

## TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The Board of Education protects and supports the right of each individual to personal religious and ethical development, but prohibits the promotion of any and all religions, religious philosophies, or observances.

The curriculum includes the study of religions and the impact of religious beliefs and practices in literature, history, and the arts. Consideration of religious ideas and ideals as moral and ethical forces in our culture and in formulating personal values also is included in the curriculum, as are the constitutional guarantees for free exercise of religious beliefs.

Some specific implications of these commitments include:

1. Discussion or study dealing with the recognition of religious holidays is appropriate when it builds common understanding and respect, but should not be presented in the context of religious celebrations. Religious celebrations are defined as worship or religious services of any kind, religious exhibits, and the presentation of religious music primarily for religious or devotional purposes.
2. Use of religious materials or displays is appropriate when it is integral to a subject in the curriculum or related to the study of religions.
3. Music with a religious text or of a religious origin comprises a substantial portion of music literature. The presentation of religious music primarily for its musical content, literary importance, or historical value is appropriate. The presentation of this music should not be made under circumstances which might reasonably suggest it is being offered primarily for devotional purposes or as a religious celebration. When music teachers select religious or seasonal music for study or performance, careful consideration and scrutiny should be given to lyrics, the age of the performers, and the religious beliefs, practices, and traditions of other faiths.
4. Acknowledgment of major religious holidays is appropriate when scheduling District activities, with the objective that students and staff not be required to choose between participating in school activities and celebrating religious holidays.
5. Teaching about the impact of religious practices and beliefs, both in our society and in the lives of individuals, is appropriate when it fosters mutual understanding, respect for the values and beliefs of others, and knowledge about religious practices.

Ref: U.S. Constitution, First Amendment  
Education Law §3210

Adoption date: November 21, 1994