

1 Religion and Religious Activities

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3 In keeping with the United States and Montana Constitutions and judicial decisions, the District  
4 may not support any religion or endorse religious activity. At the same time, the District may  
5 not prohibit private religious expression by students. This policy provides direction to students  
6 and staff members about the application of these principles to student religious activity at school.  
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8 Student Prayer and Discussion

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10 Students may pray individually or in groups and may discuss their religious views with other  
11 students, as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The right to engage in voluntary prayer  
12 does not include the right to have a captive audience listen, to harass other students, or to force  
13 them to participate. Students may pray silently in the classroom, except when they are expected  
14 to be involved in classroom instruction or activities.  
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16 Staff Members

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18 Staff members are representatives of the District and must “navigate the narrow channel between  
19 impairing intellectual inquiry and propagating a religious creed.” They may not encourage,  
20 discourage, persuade, dissuade, sponsor, participate in, or discriminate against a religious activity  
21 or an activity because of its religious content. They must remain officially neutral toward  
22 religious expression.  
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24 Graduation Ceremonies

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26 Graduation is an important event for students and their families. In order to assure the  
27 appropriateness and dignity of the occasion, the District sponsors and pays for graduation  
28 ceremonies and retains ultimate control over their structure and content.  
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30 District officials may not invite or permit members of the clergy to give prayers at graduation.  
31 Furthermore, District officials may not organize or agree to requests for prayer by other persons  
32 at graduation, including requests from students. The District may not prefer the beliefs of some  
33 students over the beliefs of others, coerce dissenters or nonbelievers, or communicate any  
34 endorsement of religion.  
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36 Baccalaureate Ceremonies

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38 Students and their families may organize baccalaureate services, at which attendance must be  
39 entirely voluntary. Organizers of baccalaureate services may rent and have access to school  
40 facilities on the same basis as other private groups and may not receive preferential treatment.  
41 The District may not be identified as sponsoring or endorsing baccalaureate services. District  
42 funds, including paid staff time, may not be used directly or indirectly to support or subsidize  
43  
44 any religious services.  
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1 Assemblies, Extracurricular and Athletic Events

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3 District officials may not invite or permit members of the clergy, staff members, or outsiders to  
4 give prayers at school-sponsored assemblies and extracurricular or athletic events. District  
5 officials also may not organize or agree to student requests for prayer at assemblies and other  
6 school-sponsored events. Furthermore, prayer may not be broadcast over the school public  
7 address system, even if the prayer is nonsectarian, nonproselytizing, and initiated by students.  
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9 Student Religious Expression and Assignments

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11 Students may express their individual religious beliefs in reports, tests, homework, and projects.  
12 Staff members should judge their work by ordinary academic standards, including substance,  
13 relevance, appearance, composition, and grammar. Student religious expression should neither  
14 be favored nor penalized.  
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16 Religion in the Curriculum

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18 Staff members may teach students about religion in history, art, music, literature, and other  
19 subjects in which religious influence has been and continues to be felt. However, staff members  
20 may not teach religion or advocate religious doctrine or practice. The prohibition against  
21 teaching religion extends to curricular decisions which promote religion or religious beliefs.  
22

23 School programs, performances, and celebrations must serve an educational purpose. The  
24 inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings is permitted, if the religious content has a  
25 historical or independent educational purpose which contributes to the objectives of the approved  
26 curriculum. School programs, performances, and celebrations cannot promote, encourage,  
27 discourage, persuade, dissuade, or discriminate against a religion or religious activity and cannot  
28 be oriented to religion or a religious holiday.  
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30 Student Religious Groups

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32 Students may gather as non-curricular groups to discuss or promote religion in accordance with  
33 District Policy 3233.  
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35 Distribution of Religious Literature

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37 Students may distribute religious literature to their classmates, subject to the same  
38 constitutionally acceptable restrictions the District imposes on distribution of other non-school  
39 literature. Outsiders may not distribute religious or other literature to students on school  
40 property, consistent with and pursuant to the District policy on solicitations (Policy 4321).  
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**INSTRUCTION**

1 Religious Holidays

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3 Staff members may teach objectively about religious holidays and about religious symbols,  
4 music, art, literature, and drama which accompany the holidays. They may celebrate the  
5 historical aspects of the holidays but may not observe them as religious events.

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8	Cross Reference:	Policy 3233	Student Use of Buildings
9		Policy 3510	School Sponsored Activities
10		Policy 3550	Student Clubs

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12 Policy History:

13 Adopted on: February 2007

14 Revised on: August 2021