

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION MOUNT OLIVE TOWNSHIP

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RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

2270 RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

The Board of Education recognizes that religious belief and disbelief are matters of personal conviction rather than governmental authority and that the pupils of this district are protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and by Article I, Paragraph 4 of the New Jersey State Constitution from the establishment of religion in the schools. Accordingly, no devotional exercises or displays of a religious character will be permitted in this district nor shall instructional activities be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religious sect or religion generally.

The Board believes that an understanding of religions and the contributions that religion has made to the advancement of civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, the curriculum may be developed to include, as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the pupils, instruction about the religions of the world.

The Board also acknowledges the degree to which a religious consciousness has enriched the arts, literature, music, and issues of morality. The instructional and resource materials approved for use in the schools of this district frequently contain religious references or concern moral issues that have traditionally been the focus of religious concern. That such materials may, therefore, be religious in nature shall not, by itself, bar their use by the district. The Board directs that teaching staff members employing such materials be neutral in their approach and avoid using them to advance or inhibit religion in any way.

The Board recognizes that religious traditions vary in their perceptions and doctrines regarding the natural world and its processes. The curriculum is chosen for its place in the thorough and efficient education of the children of this district, not for its conformity to religious principles. Pupils should receive unbiased instruction in the schools so that they may privately accept or reject the knowledge so gained in accordance with their own religious tenets.



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Accordingly, with the exception of courses in health, family life and sex education, no pupil shall be excused from attendance in a required course of study on the grounds that the instruction therein interferes with the free exercise of his or her religion.

U.S. Consti. Amend. 1
N.J. Consti (1947) Art. 1, para. 4
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.6 et seq.; 18A:36-16

Adopted: 29 June 1998

