

Title: Policy for Governing Religion and Holiday Celebrations

Control Information

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Owner/Curator	Jen Renee
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Revision History

Revision	Date	Revision Description	Originator
A	10/27/2008	Initial Release	Mark Hazelton
B	10/15/2009	To incorporate CSD policy into MCCA Policy 25	Kathleen Westly
C	9/11/2014	Number and format revision, re-write policy, align with HB3686	Melissa Harris

1.1. School Position on Religion and Holiday Celebrations

The Board recognizes that personal beliefs and religion or non-religion are an important part of each person's life and should be respected and honored. Religious institutions and orientations are central to the 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. It is the intent of the Board to promote religious tolerance and understanding among students, staff and the community.

1.2. Religious Holidays

- 1.2.1. Holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis may be observed in the school. The school calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.
- 1.2.2. The historical and contemporary values and origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
- 1.2.3. Music, art, drama and literature 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.
- 1.2.4. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native American religious or other 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.

1.3. Religion in Education

- 1.3.1. The Board supports the inclusion of religious literature, music, drama and the arts in the curriculum and in school activities provided it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively. The Bible, Quran, Torah, and other religious literature may be used as an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics or comparative religions so long as it is presented in an objective manner without promoting belief or non-belief.
- 1.3.2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balance and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.
- 1.3.3. Student-initiated expressions to question or submit assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. Students are

free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.

- 1.3.4. If a student or parent objects on religious grounds to reading, studying, or discussing any instructional material, the teacher will supply an alternative without prejudice to the student.

1.4. Student Rights and Religious Expression

- 1.4.1. Students may verbally express their ideas during class so long as their verbal expressions are consistent with the subject matter being taught.
- 1.4.2. Students may wear symbols or articles of clothing which contain written or symbolic expressions so long as such symbols or clothing is not obscene and does not infringe on the rights of other students.
- 1.4.3. Students have the right to share their religious views in a way that respects the educational process and the rights of fellow students. Students should in no way be discriminated against or verbally reprimanded for appropriate religious expression.

1.5. Staff Rights and Religious Expression

- 1.5.1. Teachers and school staff will be judged solely on their professional competence and never on the basis of their religious beliefs, non-beliefs, or association. No person will be barred from employment as a teacher merely because of membership in a religious group.
- 1.5.2. Staff have the right to wear religious symbols that have personal religious meaning (necklaces, pendants, rings, etc.). Such symbols should be discrete and modest and not worn with the intent to advertise personal belief.
- 1.5.3. Staff have the right to wear religious garb that is required by their religious tradition (i.e. turban, head scarf, Yarmulke, etc.) and consistent with Oregon HB 3686.
- 1.5.4. Staff are not permitted to wear clothing, hang posters or display symbols or written religious rhetoric that advertises or promotes the belief of one particular religion.
- 1.5.5. Staff may not verbally advertise or promote one religion. All instruction that contains reference to religious traditions shall be presented in an objective manner without promoting belief or non-belief in any particular religion.

1.6. Use of School Facilities for Religious Purposes

- 1.6.1. The school may make available its facilities to any nonstudent as a meeting place before or after the official school day and shall offer use of the school facilities on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis without regard to the content of the requested meeting.

- 1.6.2. The school may charge a rental or use fee so long as such rental or use fee is required for any meeting requested by any nonstudent on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis without regard to the content of the requested meeting.
- 1.6.3. The school may prohibit the continued use of the school as a meeting place to any nonstudent if there is evidence indicating that the nonstudent user has and will continue to cause disruption or violence to the ordinary operation of the school.

1.7. Implementation of Policy

The Executive Director will ensure that all a staff comply with this policy and will provide review and clarification of this policy as needed.