

**CLOVIS UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT****INSTRUCTION****Rights and Responsibilities****RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS**

The District recognizes that students' education would be incomplete without an understanding of the role of religion in history and society. It is proper and important for teachers to objectively discuss the influences of various religions, using religious works and symbols to illustrate their relationship with society, literature, or the arts. The District expects that such instruction will identify principles common to all religions and foster respect for the multiple creeds practiced by the peoples of the world.

Though schools must be neutral with respect to religion, the District shares responsibility with the community to develop in its students appropriate moral and ethical character incorporating American ideals of liberty, justice, the pursuit of happiness, and equality of opportunity. The fact that some of these values are also held by religions does not make it unlawful to teach them in school.

To respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is forbidden in the public schools. Instruction about religion must not favor, promote, or demean the beliefs or customs of any particular religion or sect. Staff should be highly sensitive to their obligation not to encourage or discourage religious development of any student in whatever tradition the student embraces.

Staff, when acting in an official capacity, shall not endorse, encourage, or solicit religious or anti-religious expression or activities among students. They shall not lead students in prayer or participate in student-initiated prayer. However, staff shall be highly sensitive to student religious beliefs and shall not prohibit or discourage any student from praying or otherwise expressing his/her religious belief as long as this does not disrupt the classroom or the educational environment.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in their homework, artwork, and other written and oral reports if the expression is germane to the assignment. Such work shall be judged by ordinary academic standards, free of discrimination based on religious content.

Music, art, literature, or drama programs having religious themes 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. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided that such symbols are displayed as an example of cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.

Instruction which is contrary to a student's religious beliefs and teachings may be optional for that student in accordance with the Education Code or at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

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The Board directs the Superintendent to develop an administrative regulation that provides general guidance regarding recognition of religious beliefs and customs consistent with existing law.

EDUCATION CODE

38130-38138 Civic Center Act

46014 Absences for religious purposes

51511 Religious matters properly included in courses of study

51937, et seq. Right of parent/guardian to excuse from sexual health instruction

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

4071-4074 Equal Access Act

6061 School prayer

7904 School prayer

Adopted: 05/1999

Reviewed: 06/11/2007, 10/01/2008

Amended: 01/19/2005, 11/18/2020 (BP 2112 renumbered as BP 6141.2)

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