

Marion County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in November	Descriptor Term: Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs & Holidays	Descriptor Code: 4.803	Issued Date: 04/24/01
		Rescinds: 4.803	Issued: 12/15/97

1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted by the school system or its employees, and none shall
2 be belittled. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of each other's views. The school system
3 shall use its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether
4 it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs.¹ In that spirit of tolerance, students
5 and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious
6 beliefs.

7 8 **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

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10 Observance of religious holidays² shall be as follows:

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12 1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be
13 observed in the public schools;³
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15 2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in
16 an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
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18 3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the
19 curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective
20 manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday;
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22 4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid
23 or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious
24 heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. These holidays include Christmas, Easter,
25 Passover, Hannukah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween; and
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27 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays
28 of all faiths.

29 30 31 32 33 Legal References:

- 34
35 1. TCA 49-6-2901-2906; State Board of Education Guidelines-
36 Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- 37 2. *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, 619 F. 2d 1311 (1980);
- 38 3. *Washegesic v. Bloomindale Public Schools* 813 F. Supp. 559 (1993)
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Cross References:

- Staff Rights and Responsibilities 5.600
Attendance 6.200