

Religion/School Curriculum and Activities

The constitutions of the United States and the State of Washington clearly separate the role of the government and the church. Religious beliefs are matters of personal consideration rather than governmental authority. Therefore, the school district shall observe neutrality in matters of religion, neither opposing nor promoting religion.

The following guidelines shall provide direction for school personnel as to the place of religion in the curriculum and the activities of the district:

- A. Special music, art, or drama programs shall have secular (not overtly or specifically religious) instruction as their purpose. Any program specifically relating to a religious holiday shall not be nor have the effect of being a religious celebration, ceremony, or observance. Musical, artistic, or dramatic selections in particular programs shall be justified on the basis of their particular musical, artistic, or dramatic value and/or traditional non-religious usage and presented in context with other such works that are non-religious in nature; selections shall be presented in such a way as to avoid promoting or disparaging any particular religious belief or non-belief.
- B. History, sociology, literature, and the arts, as disciplines, may have a religious dimension. Study of these disciplines, including the religious dimension, shall give neither preferential nor disparaging treatment to any single religion or to religion in general and must not be introduced or utilized for devotional purposes.
- C. Staff should avoid assignments that emphasize the religious aspects of a holiday. Individual students may use an instructional project, such as writing or an art assignment, to express voluntarily their religious beliefs or a religious tradition.
- D. Classroom displays or decorations pertaining to religion, religious holiday(s), or religious symbol(s) shall relate to instruction that is based solely on secular goals and objectives of the district and secular student objectives, as well as a factual and objective study of the particular subject. This regulation shall not infringe upon the rights of students to wear religious symbols in a manner which is not materially and substantially disruptive to the educational process.
- E. Students shall not be required to participate in school-sponsored programs or activities that are a regular part of the curriculum that are in violation of or offensive to their religious beliefs or non-beliefs. Parents shall have the authority to determine when their children may decline such participation. The school shall provide an alternate activity for such students during such program or activity.
- F. Gift exchanges in the observance and/or celebration of a religious holiday are prohibited as a part of any curricular or co-curricular activity.
- G. All school assemblies are under the control of the school district. Schools shall not conduct assemblies or sponsor speakers at assemblies that promote or disparage a religious belief or non-belief.
- H. School personnel shall not conduct, sponsor, endorse, or encourage any student to recite or participate in oral or silent prayer or other forms of devotional activity. Individual students may, on their own volition, engage in silent prayer whenever they choose to do so.

- I. Commencement exercises shall be free from sectarian influence. However, cultural traditions such as invocation and benediction observances inherent in such events or exercises may be honored in the spirit of accommodation, as long as reference to any specific religion is excluded.
- J. The district shall not sponsor a baccalaureate service. Parents, students, or groups may plan and organize baccalaureate services that are religious in nature; but attendance at such must be entirely voluntary. No district funds may be used for baccalaureate services. The planning or preparation for the baccalaureate may not involve staff or students during the school day.

Date: 11.12.85

Revised: 07.02.07; 06.05.13