

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WAUPACA
RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM

As a public entity, the District must comply with the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment requirement that the District neither establishes religion in the schools nor prohibit students' free exercise of religion according to pertinent interpretation and application of those Constitutional provisions by the Courts. Accordingly, no Board employee will promote religion in the classroom or in the District's curriculum, or compel or pressure any student to participate in devotional exercises. Displays of a religious character must conform with Policy 8800 and AG 8800A, AG 8800B, and AG 8800D. Instructional activities shall not be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religion or religion generally. Teachers shall forward requests for religious accommodation in instruction to the Principal.

An understanding of religions and their effects on civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, curriculum may include, as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the students, instruction about the religions of the world.

The Board acknowledges the degree to which religion often is incorporated into certain aspects of the arts, literature, music, and issues of morality. The instructional and resource materials approved for use in the District schools sometimes contain religious references or concern moral issues that have traditionally been the focus of religious concern. That such materials may contain such references, or may concern such issues, shall not, by itself, bar their use by the District. The Board directs that professional staff members employing such materials be neutral in their approach and avoid using them to advance or inhibit religion in any way.

The Board recognizes that religious traditions vary in their perceptions and doctrines regarding the natural world and its processes. The curriculum is chosen for its place in the education of the District's students, not for its conformity to religious principles. Students should receive unbiased instruction in the schools, so they may privately accept or reject the knowledge thus gained, in accordance with their own religious tenets if any.

Accordingly, no student shall be exempted from completion of a required course of study on the grounds that components of the instruction interfere with the free exercise of his/her religion. However, if after careful personal review of the program's lessons and/or materials, a parent indicates to the school that either the content or activities conflict with his/her religious beliefs or value system, the school will honor a written request for his/her child to be excused from a particular class period for specified reasons.

The student will be provided with alternate learning activities during the times of such parent requested absence.

For the privacy of students whose parents request that they not take part in the particular class period, prior arrangements will be made for the student(s) to go to a supervised location where under the supervision of a staff member the student(s) will be provided with the alternate learning activities during the requested absence.

The District's instructional materials shall not be designed to influence students to accept or reject a particular religious belief or point of view.

Complaints by students or the public regarding any such course of study will be handled in accordance with Board Policy 9130.