

ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS/RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND SYMBOLS

It is the policy of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District to foster understanding and mutual respect among students, staff, parents and the community of religious beliefs and backgrounds. The primary mission of the District is education. The proper role of religion in the public school lies in its academic value and not in the appropriation or endorsement of any particular religion or belief system, or of religion over non-religion. This policy will enhance our students' knowledge of, and appreciation for the role that religious heritage has played, and continues to play, in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

In furtherance of this policy

1. This policy preserves the school's role of deepening understanding of humanity as a whole, while preserving the family's role of guiding children in a particular belief system if it chooses to do so. This policy also safeguards the function of the school as a meeting place for children and families of different backgrounds and beliefs when it pertains to school functions and activities to prevent the effect of the marginalization of minority members of the school community. The application of this policy will enhance our understanding of and respect for differences in religious beliefs and practices, and deepen our understanding of our common humanity.
2. All engagement with religion, whether in the form of teaching about a religious holiday, the role of religion in history, school programs, or the academic study of religion itself, must be done solely with education and understanding as its goal.
3. Curriculum planning could include the study of religions, where appropriate, as an important part of a complete education, which can enhance student understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural beliefs and practices. It is incumbent on teachers to teach about religion broadly, respectfully and inclusively.
4. Teaching about religious holidays, which is permissible, is different from celebrating religious holidays, which is not. There shall be no school-initiated or sanctioned formal or informal observance of religion, religious holidays or religious festivals.
5. Our school should be aware, sensitive and responsive to the experiences of religious culture or traditions, both in curriculum activities as well as scheduling of events and assessments, where options exist.
6. It is not the intention of this policy to limit any individual's right to freedom of expression. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to do such.
7. Staff shall be provided training, guidance and specific advice regarding the implementation of this policy.

Date Warned: May 31, 2018

Date Adopted: June 11, 2018