

The Pizitz Letter

In 2002, a middle school principal wrote a letter to the president of Channel One. (His letter and the reply are attached.)

The principal explained how his school (Pizitz MS, Vestavia Hills, AL) shows, or rather, *doesn't* show, the daily Channel One News program. What this principal said, and more importantly, what Channel One News said in reply, can help your school turn off Channel One News, or greatly decrease the time wasted showing it, and yet still keep the television equipment.

Summary:

The principal told Channel One that his school

1. Doesn't show Channel One on days the TVs are used for other purposes
2. Doesn't show it, when he is absent
3. Doesn't show it, when he can't preview the program
4. Doesn't show it, if any content is, in his judgment, not appropriate

He says, "I have no idea how frequently this (non-showing) occurs, and I do not keep any records of such."

When it can't be shown in homeroom, he tells Channel One, it is shown later in the day, but there is no way of knowing how many (if any) teachers are showing it. The principal says he doesn't even attempt to know, or document, how often Channel One News is shown in his school.

Channel One is then asked if the school is in contractual compliance.

Jim Ritts, C1N president, replies that the school is "well within contractual viewing requirements." There is no mention of a minimum number of days the program must be shown.

What does this mean for your school?

Channel One treats schools differently. Pizitz MS, a wealthy suburban school, is told that they don't have to show the program 90% of school days. It doesn't matter how many classrooms are showing the program.

Yet many schools have been threaten with the removal of C1N's equipment if they didn't honor every onerous clause of the contract. To Channel One, there are first-class schools and there are second-class schools. Some schools get 27" TVs and some get 19" TVs that are too small for classrooms.

Obligation, Inc. would like to see Channel One out of schools, but reality is many schools simply do not abide by the Channel One contract terms. Our organization has been researching Channel One for eight years. We know of no school system in our home state of Alabama that honors the terms of the contract. We don't know any that come even close.

The next time you receive a nasty letter from Channel One News demanding that you are required to show their TV program at least 90% of school days, remember where you filed these letters.

PIZITZ MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAVID W. MILES
PRINCIPAL

SOMIA CARRINGTON
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

MARK KIRKEMIER
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

2020 PIZITZ DRIVE
VESTAVIA HILLS, AL 35218
PHONE (205) 402-5360
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WFB SITE www.vestavia.k12.al.us/pizitz



September 18, 2002

Mr. Jim Ritts,
President and CEO
Channel One Network
1440 Broadway
17th Floor
New York, NY 10018

Dear Mr. Ritts:

I am writing to inform you and your company of the viewing practices and schedule of Channel One News at Pizitz Middle School. Our school day begins at 8:05 am and ends at 3:05 pm. Channel One News is typically broadcast during our homeroom periods, which are about 27 minutes in length. On those days in which the Channel One equipment is being used for other closed-circuit broadcast purposes, we play the program at 2:45 for anyone wishing to view it; some teachers take advantage of this opportunity, some do not – I do not monitor or document this.

I do not show Channel One News (1) if I am absent from work; (2) if I do not have time to preview the program; (3) if the program and/or commercial content is not, in my judgment, appropriate for our children to see; or (4) if the equipment is tied up with other closed-circuit programming. I have no idea how frequently this occurs, and I do not keep any records of such.

Please advise us if, in light of the above information; (1) you consider Pizitz to be in contractual compliance with Channel One News; (2) you require myself and other principals to document the frequency with which they permit Channel One to be broadcast; and (3) you encourage and expect local administrators to screen out Channel One broadcasts they deem unsuitable in their schools/communities.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these issues and questions.

Sincerely,

David W. Miles,
Principal

September 19, 2002

Mr. David W. Miles
Principal
Pizitz Middle School
2020 Pizitz Drive
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

Dear Mr. Miles:

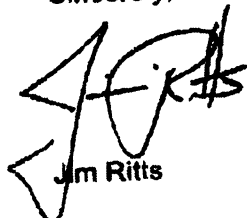
Thank you for your letter of September 18th detailing the viewing schedule of the daily Channel One News program at Pizitz Middle School.

The details you have outlined for us, indicating that the program is shown on most days during the homeroom period or later in the day if circumstances do not permit, is well within the contractual viewing requirements of Channel One Network.

