

BEND-LA PINE SCHOOLS

Administrative School District No. 1

Deschutes County, Oregon

Name: Treatment of Religion in Schools

Section: Instruction

Code: IGAC-AR

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Religious instruction is a private concern; therefore, district schools must remain neutral regarding religion. District staff should foster respect for each individual's convictions about religion and an understanding and respect for all religions in general.

Factual and objective teaching about religion is to be distinguished from the teaching of religion. For example, religion is often a factor to be considered in history, art, literature or music. Teachers may speak of religious holidays, but may not advocate the religious observance of such holidays in the school.

Reading of religious texts for historical or literary instructional purposes is encouraged; however, reading of religious texts may not be used for devotional purposes or to influence religious beliefs. School officials also cannot legally require recitations of prayers in classes.

Religious music as part of a secular program or concert shall be permitted. School choruses, bands, orchestra, etc., may accept invitations to perform at nonschool religious functions only on the condition that any member of the group may be excused at his/her request without penalty.

EMPLOYMENT

Teachers shall be hired on the basis of professional competence and not on the basis of any religious beliefs, nonbeliefs or affiliations. No one shall be barred from employment as a teacher merely because of membership in a religious group.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Dual enrollment whereby students who wish may pursue a portion of their studies in the district school and another portion in a nonpublic school is permissible and the district should cooperate with parents and nonpublic school officials in making such arrangements.

RELEASED TIME

Released time for participation in religious instruction is granted as provided by Oregon Revised Statutes.

ACTIVITIES ON WEDNESDAY EVENING

An effort will be made to keep Wednesday evenings open to cooperate with the communities' churches for scheduling their student activities.

EXCUSED ABSENCE AND/OR NON-PARTICIPATION BASED ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Students may occasionally miss a state-required program or learning activity because of religious beliefs. For example parent/guardian may request that a student be excused from school to observe a religious holiday that occurs on a regular school day. In such situations the student shall not be penalized for the absence.

BACCALAUREATE

Baccalaureate services shall not be organized by school staff or sponsored by district schools.

HOLIDAY DISPLAYS

Religious celebrations and use of religious symbols are personal and private decisions; therefore district schools must remain neutral regarding religious celebrations. District staff should foster a respect for each individual's convictions about religion and an understanding and respect for all religions celebrations and symbols in general.

Seasonal holiday displays are permitted, including religious symbols as part of an educational role of increasing student's knowledge of culture, heritage and diversity. Care must be taken so that the school is not seen to be advancing or inhibiting religion as the primary purpose of the display. Care must be taken with regards to written material accompany to holiday displays. The message may not overtly encourage any one religion.

Religious holiday displays should play the educational role of increasing a student's knowledge regarding our cultural, ethnic and religious heritage and diversity. Therefore, religious holiday displays should be more inclusive than exclusive.

Revised Date: 3/1/2004, 6/15/09, 1/4/10

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Reviewed by: Leadership Council