

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING IN LMSD



LMSD | Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve



DEIB IN LMSD | The Lower Merion School District is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all students and employees. Building Belonging goes beyond ensuring that every student has equal access to the District’s educational programs and activities to ensure that each student has the support to learn and grow while being true to themselves. Our commitment to Building Belonging by embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is embedded in the District’s official policies, including [Policy 101 Equity](#), as well as the [goals](#) of our [Strategic Plan](#).

UNDERSTANDING OUR DEIB EFFORTS | It’s important for all students, parents/guardians, families, and community members to understand our DEIB efforts. The chart below provides clarity about our DEIB efforts.

OUR DEIB Efforts Are...	Our DEIB Efforts Are NOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...aimed at ensuring that all students and staff feel valued, respected, and included. ...in place to help students get what they need to be successful. ... inclusive of ALL students and staff. ALL means all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...a program. ...based on race only. ...a religious or political stance/agenda.

TREMENDOUS DIVERSITY, ONE LMSD | One of the ways we are sustaining a culture of belonging is to ensure we are aware of the many holidays and days of recognition and celebration for those in our school community and around the world. Guidelines concerning religion and additional information are included in this document.

IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT COMMUNICATION | We cherish the diversity of our community and remain committed to working together to ensure excellent experiences for ALL students. On our journey to a sense of belonging for all, we will undoubtedly face roadblocks and obstacles. When incidents arise that run contrary to our DEIB efforts, we will communicate information about those instances with the relevant parties. Please remember that we have a duty to respect students’ privacy; therefore, communications do not always include many details. A lack of details is never an attempt to withhold information but rather a practice to protect students’ privacy.

OUR WHY

Focusing on belonging is crucial because it creates environments where everyone feels valued, respected, and included. When people feel a sense of belonging, they're more likely to engage, contribute their best, and collaborate effectively. It enhances overall well-being, fosters diversity of thought, and cultivates a supportive community where individuals can thrive. Ultimately, prioritizing belonging leads to stronger relationships, increased productivity, and a more positive and inclusive culture for all.



GUIDELINES CONCERNING RELIGION

Lower Merion School District Policy/Administrative Regulation No. 130

MAINTAINING BALANCE

“As educational centers, public schools have the basic responsibility to develop in students an understanding of their diverse history and culture and the significance of religion in that history and culture. They also have the responsibility to teach understanding of and respect for group differences in our society including religious differences. In fulfilling these responsibilities the teaching must be objective, avoid any doctrinal impact, and clearly demonstrate religious doctrines do not have the support of state authority. . . .

Further, it is the policy of the District not to prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in the District’s schools, consistent with guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.”

Text excerpted from LMSD Policy 130

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

- As a public school entity, LMSD employees must show no preference for one religion over another or non-religion and refrain from the promotion of any and all religions. There should be no inculcation of sectarianism in the school through religious services, observances, or participation in liturgical rituals, such as prayers or songs connoting an affirmation of faith.
- Any dramatic or musical displays and activities in art or music, regardless of the season, must be determined by their educational function and must avoid the atmosphere of a religious ceremony or observance. This depends on the sensitivity, understanding and good judgment of the teacher.
- Care should be exercised to avoid indoctrination through exhibits of religious artifacts and symbols. The meaning of religious holidays may be explained through the use of religious symbols.
- Whatever the circumstances, students should be able to freely and comfortably refrain from participation in any program in the context of the guidelines without either direct or subtle pressures upon them.
- In order to avoid scheduling conflicts between our schools and religious life in the community, calendars which denote religious holidays should be consulted by teachers and administrators in planning the instructional program and school activities. Major examinations should not be scheduled when a significant number of student absences are anticipated due to religious holidays. In areas such as lesson planning (tests, introduction of new units), extra-curricular sports, special programs (music, drama, etc.), and elective classes the dates of religious holidays including the Sabbath should be taken into account. Absence in observance of religious holidays is excused and there should be no academic penalty or non-academic deprivation for non-participation in activities resulting from the students’ observation of religious holidays and other observances, including weekly observances.
- Questions or concerns regarding the implementation of these guidelines should be directed to your Supervisor or Principal/Assistant Principal.
- A calendar of religious holidays is included herein and is intended to serve as a reference guide. Note that Baha’i, Jewish and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening before the date listed. Thus, when scheduling events close to major holidays, school activities should conclude approximately two hours before sunset. At the high school level, activities must conclude in sufficient time to allow students to catch the 4:30 p.m. late bus.



For More Information Contact:

Megan Shafer,
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District Administration
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610-645-1955 or 610-645-1928
OR your Supervisor or Building
Principal/Assistant Principal

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The full text of the policy and administrative regulation should be consulted and can be found on the District's website:

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1529686325/lmsdorg/oyv7pf7ybj07lmybiay3/Policy_P130.pdf

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1529686335/lmsdorg/e8hltxagkv4qqveosp0y/Policy_AR130.pdf

- Multifaitth calendar resources and information regarding religious holidays and celebrations:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/multifaith-calendar/>

<https://www.csee.org/page/Religiouscalendar>

<http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/>