

Stewart County Board of Education

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| Monitoring: Review: Annually, in December | Descriptor Term: Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays | Descriptor Code: 4.803 | Issued Date: 09/13/18 |
| | | Rescinds: 4.803 | Issued: 07/09/15 |

1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted or belittled by the school system or its employees. All
2 students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of others and not discriminate against anyone
3 for a religious viewpoint or lack of a religious viewpoint. Students and staff members shall be excused
4 from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs.¹

5 **STUDENTS' EXPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINTS**

6 A student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject shall be
7 treated in the same manner as a student's voluntary expression of a secular viewpoint.

8 Students may express religious beliefs in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments
9 free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. These assignments shall be
10 judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate academic
11 concerns. A student shall not be penalized or rewarded on account of the religious content of the student's
12 work.²

13 **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

14 Observance of religious holidays shall be as follows:³

- 15 1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may
16 be observed in the public schools;⁴
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- 18 2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained
19 in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
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- 21 3. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the
22 curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and
23 objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the
24 particular holiday;
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- 26 4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching
27 aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and
28 religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature; and
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- 30 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to attempt to minimize conflicts with
31 religious holidays of all faiths. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views
32 of others. Students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices
33 which are contrary to their religious beliefs.¹

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-2901 through 2906; State Board of Education Guidelines-Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
2. TCA 49-6-1804
3. *Florey v. Sioux Falls Sch. Dist.*, 619 F. 2d 1311 (8th Cir. 1980)
4. TCA 49-6-3016

Cross References

Student Equal Access 4.802
Staff Rights and Responsibilities 5.600
Attendance 6.200