# Substitute Teacher Dismissed from Wyoming Schools for Refusing to Use Preferred Student Names



In Cheyenne, Wyoming, substitute teacher Gene Clemetson was dismissed from two different schools after refusing to address students by their preferred names. The incidents took place at East High School and Triumph High School during the spring semester.

At East High School, a student identifying as female requested Clemetson to call her by a different name than the one on the attendance sheet. Clemetson refused, stating he had to use the names officially registered with the district. This led to a confrontation with Principal Sam Mirich, who informed Clemetson that he did not fit in at the school and had him escorted out by the vice principal.

A similar situation occurred at Triumph High School, where another student requested Clemetson to use a different name. When he again refused, the principal asked him to leave, stating that human resources would follow up.

Following these incidents, Clemetson met with HR representatives from Laramie County School District #1, including Vicki Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of HR, and HR Director Jen Brownhill. The HR team outlined multiple complaints from students who were upset that Clemetson did not use their preferred names.

Additionally, during the review, an environmental science teacher complained Clemetson did not play a documentary as instructed, instead allegedly criticizing her political views, which Clemetson denied.

Clemetson maintains that using students' legal names is a matter of free speech. Court rulings across the United States, including a recent decision in Wyoming, have addressed similar issues. In Wyoming, a federal judge ruled that teachers do not have a free speech right to use students' legal names if the school policy dictates otherwise. It is currently unclear if the school district Clemetson worked for has such a policy.