

Teaching about Religion

Factual and objective teaching about religions, their basic tenants and traditions, is approved, but advocacy of religion is not allowed in district classrooms or elsewhere as part of district-sponsored events.

Instruction in morality, ethics and values is approved, but such instruction shall not constitute the endorsement of the beliefs and principles of any particular religious group.

Passages from the Bible may be studied for historical or literary instructional purposes, but Bible reading may not be used for devotional purposes or to influence religious beliefs.

Neither instructional materials nor assembly programs shall be use to promote or encourage nonreligion, partisan religious viewpoints, religious groups, or partisan religious activities.

To help meet legitimate instructional goals and as part of a total unit of study, adherents of particular religious creeds may be invited into the schools to explain the religious traditions of their group. Such a presentation shall be limited to providing information about a particular religion, not advocating or promoting or denigrating religion in general or any particular religion. The teacher shall notify the principal in advance of any such planned visit.

Religious holidays may be the subject of a program of study, but teachers shall take care that the meaning of such holidays is accurately represented. Teachers may not celebrate such holidays with religious observances in the classrooms or as a part of any school-related activity. Any teaching about holidays should be sensitive to the beliefs of those having different religious beliefs and practices.

Religious music as a part of a secular program or concert shall be permitted. School choruses, bands, orchestras and other groups may accept invitations to perform at nonschool religious functions only if members of the group may be excused at their request without penalty. Performance as a part of religious services is not permitted as a general rule, except in unusual circumstances such as a memorial service, where the superintendent may make an exception.

If the school sponsors a baccalaureate program it must be nonreligious and in the nature of an inspirational event only. Attendance for graduates must be voluntary. If the baccalaureate service is sponsored by religious or community groups, it shall not be conducted so that any school sponsorship is implied, nor shall any school staff member advocate attendance or nonattendance at the service.

No public school funds shall be used to purchase an intended devotional display or religious symbols, nor may such items be displayed except in an occasional educational exhibit for the purposes of familiarizing students with religious symbols used by a variety of different groups.

Student's religious beliefs shall be honored by excusing them without penalty at their parent's request from school attendance on religious holidays officially recognized by the student's religious faith, where attendance at religious activities or abstinence from secular activities is required by faith. However, students shall be responsible for notifying teachers in advance of an upcoming absence for a religious observance and for making up all school work missed on those days.

Parents may request on behalf of a student that school requirements be modified to accommodate the student's religious beliefs. The principal will review such requests and hold a conference with the parents and, if appropriate, the student to discuss the request and inform the parents of the district's decision.

Religious Activities of Student Groups

Adult directed or group reading of religious materials (other than for historical or literary purposes) and group prayers in classes, before meals or snacks, or at assemblies, sporting events or any public school function shall not be permitted.

Individual religious activity, such as prayer or reading of religious materials, is not prohibited as long as such activity is initiated by the student alone and is not disruptive or in conflict with school instruction and activities.

Religious Promotional Activity

Visitation on school property for the purpose of promoting religion or distributing religious literature or literature about the activities of a particular religious group, other than for clearly identified school curriculum purposes, shall not be permitted.

The distribution or posting of literature in the schools by non-students which is intended to promote any religion or religious group shall not be permitted except as provided in Board policy KJA - Materials Distribution.

In accordance with ORS 339.420, upon the application of the parent or guardian (or the student if over 18 or emancipated), a student may be excused for periods not exceeding five hours in any week to attend weekday schools giving instruction in religion. The schools will not promote such released time programs, nor shall promotional or "sign-up" activities take place on school property.