

## **Mission-Goals-Objectives**

### **Nondiscrimination**

#### **Commitment to Religious Neutrality (Prayer in the Schools)**

Notwithstanding anything which may inadvertently still appear in policy, the Board of Education understands that administration and staff must recognize the First Amendment religious rights of students. The Board further recognizes that the United States Constitution's First Amendment imposes two equally important obligations on public schools.

First, schools must not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs. Second, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine and students may not coerce participation in religious activity.

Schools must give students the same rights to engage in religious activity and discussion, as they engage in other comparable activity. Generally, this means that students may pray and express their religious beliefs in a non-disruptive manner during the school day when they are not engaged in school activity and instruction, subject to the same rules as apply to other speech.

(cf. 1140 – Distribution of Materials to and by Students)

(cf. 4118.21 – Academic Freedom)

(cf. 6115 – Religious Ceremonies)

(cf. 6115.1 – Religious Observances and Displays)

(cf. 6115.11 – Graduation Exercises – Prayer)

(cf. 6141.2 – Separation of Church and State)

(cf. 6141.21 – Religion in the Public Schools)

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6144.1 – Exemption from Instruction)

(cf. 6145 – Extra Class Activities)

(cf. 6162.51 – Student Surveys)

(cf. 6145.3 – Distribution of Printed Matter, Freedom of School Press, Publications)

**Mission-Goals-Objectives**

**Nondiscrimination (continued)**

Commitment to Religious Neutrality (Prayer in the Schools)

(cf. 9030.1 – Religious Guidelines)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-16a Silent Meditation

10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited

*Lee v. Weisman*, 112S. Ct. 2649 (1992)

*Jones v. Clear Creek Independent School District*, 977 F 2d 963 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1992)

*Harris v. Joint School District*, 41F 3d 447 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1994)

*American Civil Liberties Union of NJ v. Black Horse Pike Regional Board of Education*, 84F.3d 1471 (3<sup>rd</sup> Cir. 1996)

20 U.S.C. 7904 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

First Reading: October 13, 2015

Adopted: November 10, 2015

HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT