

BETHEL PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PROGRAMS

TITLE: RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

ADOPTED: JUNE 27, 2007

REVISED: APRIL 19, 2007

<p>1. Purpose</p> <p>2. Authority</p> <p>Title 22 Sec. 11.21 Pol. 204</p> <p>3. Guidelines</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">131. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES</p> <p>The district encourages all students and staff members to appreciate and respect each other's religious views. It is accepted that no religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted by the district or its employees, and none shall be disparaged. The district shall utilize its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents/guardians, whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs.</p> <p><u>Observance of Religious Holidays</u></p> <p>The school district shall comply with all requirements of law governing the subject matter to this policy, including the Federal Equal Access Act; as such requirements exist from time to time.</p> <p>The district will not knowingly penalize, directly or indirectly, any student or staff member for absence from school on recognized days or expectation or obligation as it pertains to his/her religious conviction.</p> <p>The practice of the school district concerning the observance of religious holidays shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and secular basis may be observed in the public schools.2. The historical and contemporary aspects and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner as long as such is without sectarian indoctrination.3. Music, art, literature, and drama having a religious theme or basis is permitted as part of the curriculum, through 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. For example, works of music should not be excluded because of their religious origin. But in presenting such selections, focus must be on the musical merit, not religious value, of the works in question.
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<p>20 U.S.C. Sec. 4071 et seq</p>	<p>4. The district's calendar should be prepared as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.</p> <p><u>Religion in the Curriculum</u></p> <p>Religious instructions and orientations are central to human experience past and present, therefore, an education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. However, it is essential that the teaching about, and not of, religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner and that it be appropriate for the age level of the students.</p> <p><u>Dedications and Commencement</u></p> <p>Traditions are a cherished part of the community life, and the district has an interest in maintaining those traditions which have significance to the community. Accordingly, the practice of the district shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dedication and commencement ceremonies should encompass the pluralism of the community. Open invitations for such events should be extended to all citizens, regardless of faith, to attend these ceremonies. <p><u>Non-Curriculum Related Religious Activity in the Schools</u></p> <p>The district shall provide secondary students the opportunity for non-curriculum related student groups to meet on the school premises during non-instructional time for the purpose of conducting a meeting within the limited open forum on the basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. Such meetings must be voluntary, student-initiated, and not sponsored in any way by the school, its agents or employees. Non-instructional time is the time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends.</p> <p>The meetings cannot materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities in the school.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall establish the length of sessions, number per week, and other limitations deemed reasonably necessary.</p> <p>The district retains the authority to maintain order and discipline on school premises in order to protect the well-being of students and employees and to ensure that student attendance at such meetings is voluntary.</p>
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