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## EX-TEACHER SENTENCED IN MOLESTATION CASE

**BYLINE:** SONJA BJELLAND, THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

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A former California School for the Deaf Riverside teacher was sentenced Friday to 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to molesting two girls.

Daniel Ray Metroka has been in jail since his arrest on June 30, 2007. On that day, Metroka and his wife were baby-sitting the two girls, 5 and 7 years old.

"There are no words that truly describe the betrayal we feel," stated a letter from their parents read by Deputy District Attorney Kelli Catlett. "...Dan stole our children's innocence forever."

In the letter, the parents requested that he identify any other victims who may be deaf and have trouble communicating.

"We want Dan to know we will never live in peace," Catlett read from the letter.

Metroka, 52, had taught at the school since 1997. He also signed as a volunteer interpreter at St. Catherine of Alexandria Catholic Church in Riverside. The school is one of two state-run schools for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On Friday, Metroka pleaded guilty to four counts of committing a lewd or lascivious act. Chained and in an orange jumpsuit, he signed the "I love you" symbol to his family and friends as he was escorted out of the Riverside Hall of Justice courtroom.

He was facing life in prison but struck a deal for a 20-year sentence, said his defense attorney, Stephen Harmon.

"This is a man who has led a very good life," Harmon said. "But on one evening he made a terrible mistake. I admire him for taking responsibility for that, and he will certainly pay a very high price."

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