

Teaching About Religion

The following guidelines will govern religion in the Scappoose School District programs:

1. Factual and objective teaching about religions is approved, but advocacy of religion is not allowed in district classrooms;
2. 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;
3. Passages from the Bible may be studied for historical and literary instructional purposes, but Bible reading may not be used for devotional purposes or to influence religious beliefs;
4. Neither instructional materials nor assembly programs shall be used to promote or encourage nonreligion, partisan religious viewpoints, religious groups or partisan religious activities;
5. Religious music as 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;
6. 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;
7. Students' 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 the faith. However, students shall be responsible for making up all school work missed on those days;
8. 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;
9. Religious baccalaureate services shall not be a required school activity. Student representatives of graduating classes desiring to have a baccalaureate service outside school hours may arrange with a person of the clergy for his/her services and for suitable facilities. Attendance at any such services should be entirely optional with class members and school personnel acting as private individuals;

10. The distribution to individual students on school property of New or Old Testaments, Bibles or other religious literature (other than for clearly identified school curriculum purposes) cannot legally be permitted according to Opinion of the Attorney General.