

RELIGIOUS-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

This regulation provides guidance for implementing Board Policy 2340 Religious Related Activities and Practices.

1. For all classroom and school activities that may address religious aspects of holidays, the following questions should be asked and answered to comply with Board Policy 2340.
 - a. What is the secular purpose of the activity? If there is no secular purpose involved, use of religious symbols or content is improper.
 - b. If there is a secular purpose, will the primary effect of the activity be one that advances or inhibits religion? If so, the activity is improper.
 - c. Will the activity impose an excessive entanglement of school personnel in religious issues, which will create difficulty in maintaining a neutral position toward advancement of religion? If such consequences appear likely, then the activity is improper.
2. Staff should not assign work that emphasizes the religious aspect of a holiday. Individual students may, if consistent with an assignment and at their own direction, use religious personages, events or symbols for artistic or other types of school related expression.
3. Students may be excused from participating in or attending school activities that they believe are contrary to their religious beliefs.
4. Musical, artistic and dramatic presentations which have a religious theme or content may be included in course work or programs on the basis of their particular artistic and educational value or traditional secular usage. Such materials must be presented in a neutral, non-devotional manner, be related to the objective of the instructional activity, and be accompanied by comparable works of a non-religious nature.
5. A variety of activities should be included as part of any holiday themes or activities to insure that the focus is on the historical and secular aspects of the holiday rather than any devotional meaning. Music programs shall not use the religious aspect of a holiday as the underlying theme or message.
6. Pageants, plays or other dramatic activities shall not be used to convey religious messages.
7. Religious symbols, such as a nativity scene, may only be displayed for a secular purpose and in conjunction with other secular holiday symbols so that the total presentation emphasizes the culture rather than the religious significance of a holiday.
8. All instructional and building activity, including decorations, that have any religious content must be conducted or used in a manner that is objective, neutral, and non-devotional regarding religion, and must serve a secular purpose. Use of religious

materials in instruction or activities should always honor the same principles of neutrality, objectivity, and educational effectiveness that is expected in other areas of the curriculum, must be sensitive to our Nation's and community's pluralistic society and seek to educate not indoctrinate. No use of religious materials may treat any particular religion or religion in general in a preferential or disparaging manner and must not be used for devotional purposes.

Cabinet Reviewed 9-20-05

Superintendent Approved 9-21-05