

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

No. 210 A

Board of Trustees

Douglas County School District

PROGRAM

Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

It is accepted that no religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the school district or its employees and none should be disparaged. Instead, the school district should encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious views. The school district should utilize its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parent(s) or guardian(s), whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs. In that spirit of tolerance, students and staff members should be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it.

It is also accepted that many things in our culture and tradition worth transmitting to students, while religious in origin, have acquired a significance which is no longer confined to the religious sphere of life. The Douglas County School District recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance student knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

Observance of Religious Holidays

The practice of the Douglas County School District shall be as follows:

1. The several holidays through the year which have a religious and secular basis may be observed in the public schools. Among these holidays are St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Passover, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas.
2. It is permissible to explain the historical and contemporary values and the origin of a holiday in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
3. Music, art, literature, drama and films having religious themes or bases 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 such as a cross, menorah, crescent, crèche, symbols of native American religions or other symbols that are a part of a holiday is 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. "Temporary in nature" shall mean that time necessary to complete the particular instructional program.

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5. The use of religious symbols, music, art, literature and drama should, in all cases, be presented by the teacher in a manner that expressly avoids the impression that the teacher or school is sponsoring the beliefs or symbols of any one religion or sect and presented in a manner that recognizes the religious pluralism of the community.

Curriculum

Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that the teaching about, and not of, religion be conducted in a factual, objective and respectful manner.

Therefore, the practice of the Douglas County School District shall be as follows:

1. It is permissible to include religious literature, music, drama or art in the curriculum provided it is presented in a prudent and objective manner.
2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.
3. Student-initiated expressions in response to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.

See Policy related to this Administrative Regulation

Adopted: 8/14/12