

Instruction

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND DISPLAYS

6115.1(a)

It is the policy of the Board of Education that no religious belief or non-belief will be promoted by the district or its employees and none will be disparaged. The district will encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and respect each other's religious views. The district will use all opportunities to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents or guardians, whether they involve race, culture, economic background, or religious beliefs. Students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices that are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it. There will be no benedictions, invocations, or other form of group prayer at any school functions or exercises.

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

Therefore, the practices of the district will be:

- The customs of several holidays throughout the year that have a religious and a secular basis may be recognized in the 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 religious themes 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 Crescent, Cross, Menorah, Star of David, symbols of Native American religion, 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 the display is temporary in nature.

It is also the policy of the Board that religious literature, music, drama, and the arts will be included 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.

Instruction

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND DISPLAYS (continued)

6115.1(b)

The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history will only be as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive 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 that reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme will be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.

Adopted 8/27/2004