

RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM

1.0 Purpose

Based on the First Amendment protection against the establishment of religion in the schools, no devotional exercises or displays of a religious character will be permitted in the county operated schools in the conduct of any program or activity under the jurisdiction of the Board. Instructional activities shall not be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religion or religion generally.

An understanding of religions and their effects on civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, curriculum may include as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the students, instruction about the religions of the world.

The Board acknowledges 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 in the schools system 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 in the public schools. The Board directs that professional staff members employing such materials be neutral to their approach and avoid using them in advance or inhibit religion in any way.

The Board recognizes that 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 school system's students, not for its conformity to religious principles. Students should receive unbiased instruction in the schools so they may privately accept or reject the knowledge thus gained, in accordance with their own religious tenets.

Accordingly, no student shall be exempted from attendance in a required course of study on the grounds that the instruction therein interferes with the free exercise of his/her religion. However, if after careful, personal review of the program's lessons and/or materials, a parent indicates to the school that either the content or activities conflict with his/her religious beliefs or value system, the school will honor a written request for his/her child to be excused from a particular class period for specified reasons. The student will be provided with alternate learning activities during the times of such parent requested absence.

No classroom teacher shall be prohibited from providing reasonable periods of time for activities of a moral philosophical or patriotic theme. No student shall be required to participate in such activities if they are contrary to the religious convictions of the student or his/her parents or guardians.

The Board acknowledges that it may not adopt any policy or rule respecting or promoting an establishment of religion or prohibiting any student from the free, individual, and voluntary exercise or expression of the student's religious beliefs. However, such exercise or expression

shall be limited to lunch periods or other non-instructional time periods when students are free to associate.

2.0 Review Schedule

This policy shall be reviewed in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule published by the Superintendent.

AUTHORITY: U.S. Const. Admen. I, §18-28-1 Code of WV

ADOPTED: 09/24/13

REVISED: _____