

225 Religion in the Schools

Religious belief and disbelief are matters of personal consideration rather than governmental authority and the students of this School are protected by the First Amendment from the establishment of religion in the schools. Accordingly, no devotional exercises or displays of a religious character will be permitted at the School in the conduct of any program or activity under the jurisdiction of the School, nor shall instructional activities be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religion, or religion generally.

An understanding of religions and the contributions that religion has made to the advancement of civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, the curriculum shall be developed to include, as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the students, instruction about the religions of the world.

The Board and School acknowledge the degree to which a religious consciousness has permeated the arts, literature, music, and issues of morality. The instructional and resource materials approved for use frequently contain religious references or concern moral issues that have traditionally been the focus of religious concern. That such materials may be religious in nature shall not, by itself, bar their use by the School. The Board directs that teaching staff members employing such materials be neutral in their approach and avoid using them to advance or inhibit religion in any way.

Religious traditions vary in their perceptions and doctrines regarding the natural world and its processes. The curriculum is chosen for its place in the education of the students of the School, not for its conformity to religious principles. Students should receive unbiased instruction in the schools so that they may privately accept or reject the knowledge so gained in accordance with their own religious tenets.

Accordingly, no Student shall be exempted from attendance in a required course on the grounds that the instruction therein interferes with the free exercise of his/her religion.

226 School Prayer

Any other policy of this School notwithstanding, the School shall not prevent a student from participating in or deny a student the ability to participate in constitutionally protected prayer.

20 U.S.C. 7904(b)