

8800 - RELIGIOUS AND OTHER CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The School Board acknowledges that the U.S. Constitution prohibits it from adopting any policy or rule promoting or establishing a religion or any policy that unlawfully restricts any person's free exercise of the individual right to worship enjoyed by all persons. Within the confines of this legal framework, the Board adopts the following policy to address the scope of these rights and the District's authority within its own facilities or during events.

As public employees, while on duty and acting within the scope of employment or pursuant to official duties as opposed to in their capacity as private citizens, District staff members shall not use prayer, religious readings, or religious symbols as a devotional exercise or in an act of worship or celebration. Staff are expected to avoid circumstances where the staff member's expression of religious views could be reasonably construed as an endorsement or approval of the message by the school or District. Nothing in this policy or its application shall serve to prohibit or interfere with any staff member's free exercise of their religious views in circumstances not covered by this policy.

Nothing in this policy prohibits teaching about various religions and religious practices in a manner consistent with any adopted District course curriculum. This instruction may include discussion of religious holidays and customs in a manner related to the curriculum that does not give the appearance of an endorsement of one religion over other religions or favoring either a system or religious beliefs or of other beliefs, such as atheism or agnosticism. Observance of religious holidays through devotional exercises or acts of worship is also prohibited.

The District shall not act as a disseminating agent for any person or outside agency for any religious or anti-religious document, book, or article. Distribution of such materials on District property by any party shall be in accordance with Policy 7510 and AP 7510A - *Use of District Facilities* and Policy 9700 and AP 9700 - *Relations with Special Interest Groups*.

Students are not prohibited by this policy, or any procedure promulgated pursuant to this policy, from engaging in the free, individual, and voluntary exercise or expression of the student's religious beliefs. However, such exercise or expression may be limited to lunch periods or other non-instructional time periods when students are free to associate, or on an individual basis in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process.

Celebration activities involving nonreligious decorations and use of secular works are permitted, but it is the responsibility of all faculty members to ensure that such activities are strictly voluntary, do not place an atmosphere of social compulsion or ostracism on groups or individuals, and do not interfere with the regular school program.

The Board shall not conduct or sanction a baccalaureate service in conjunction with graduation ceremonies.

The Board shall not include religious invocations, benedictions, or formal prayer at any school-sponsored event.

Moment of Silence

The Principal shall require teachers in first-period classrooms in all grades to set aside at least one (1) minute, but not more than two (2) minutes daily, for a moment of silence. A staff member may not make suggestions as to the nature of any reflection that a student may engage in during the moment of silence. District staff shall encourage parents or guardians to discuss the moment of silence with their children and to make suggestions as to the best use of this time.

Students may not interfere with other students' participation during the moment of silence.

Veterans Day

The Board requires that an observance be scheduled each year on or about Veterans' Day to convey the meaning and significance of that day to all students and staff. The amount of time each school devotes to this observance shall be at least one (1) hour or, in schools that schedule class periods of less than one (1) hour, at least one (1) standard class period. The Board shall determine the specific activities to constitute observance in each school in the District after consulting with the school's administrators.

Celebrate Freedom Week

The last full week of classes in September is recognized in school as Celebrate Freedom Week, and instruction that week will include study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence. During that week, principals and teachers will lead students in reciting a portion of the Declaration of Independence. A student will be excused from reciting the Declaration, upon written request by the student's parent, in accordance with State law.

[] Holocaust Remembrance Day

~~In honor of the millions of victims killed in the Holocaust, January 27 will be observed in schools as "Holocaust Remembrance Day." If January 27 is not a school day, "Holocaust Remembrance Day" will be observed on the following school day or on another school day as designated by the Board. Instruction on the harmful impacts of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism and the positive contributions of the Jewish community to humanity may be provided as part of the instruction on "Holocaust Remembrance Day".~~

~~See Policy 2215—*Program of Instruction* for required instruction regarding the Holocaust.~~

[END OF OPTION]

F.S. 683.196

F.S. 1000.06

F.S. 1002.20

F.S. 1003.421

F.S. 1003.44

F.S. 1003.4505

20 U.S.C. 4071 et seq.

Gregoire vs. Centennial School District 907 F.2d 1366 (3rd Circuit, 1990)

Lee vs. Weisman, 112 S. Ct. 2649, 120 L. Ed.2d 467 (1992)