mr. Graham stated that it was a mandatory program, that our consent was not required and that if our children didn't participate "we would have big problems".

It is our contention that as parents we most certainly do have a legal right to decide what is best for our minor children based upon our moral convictions and religious beliefs.

While wearing an ID card is common practice in the private work force I am unable to find any other schools that have adopted this policy within the California Public School System. It is one thing if an employer requires an employee to wear an ID badge as a condition of employment and entirely another to require this of an elementary or junior high student at a public school. These ID cards are an invasion of privacy, cumbersome to wear and a hazard to the children. It has been pointed out to the Board that the newest game at school is "tag" where kids try to grab the ID card and pull it off another kid's neck. It has also been reported by students that some of the lanyards are already broken and students are tying knots in the cords. Many parents are worried that a child is going to get hurt; when I spoke to Mr. Graham, I was informed that new lanyards were available and that "minor" injuries are an acceptable risk.

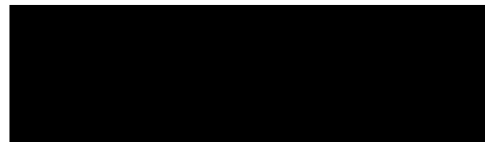
Besides, when is the last time a group of high level executives tried to play dodge ball with an ID card hanging around their necks?

RFID is not new technology and is rapidly becoming the preferred method of inventory control in the retail sales and manufacturing industries. This technology allows for immediate inventory control and has even been reported to allow retailers to track consumers' buying preferences and spending habits. Even in this application many concerns have been raised by privacy protection groups about the complete invasion of privacy this technology allows. Yet, I can find no references of RFID being used to track elementary or junior high students in a California public school. Our children are NOT "inventory".

Education is about teaching respect and tolerance for each other. It is not "big brother" monitoring every move, or children being made to feel they have fewer rights than criminals convicted of serious crimes.

"And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freemen and bondmen, to have a character in their right hand or on their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the character or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation Chapter 13: 16-17). Have we reached the point where parents don't have any rights and schools will decide what is best for their children? Are not our moral convictions and religious beliefs protected? Do our children not have a right to a good education free from fear of retaliation?

Sincerely,



Cc: Don Hagland, President Brittan School Board
Jeff Holland, Sutter County Superintendent of Schools
Ruth Green, California State Board of Education
Marsha Bedwell, General Counsel, State Board of Education
Sam Aanestad, State Senator
Doug LaMalfa, State Assemblymen
Electronic Privacy Information Center
American Civil Liberties Union