

RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

1. Observance of Religious Holidays

Acceptable practices of Religious Holidays

- a. The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis may be noted in the schools.
 - b. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
 - c. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes and programs if presented in an objective manner and as a traditional part of a cultural and religious heritage of a particular holiday.
 - d. The use of religious items, such as crosses, menorahs, crescents, Stars of David, crèches, or other symbols that are part of a religious holiday, is permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as examples of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.
2. The district's calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.

3. Religion in the Curriculum

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

- a. The district supports the inclusion of religious literature, music, drama, and other arts in the curriculum and in school activities if it is intrinsic to the various fields of study and is presented objectively.
- b. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenet or demean any religious beliefs.
- c. Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or nonbeliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated in the

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classroom; for example, students are free to express religious belief or nonbelief in composition, art forms, music, and speech and debate.

4. Teachers are urged to recognize the need to be sensitive to students of minority religions in structuring lessons about holidays and religious observances. This can be done so that students understand the plurality of religions as part of the American heritage.
5. With parental permission, students will be allowed to observe their major religious holidays by not attending school. Such absences are not excused by the state and no ADA can be claimed; however, students will be allowed full make-up privileges without penalty for any work missed.