

RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Code **JHCB-R** Issued **6/05**

The following regulations and guidelines apply to released time for religious instruction programs.

School and students

Middle school and high school students may be excused for religious instruction only upon receipt of a written request from a parent/legal guardian.

Absences for religious instruction may not exceed one hour per week at a date and time set by school officials. Dates and times for absences for religious instruction will be set by school officials.

Released time for religious instruction may not occur during core academic subject classes.

No public funds will be used to promote or support religious instruction.

District faculty and staff may not promote program attendance through encouragement, coercion or other means. Specifically, employees of the district may not be instructors for a released-time program.

Religious instruction

The religious instruction must be under the sponsorship of a formally recognized religious organization or group. For purposes of this administrative rule, “formally recognized religious organization or group” means an organization or group that is exempt from the federal internal revenue code pursuant to section 501(c)(3).

The religious organization must secure written approval from the district prior to the beginning of religious instruction.

In order for the district to accommodate the requests of parents/legal guardians and yet have appropriate information from the religious organizations to ensure the necessary record keeping and operation of the “released-time” program, including necessary attendance information, a written application must be submitted by the religious organization to the district annually and must include the following information.

- anticipated starting and ending dates for the program
- vacation dates
- name of church or religious organization
- location and address of the program
- requested grade levels for religious instruction
- names of schools from which students will be drawn

PAGE 2 - JHCB-R - RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

- statement assuring that the religious organization will state on any correspondence that the program is sponsored by the church or religious organization and not by the district
- statement assuring that the religious organization will assume the full financial responsibility for all aspects of the program, including transportation
- statement assuring that the religious organization is solely responsible for the supervision and security of students from the time of release to the time of return to district schools
- statement that the religious organization will provide proof of liability insurance coverage to include supervision, safety and transportation of students to and from the program, including at all times students are not on school property and that the religious organization will indemnify and hold harmless the district, its agents and employees from any and all liability arising from any aspect of the operation of the program
- name, phone number and signature of contact person

Applications must be received by the superintendent or his/her designee at least six weeks prior to the requested starting date.

Once an application is approved by the district, students must register for the course on forms and supplies furnished by the sponsoring organization, and a copy of the registration, with a signed parental request form, must be filed in the appropriate school office.

A list of those students who attend released time instruction will be forwarded to the school principal weekly.

No individual connected with any religious organization will be permitted to promote or discourage student participation by directly contacting students on school grounds.

Safe passage from the school to the released time program site and back to the school will be the responsibility of the organization sponsoring the released time classes.

No released time classes for religious instruction may be held on any school property.

The district reserves the right to deny approval for any applications which are not consistent with the requirements outlined in this policy and administrative rule. The district further reserves the right to withdraw approval for any program that fails to operate consistently with the requirements outlined in this policy and administrative rule or to follow all applicable laws and regulations.

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