Instruction

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Religion

Foundations and Basic Commitments
The Adrian Public Schools will neither promote nor disparage any religious belief or non-belief. The School District shall demonstrate tolerance of all religious and nonreligious views.

The Adrian Public Schools recognizes that one of its educational responsibilities is to address students' knowledge and understanding of the role that religion has played in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

Religion in the Schools and at School Activities

Acknowledgement of Religious Holidays

The practice of the Adrian Public Schools shall be as follows.

1. The several holidays throughout the year that may have a religious basis may be acknowledged in the public schools.
2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
3. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent, balanced, objective, and nonproselytizing manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.
Acknowledgement of Religious Holidays Continued

4. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, crèche, symbols of Native American religions, or other symbols that are part of a religious holiday are 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 and nonproselytizing in nature. Among these holidays are Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, St. Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Halloween.

5. The School District’s calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts of school activities with religious holidays of all faiths.

Religion in the Curriculum

Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education which excludes such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that the teaching about – and not of – religion be conducted in a factual, objective, balanced, respectful, and nonproselytizing manner.

Therefore, the practice of the Adrian Public Schools shall be as follows.

1. The School District supports 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 fields of study and is presented objectively.

2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.

3. Student-initiated responses to questions or assignments that reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated, as long as they comply with the assignments. Students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.
Public Appearances of Student Groups in Music and the Arts

Student groups in music and the arts will be permitted to make public appearances in the community, subject to the approval of the building principal following these guidelines.

1. Invitations may be accepted to perform before a variety of audiences within the community such as workshops, community service groups, conventions, and sectarian groups.
2. Performances may take place in a variety of locations including shopping centers, auditoriums, meeting halls, churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and gurdwaras.
3. When performing before a sectarian audience, student groups representing the Adrian Public Schools shall not perform during a religious service or immediately before or after a religious service.

Prohibition of Religious Activity in Schools by School Personnel

1. School personnel shall not organize, provide leadership, or participate in religious activities in student organizations, clubs, or functions on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities unless the organization has leased the facility according to Policy/Regulation KG and KG-R – Community Use of School Facilities.
2. School personnel shall not distribute religious literature in or through the schools or on school grounds except as part of academic study, which may include information about religions.

School Sponsored Events

The practice of Adrian Public Schools shall be as follows.

1. A school-sponsored event shall not contain prayers authorized, approved, or sponsored by the School District or any of its representatives.
2. Because the baccalaureate service is traditionally religious in nature, neither the Adrian Public Schools nor staff of the School District shall sponsor or encourage such service.
Prohibition of Religious Proselytism or Recruitment

Non-student members of religious groups are not allowed on school grounds to proselytize or recruit during the school day or during school activities.

Release for Religious Instruction

A student shall be released from attendance by her/his principal or a designee to attend religious education for no more than two class hours per week, upon receipt of a written request from the student’s parent or guardian. The written request shall be submitted annually and shall specify the place at which the religious instruction will be provided and the total amount of time per week for which the release is requested. Employees of the Adrian Public Schools shall neither encourage nor discourage students regarding participation in released time religious instruction. *(MCL 380.1561(3))*

A record of attendance at religious instruction classes shall not be maintained by officials of the Adrian Public Schools. Those persons or groups offering or conducting religious instruction classes shall keep records of attendance. The responsibility for attendance at religious instruction classes belongs to the parent or guardian of the child.

Excusal

A student of the Adrian Public Schools shall have the right to be excused from instructional activities which are inconsistent with his/her religious beliefs or practices, according to a written request for excusal from the student’s parent or guardian. An alternative assignment shall be provided for such an excusal. Employees of the Adrian Public Schools shall neither encourage nor discourage students regarding excusal from instructional activities for this reason.

Distribution of Religious Literature by Students

Students of the Adrian Public Schools shall have the right to distribute religious literature on the same terms as those which apply to their distribution of other literature which is unrelated to the Adrian Public Schools. Students shall also have the right to refuse such literature.

POLICY APPROVED: November 7, 1968

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