

# EASTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PROGRAMS

TITLE: RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

ADOPTED: May 17, 2007

REVISED:

<p>1. Purpose</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">136. RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS</p> <p>The district is charged with the obligation of maintaining benevolent neutrality in the matter of religion.</p> <p>The requirement of benevolence suggests that the climate of our thinking and actions recognizes and, specifically, is not hostile to the unique place and meaning of religion in national life as well as its place in private life.</p> <p>The requirement of neutrality suggests an on-going search for sensitivity, understanding, appreciation, and factual information about cultural and religious diversity. It also mandates that the schools of the district refrain from advocacy of a particular religious position.</p> <p>It is accepted that no religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the district or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Instead, the district should encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious views. The district should utilize its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents/guardians, whether it involves race, cultural, economic background or religious beliefs.</p> <p>The Board recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance the student's knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.</p>
<p>2. Guidelines</p>	<p><u>Observance Of Religious Holidays</u></p> <p>The students, faculty, and administration shall be reminded of the pluralism of religious beliefs. Specifically, that which is important and meaningful to some may be offensive to others. Each person shall be reminded to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.</p> <p>Factual and objective teaching about religion may occur in the district. Religious indoctrination is never appropriate in the public schools and is not supported by the Board. Teachers may explain the meaning of religious holidays but may not</p>

recognize such holidays with religious observances in the classroom or in any mandated teaching situation. Inclusion of sacred writings, music, and arts in the educational program shall be based on their having independent educational merits.

The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.

Music, art, literature, and drama having a religious theme or basis shall be permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs, if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.

The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, crèche, symbols of native American religions and other symbols that are part of a religious holiday shall be permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. Among these holidays shall be included Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukah, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Halloween.

#### Religion In The Curriculum

Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that the teaching about and not of, religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner. Therefore, the practice of the district shall be as follows:

1. The district shall support the inclusion of religious literature, music, drama, and the arts in the curriculum and in school activities, provided it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various approved fields of study and is presented objectively.
2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history should only be as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of the areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.