

# Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring: <b>Review: Annually, in November</b>	Descriptor Term:  <h2 style="text-align: center;">Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs &amp; Holidays</h2>	Descriptor Code: <b>4.803</b>	Issued Date: <b>07/08/13</b>
		Rescinds: <b>IKCA</b>	Issued:

No religious belief or non-belief shall be promoted by the school system or its employees, and none shall be belittled. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of each other's views. The school system shall use its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> In that spirit of tolerance, students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs.

### RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Observance of religious holidays<sup>2</sup> shall be as follows:

1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be observed in the public schools;<sup>3</sup>
2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday;
4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature; and
5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.

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Legal References:

1. TCA 49-6-2901-2906; State Board of Education Guidelines  
Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
2. *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, 619 F. 2d 1311 (1980);  
*Washegesic v. Bloomingdale Public Schools* 813 F. Supp. 559 (1993)
3. TCA 49-6-3016

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Cross References:

Student Equal Access 4.802  
 Staff Rights and Responsibilities 5.600  
 Attendance 6.200