

GRANITE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

INSTRUCTION POLICY 6140: RELIGION AND THE CURRICULUM

The board recognizes the role that religion has played in the various societies of the world. The United States, through the First Amendment, has clearly separated the role of the government and religion. Religious belief and disbelief are matters of personal consideration rather than of governmental authority. Therefore, the school district must be neutral in matters of religion, neither opposing nor promoting religion in general or any particular religion.

History, sociology, literature, the arts and other disciplines taught in school may have a religious dimension. Study of these disciplines, including the religious dimension, shall give neither preferential nor disparaging treatment to any single religion or to religion in general and must not be introduced or utilized for devotional purposes.

Criteria used to guide academic inquiry in the study of religion shall seek the same neutrality, objectivity and educational effectiveness expected in other areas of the curriculum. In addition, materials and activities should be sensitive to America's pluralistic society and should educate rather than indoctrinate. Instructional activities should meet the three-part test established and used by the U.S. Supreme Court to determine constitutionality: (1) the activity must have a secular purpose; (2) the activity's principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; and (3) the activity must not impose excessive involvement on the part of the school in order to maintain a neutral position towards the advancement of religion. This constitutional restriction shall not preclude a student from expressing his/her views relative to belief or non-belief about a religious-related issue in compositions, reports, music, art, debate and classroom discussion when consistent with the assignment.

Student learning objectives govern the scope and activities of each course offering in the school district. All religious-related instructional materials and/or activities must relate to a secular student-learning objective.

Legal References:

U.S. Constitution First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment
Wash. Constitution Art. 9, Sec. 4 and Art. 26

Cross References:

Policy 6120: Religious Assemblies
Policy 6130: Religious Holiday Observances
Policy 6150: Religious-Related Activities/Practices
Policy 7020: Use of Buildings and Equipment
Policy 5044: Dress Code

ADOPTED: APRIL 27, 2000