

Sullivan County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in November	Descriptor Term: Religion in the Curriculum	Descriptor Code: 4.804	Issued Date: 04/10/12
		Rescinds: 3025	Issued: 06/06/2011

1 While religious instruction is the primary responsibility of parents and religious institutions, some teaching
2 about religion is a legitimate part of a complete education on the elementary and secondary levels.
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4 Teaching about religion is allowed where appropriate within the curriculum, and when the classroom
5 atmosphere encourages both teachers and students to be responsible and to respect the rights of each
6 person. For example, education in music and the arts could not be complete without a study of works
7 of art having a religious theme, and cannot be understood without some instruction in that area.
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9 In carrying out such instruction, the approach must be to educate, not indoctrinate. No religious belief
10 or non-belief shall be promoted, and none shall be belittled.
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12 In determining the age and grade level at which such topics are studied, teachers and administrators
13 should keep in mind that younger children are less able to independently and maturely make decisions
14 about religious concepts.
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16 It is essential that the teaching *about* religion—and not *of* a religion be conducted in a factual, objec-
17 tive and respectful manner in accordance with the following guidelines:
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- 19 1. Music, art, literature, or drama with a religious theme or basis is permitted as part of the cur-
20 riculum for school-sponsored activities and programs provided it is essential to the learning
21 experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively;
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- 23 2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history should be only as extensive
24 as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies shall never
25 foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs; and
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- 27 3. Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs
28 about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express reli-
29 gious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.
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