

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

Factual and objective teaching about religion, and the impact of religion may be included in classroom instruction if such information is presented as part of the curriculum and is in keeping with the district's educational goals and student learning objectives. Staff members may not teach religion or advocate religious doctrine or practice. This prohibition against teaching extends to curricular decision which promote religion or religious beliefs.

Requests to display religious objects in classrooms or schools shall be filed in accordance with the district's policy governing religious displays.

Religious musical selections, literature, documents of historical significance, artwork, and other learning aids may be included in the curriculum on the basis of their particular educational value and/or traditional secular usage and shall be presented with works that are nonreligious in nature, shall be selected and performed as works of art, not as acts of veneration, and shall be presented prudently and objectively, with background information explaining their purpose.

School programs, performances, and celebrations must serve an educational purpose. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writing is permitted, if the religious content has a historical or independent education purpose which contributes to the objectives of the approved curriculum. School programs, performances, and celebrations cannot promote, encourage, discourage, persuade, dissuade, or discriminate against a religion or religious activity and cannot be oriented to religion or a religious holiday.

A student or parent who believes that inclusion of religious material in the instructional program infringes on the student's free exercise of religion shall be given the option of opting-out by filing a request with the building principal. The building principal shall direct the classroom teacher to provide the student with an alternative assignment.

Any staff member, citizen, or student who believes that a particular school program may have violated this policy may submit a complaint in accordance with the procedures established by board policy for complaints about instructional material.

Complementing Policies:

- ABBE, Displays of Religious Objects or Documents
- GAAA, Curriculum Design & Evaluation
- GAAC, Review & Complaints about Instructional & Resource Material
- GAAC-BR, Procedure for Reviewing Complaints about Instructional/ Resource Material