I am happy to know that you are committed to previewing the Channel One News program daily prior to showing it to your students. We strongly encourage that all Channel One schools do exactly that and report to us any concerns that they have about the program. Local administrators have the option to forgo showing the daily Channel One News program in their schools. If, in previewing, they find any portion of the program to be inappropriate or unsuitable for their schools. Fortunately, with our 11 year history, this appears to happen rarely.

Thank you for your dedication to provide your students with another valuable, educational tool in the daily Channel One News program. Your direct participation and suggestions are important to us in helping us make the program the best for the students, schools and community.

Sincerely,



Jim Ritts

November 15, 2011

From Jim Metrock:

Of course the Pizitz Letter is from 2002. One could argue that it is no longer relevant.

Channel One might have changed their lackadaisical attitude towards schools violating their viewing requirements. Indeed, Channel One president's Jim Ritts left the company in 2005.

Unfortunately for Channel One's advertisers like the Army and Marines, the Pizitz Letter is more relevant than ever.

On August 17, 2010, Pizitz principal David Miles wrote Paul Folkemer a Channel One executive and said the school is still handling the showing of the program in the same way he stated in his September 18, 2002 letter to Jim Ritts. The principal asks if the school can be considered "in contractual compliance."

The principal goes out of his way to mention three times that everything is the same as it was in 2002.

The answer from the current Channel One president Kent Haehl is a duplicate given by Jim Ritts eight years before. Haehl ignores the fact that the school isn't even attempting to show the program 90% of school days.

Channel One's president doesn't take the principal to task for not showing the program for TWO YEARS. (Two years that advertisers thought their ads were playing to the 1,100 students at Pizitz Middle School.)

Instead Mr. Haehl says Pizitz is showing the program "most days" (Not true.) and that showing it "most days" is "well within the contractual viewing requirements of Channel One Network." (No it's not.)

Channel One's presidents Jim Ritts and Kent Haehl have both acknowledged that the Channel One contract has become non-enforceable. And they have put it in writing.

From: "David W. Miles" <milesdw@vestavia.k12.al.us>
Subject: **Letters**
Date: August 17, 2010 2:38:39 PM CDT
To: Paul Folkemer <PFolkemer@ChannelOne.com>
1 Attachment, 2.1 MB

Paul,

Here are the scanned letters from me to Jim Ritts and his response in September of 2002.

The circumstances that I describe in my September 18, 2002 letter are still valid today. The only caveat, as I explained to you on the phone today, is that for two years we were undergoing extensive renovations to our building, which resulted in a lot of our wiring being cut/disrupted, which prevented our being able to do any kind of school-wide broadcasts of any kind consistently, including the Channel 1 broadcasts. It took us until last year to sort out all of the residual wiring issues, and so last year we gradually got back on-line with our building-wide broadcasts. This year, we should be in full stride per my September 18, 2002 letter.

Also, as I mentioned in our conversation, we no longer use the Channel 1 televisions, but broadcast through our Promethean Boards, which are located in every classroom in the building.

My question is, as it was in 2002, does Channel 1 consider us to be in contractual compliance, given the circumstances stipulated in my 2002 letter as amended in this email?

I look forward to hearing from you or the appropriate Channel 1 official(s) soon.

Sincerely,
David W. Miles,
Principal

CH1 LETTERS 2010.MB



Channel One Network®

August 18, 2010

Mr. David W. Miles
Principal
Pizitz Middle School
2020 Pizitz Drive
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

Dear Mr. Miles:

Thank you for your letter of August 17 detailing the viewing schedule of the daily Channel One News program at Pizitz Middle School.

The details you have outlined for us, indicating that the program is shown on most days during the homeroom period of later in the day if circumstances do not permit, is well within the contractual viewing requirements of Channel One Network.

I am happy to know that you are committed to previewing the Channel One News program daily prior to showing it to your students. We strongly encourage that all Channel One schools do exactly that and report to us any concerns that they have about the program. Local administrators have the option to forgo showing the daily Channel One News program in their schools if, in previewing, they find any portion of the program to be inappropriate or unsuitable for their schools. Fortunately, with our 20+ year history, this appears to happen rarely.

Thank you for your dedication to provide your students with another valuable, educational tool in the daily Channel One News program. Your direct participation and suggestions are important to us in helping us make the program the best for the students, schools and community.

Sincerely,

Kent Haehl