

The ~~School~~Board recognizes that students' education would be incomplete without an understanding of religion in society. To respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is forbidden in public schools. The schools may teach about religion from a historical, cultural, sociological or other educational perspective. Instruction about religion ~~shall~~will not promote nor denigrate the beliefs or customs of any religion or sect, nor should a preference be shown for one religious viewpoint over another. The Board expects that such instruction will identify principles common to all religions and foster respect for the diversity of religions and customs in the world.

As appropriate for a particular course, teachers may objectively discuss the influences of various religions, using religious literature, art, music or symbols to illustrate their relationship with culture, literature or the arts.

Such instruction should be designed to broaden the students' understanding of social and cultural ~~history, and~~history and understanding for the multiple ways of life practiced by the peoples of the world. Instruction about religious holidays ~~shall~~will be carefully tied to these educational objectives.

The Board recognizes the rights of all students to engage in private religious activity, individually or in groups. This may include reading of religious texts, religious discussions, and prayer. It is the policy of the Board not to prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in the 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.

Staff members ~~shall~~will be sensitive to their constitutional obligation not to interfere with the philosophical/religious development of each student, in whatever tradition the student embraces. Students may voluntarily pray at any time before, during or after the school day, including in a public or private place, when not engaged in instruction or other school activities, subject to the same rules of order that apply to other student activities.

School-sponsored programs should not be, nor have the effect of being, a religious celebration.