
RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

The board directs that no religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted in the regular curriculum or in district-sponsored courses, programs or activities, and none shall be disparaged.

However, the board recognizes that a genuine and broad secular program of education is furthered by advancement of pupils' knowledge of our society's cultural and religious heritage. Therefore, the several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be recognized in the school by use of material having secular or cultural significance.

The instructional program of the school should inform pupils of the many beliefs and customs stemming from religious, racial, ethnic and cultural heritages. Such instruction should be designed to broaden the pupils' understanding of and tolerance for the multiple ways of life enjoyed by the peoples of the world.

Songs and customs which have come to us from the various ethnic, religious and racial elements of our population should be used to broaden our pupils' awareness of the contributions which each segment has made to the composite American culture.

Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or bases are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in an objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.

The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native American religions or other symbols that are part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.

Any instruction in the school which may be contrary to a pupil's religious beliefs and teachings shall be viewed as optional for the pupil.

Dated: September 18, 2002

Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:36-16	Rules regarding religious holidays
<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:54-20	Powers of board (county vocational)

U.S.C.A. Const. Amends. 1, 14

20 U.S.C.A. 4071 – Equal Access Act

Florey v. Sioux Falls School District, 619 F.2d 1311 (8th Cir. 1980)

Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668, 104 S.Ct. 1355, 79 L.E.D. 2d 604 (1984)

Edwards v. Aquillard, 482 U.S. 578 S.Ct. 2573, 96 L.E.D. 2d 510 (1987)

Lee v. Weisman. 505 U.S. ___, 112 S.Ct. 2649, 120 L.E.D. 2d 467 (1992)

American Civil Liberties Union v. Blackhorse Pike Regional Board of Education,
F. 2d (3d Cir. 1996) (No. 94-5233 decided May 24, 1996)

Cross References

5113	Absences and excuses
5127	Commencement activities
5131	Conduct/discipline
6115	Ceremonies and observances
6121	Affirmative action
6144	Controversial issues
6161.2	Complaints regarding instructional materials

