

## SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES

### Instructional Practices

1. A good education acknowledges the importance of studying about religion. This study would include such learning activities as an analysis of the role of religion in culture and an appreciation of its importance in order to reach a balanced understanding of civilization and society.
2. The treatment of religion in the schools will meet the Supreme Court's constitutional boundaries set forth in the three-part test of Lemon v. Kurtzman: (1) the activity must have a secular purpose, (2) the principal or primary effect of the activity must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, (3) the activity avoids excessive governmental entanglement with religion.
3. Teachers will be sensitive and knowledgeable about the diversity of religious beliefs of the students in their classes. Instructional practices will balance religious beliefs so that all students will feel included; no student will be required to participate in class activities associated with religion if unwilling, or if a parent expresses unwillingness.
4. Community resources and personnel should be used whenever possible by the schools when activities related to religious holidays are planned and implemented.
5. The school system calendar will indicate religious holidays affecting a significant proportion of our population. The school system will indicate holidays that will have an impact upon student participation in school activities.
6. Students will be accommodated if they request of the teacher that they be excused from participating in activities involving religion and/or if they are unable to participate in regular activities due to religious observances. Written parent permission should accompany such student requests.
7. The school will use the standard grievance procedure to resolve differences resulting from the implementation of these guidelines (e.g., appeal to teacher, to principal, superintendent, to the school committee).

REF: Acknowledging Religious Holidays, File: ACD and ACD-R

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