

Recognition of Religious and Cultural Beliefs and Customs

Belmont Public School teachers may, as appropriate for a particular unit of study, objectively discuss the influences of various religions, using religious works and symbols to illustrate their relationship with culture, literature or the arts. Such instruction will identify common religious principles and foster respect for the diversity of religions and customs of the world.

Religious celebrations and decorations that are religious in nature are not permitted in the public schools. Religious symbols may be used temporarily in the classroom in the context of studying the historical and cultural significance of a holiday or religious practice, but must not be used for worship or religious practice.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in their homework, artwork or other class work if the expression is relevant to the assignment.

Staff shall make every effort to avoid scheduling examinations, school sponsored trips and special events that conflicts with major religious holidays.

Students shall have the right to engage in private, non-disruptive religious expression during non-instructional time. School officials may not participate in, or encourage or discourage students to participate in any of these activities.

Legal References:

The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States

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

20 USC 4071-4074

6061

7904

US Department of Education: Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools; February 7, 2003

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