



Huntington Beach Union High School District Board Policies and Administrative Regulations

BP 6141.2
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Instruction

Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

The Governing Board recognizes that students' education would be incomplete without an understanding of the role of religion in history. It is both 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 Board 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.

In order to respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is clearly 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 shall be highly sensitive to its obligation not to interfere with the religious development of any student in whatever tradition the student embraces.

Staff 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 not prohibit or discourage any student from praying or otherwise expressing his/her religious belief as long as this does not disrupt the classroom.

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 standards, free of discrimination based on religious content.

Acknowledgement of Religious Holidays

The practice of the Huntington Beach Union High School District shall be as follows:

1. The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and a secular basis may be observed in the public schools.
2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.

Acknowledgement of Religious Holidays (continued)

3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the culture and religious heritage of the particular holiday.
4. 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. Among these holidays are included Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween.
5. The school district's calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.

Legal Reference:

Education Code

51240

51511

United States Code, Title 20

6061

United States Code, Title 42

2000bb-2000bb4

Lemon v. Kurtzman, (1971) 403, U.S. 602

Walleye v Gaffer, (1985) 472 U.S. 38