

This district recognizes that students and employees have certain constitutional rights regarding religious activities. The district will not take action to prevent or deny students and employees the opportunity to exercise such rights or impose sanctions for having exercised such rights.

STUDENT RIGHTS

1. Prayer During Noninstructional Time. All students have the right to engage in private, non-disruptive activities, such as praying or reading religious materials, during noninstructional time to the same extent that they may engage in nonreligious activities and subject to the same rules that are applied to other student-initiated expressive activities. Students may engage in such activities with other students.
2. Organized Prayer Groups and Activities. Students have the right to organize prayer groups, religious clubs, and similar activities to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other non-curricular student activity groups. District employees should neither encourage nor discourage participation in student-run activities based upon the activities' religious character or perspective. The district will provide such groups the same access to school facilities for assembling and school media for advertising that it provides other non-curricular student activity groups.
3. Moment of Silence. Students have the right to pray, or not pray, during moments of silence and district employees are prohibited from encouraging or discouraging student prayer during such moments of silence.
4. Accommodation of Prayer and Religious Expression During Instructional Time. Students have the right to engage in prayer or religious expression during instructional time to the same degree they may engage in nonreligious private expression during such time (e.g., praying silently before taking a test). Students also have the right to be dismissed to attend off-premises religious instruction during the school day, in compliance with the district's policy governing release time. The district will evaluate and grant, or deny, student requests to be excused from class to accommodate religious needs in the same manner that similar requests to accommodate nonreligious needs are evaluated.
5. Religious Expression and Prayer in Class Assignments. Students have the right to incorporate written expressions of religious beliefs in their schoolwork, including homework, art, and other class assignments. District employees are directed to judge all class assignments by ordinary academic standards of substance, relevance, and other legitimate pedagogical objectives. District employees are prohibited from penalizing or rewarding students based on the religious content, or lack of religious content, in a student's schoolwork. When selecting student work for display (e.g., art projects), the district will apply the same legitimate pedagogical selection criteria, such as skill or creativity, to work with and without religious content.

6. Student and Guest (non-student) Speakers at Assemblies and Extracurricular Events. Speakers for assemblies and extracurricular activities who retain primary control over the content of their expression will be selected on the basis of genuinely content-neutral, evenhanded criteria. Speakers will not be sanctioned solely on the basis that the content of the speech is religious or nonreligious in nature. Where school officials determine or substantially control the content of student speech, the speech may not include a prayer or specifically religious, or anti-religious, speech. The district will make appropriate, neutral disclaimers to clarify that such speech, regardless of content, is not endorsed by the school. The district will not organize or require prayer or other religious expression at assemblies or other school-sponsored events.
7. Prayer at Graduation/Baccalaureate Ceremonies. The district prohibits school officials from mandating or organizing prayer at graduation or selecting speakers in a manner that favors or disfavors religious expression, such as prayer. Student speakers at graduation ceremonies must comply with this district's graduation policy. The district is prohibited from sponsoring baccalaureate ceremonies but may allow use of school facilities by private organizers of such ceremonies to the same extent, and in the same manner, as it would allow use of the facilities by other private groups.
8. Student Dress. Students may display religious messages on items of clothing to the same extent that they are permitted to display other comparable messages, and so long as the items are not disruptive to the educational process.
9. Distribution of Religious Materials. Students have the right to distribute religious literature on school property, in a nondisruptive manner, on the same terms as they are permitted to distribute literature that is unrelated to school curriculum or activities, subject to the district's reasonable restrictions as to time, place, and manner.
10. Participation in Curriculum. Students have the right to be exempted from participating in school courses, programs, or activities if it is established that such participation violates the student's religious beliefs, and the district cannot prove a compelling interest in required attendance.
11. Religious Expression Related to Holidays. District employees may include instruction related to religious holidays and practices, provided that such instruction is consistent with the district's curriculum, neutrality among religions is maintained. Employees are prohibited from instruction on religious holidays and practices that promotes or discourages religious expression or particular religions. The district will not celebrate or observe holidays as religious events, nor will it promote or disparage such celebration or observance by students. Students may observe or otherwise recognize religious holidays to the same extent that they may engage in comparable nonreligious activities. District employees may celebrate secular aspects of holidays such as decorating with Halloween pumpkins, but are directed to allow for student religious accommodations whenever possible. For example, school employees should allow a student to color a snowflake or snowman rather than a Christmas tree. District schools may hold events that include religious themes, such as student choirs performing music inspired by or based on religious texts or themes, provided that the music is not performed as a religious exercise

and is not used to promote or favor religion generally, a particular religion, or a religious belief. District schools may incorporate themes referencing any religion or no religion into such events.

DISTRICT EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

The district prohibits employees from encouraging or discouraging prayer or other religious activity. However, employees may take part in religious activities or prayer at any time they are not acting in their official capacity or are otherwise free to engage in personal conversations or other personal conduct (i.e., meeting with other teachers for prayer group during lunch). Employees engaging in private religious expression or prayer may not compel, coerce, persuade, or encourage students to join in such activities. Employees may participate in their personal capacities in privately sponsored baccalaureate ceremonies or similar events. Neither the district nor its employees may punish or otherwise take adverse action or discriminate against any student or other person for refusing to participate in a prayer offered by a district employee during times when such employee is otherwise free to engage in personal conversations or other personal conduct.



LEGAL REFERENCE:

Idaho Code §33-6603 – Public Prayer
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015
Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, U.S. Department of Education (May 15, 2023)
Religion Expression in Public Schools FAQ, U.S. Department of Education (2023)

ADOPTED: March 18, 2025

AMENDED: