

Lakeland Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in November	Descriptor Term: Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs & Holidays	Descriptor Code: 4.803	Issued Date: 07/14/14
		Rescinds: 4.803	Issued: 04/14/14

1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted or belittled by the school system or its employees.
2 All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of others and not discriminate against
3 anyone for a religious viewpoint or lack of a religious viewpoint. Students and staff members shall be
4 excused 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 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
10 be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate
11 academic concerns. A student shall not be penalized or rewarded on account of the religious content of
12 the student's work.¹

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;³
- 17 2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained
18 in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
- 19 3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the
20 curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective
21 manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday;
- 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; and
- 25 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to attempt to minimize conflicts with
26 religious holidays of all faiths. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of
27 others. Students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are
28 contrary to their religious beliefs.²

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-1804
2. TCA 49-6-2901-2906; State Board of Education Guidelines-Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
3. Florey v. Sioux Falls, 619 F. 2d 1311 (1980);
Washegesic v. Bloomindale Public Schools 813 F. Supp. 559 (1993)
4. TCA 49-6-3016