

Instruction

RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

6141.2(a)

The recognition of religious holidays provides a natural opportunity to promote an appreciation for and respect of diversity. Learning opportunities should reflect the diversity of global cultures.

- Recognition of religious holidays must support curricular objectives and shall not dominate the educational program.
- All religions must be afforded equal dignity with none advanced or disparaged.
- Classroom and school decorations which are part of custom and which have no direct religious meaning (e.g., cornucopia, wreath, garland, candy canes, holly) may be displayed for a period of time appropriate to the holiday.
- Programs and concerts should focus on seasonal rather than religious themes. Performances that recognize holidays must be of an artistic not religious nature. Religious music must not dominate any school program.
- Program selections should not, by their nature, exclude students from participation. The parents or guardians may exclude their children from a program involving the recognition of religious holidays or a celebration that is in conflict with family beliefs. The parent or guardian shall send written notification of the child's exclusion to the principal.
- No school events (including rehearsals, performances, athletic practices, and games) are to be scheduled on major religious holidays that are also school holidays, and by 4:30pm on the eves of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Normal school activities may proceed on religious holidays that are not school holidays. However, students cannot be required to attend nor are they to be penalized for missing class, homework, practices, games, rehearsals, performances, etc., because of religious observance.
- The Superintendent shall designate a central office administrator to provide direction to building administrators regarding this policy and provide for a review of building activity calendars.

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6141.2(b)

Legal References: First Amendment, The United States Constitution
Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962)
Lenon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971)
Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992)
Lamb’s Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District, 508 U.S.
384 (1993)

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