

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND DISPLAYS

Code **IMDC** Issued **4/05**

Purpose: To establish the board's vision for the recognition of religious beliefs and customs.

The board recognizes that one of the district's educational goals is to advance students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.

No religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the school 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.

Observance of religious holidays

The district will practice the following in the observance of religious holidays.

- The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and a secular basis may be observed in the public schools.
- The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
- The district will permit music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if they are presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.
- The district will permit use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, crèche, symbols of Native American religions or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday 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. These holidays may include Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Thanksgiving.
- The district will prepare its calendar so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.

Adopted 4/12/05

Legal references:

A. Court cases:

1. Wynne v. Town of Great Falls - 375 F. 3d 292 (4th Cir. 2004).