

Oneida Special Board of Education

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

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 for a
 3 religious viewpoint or lack of a religious viewpoint. Students and staff members shall be excused from
 4 participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs.²

5 **STUDENTS' EXPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINTS**

6 A student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject shall be treated in
 7 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 free from
 9 discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. These assignments shall be judged by
 10 ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate academic concerns. A
 11 student shall not be penalized or rewarded on account of the religious content of the student's work.¹

12 **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

13 Observance of religious holidays shall be as follows:³

14 1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be
 15 observed in the public schools;⁴

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

18 3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the
 19 curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner
 20 and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday;

21 4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid or
 22 resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of
 23 the holiday and are temporary in nature; and

24 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to attempt to minimize conflicts with religious
 25 holidays of all faiths. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of others. Students
 26 and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious
 27 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

Cross References

Student Equal Access 4.802
Staff Rights and Responsibilities 5.600
Attendance 6.200