

Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

It is accepted that no religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the district or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Instead, the district should encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and to be tolerant of each other's religious views. The district should utilize its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious belief. In that spirit of tolerance, students and staff members should be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it.

The board recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that religious heritage has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.

Rules found in IKD-R will be followed by district employees.

APPROVED: December 13, 1982

REVIEWED: July 9, 2001

REVIEWED AND APPROVED: March 12, 2012

Observance of Religious Holidays

The practice of the district shall be as follows:

The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and a secular basis may be observed in the public schools.

The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.

Music, art, literature and drama having a religious theme or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.

The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native America religions or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. Among these holidays are included Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hannukah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween.

The district's calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.

Religion in the Curriculum

Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that teaching about--and not of--religion be conducted in a factual objective and respectful manner. Therefore, the practice of the district shall be as follows:

The district supports the inclusion of religious literature, music, drama and the arts in the curriculum and in school activities provided that it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively.

The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and thorough study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.

Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.

Dedications and Commencement

Traditions are a cherished part of the community life, and the district expresses an interest in maintaining those traditions which have had a significance to the community. While recognizing the significance of traditions, the Board of Education believes that its dedication ceremonies and commencement exercises should be secular to nature. Inspirational addresses, which do not promote religion, may be permitted in such ceremonies.

Because the baccalaureate service is traditionally religious in nature, it should be sponsored by agencies separate from the district.

APPROVED: December 13, 1982

AMENDED: November 9, 1992

REVIEWED: July 9, 2001

REVIEWED AND APPROVED: March 12, 2012