

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

Decisions of the United States Supreme Court have made it clear that it is not the province of a public school to advance or inhibit religious beliefs or practices. Under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution, this remains the inviolate province of the individual and the church of his/her choice. The rights of any minority, no matter how small, must be protected. No matter how well intentioned, either official or unofficial sponsorship of religiously-oriented activities by the school are offensive to some and tend to supplant activities which should be the exclusive province of individual religious groups, churches, private organizations or the family.

District staff members shall not use prayer, religious readings, or religious symbols as a devotional exercise or in act of worship ~~or celebration~~. The District shall not function as a disseminating agent for any person or outside agency for any religious or anti-religious document, book, or article. Distribution of such materials on District property by any part shall be in accordance with policy and administrative guideline 7510, Use of District Facilities, and 9700, Relations with Special Interest Groups.

Observance of religious holidays through devotional exercises or acts of worship is prohibited. Acknowledgement of, explanation of, and teaching about religious holidays is encouraged. Celebration activities involving non-religious decorations and use of secular works are permitted, but it is the responsibility of all faculty members to ensure that such activities are strictly voluntary, do not place an atmosphere of social compulsion or ostracism on minority groups or individuals, and do not interfere with the regular school program.

~~The flag of the United States shall be raised above each school and/or at other appropriate places during all school sessions, weather permitting. The flag shall be raised before the opening of school and taken down at its close every day.~~

~~Professional staff members are authorized to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance at an appropriate time each school day. However, no student shall be compelled to participate in the reciting of the Pledge. The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines which ensure that any staff member who conducts this activity does it at an appropriate time, in an appropriate manner, and with due regard to the need to protect the rights and the privacy of a nonparticipating student.~~

The United States Flag and Pledge of Allegiance

The flag of the United States shall be raised at each public school building operated by the District at all times during school hours, weather permitting. This flag shall measure at least 4 feet 2 inches by 8 feet. A United States flag shall also be

displayed in every classroom or other instructional site in which students recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

All students in attendance at school will be provided an opportunity to recite the Pledge each day that school is in session. However, no student shall be compelled to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. No student shall be penalized for failure to participate in the Pledge and the professional staff shall protect any such students from bullying as a result of their not participating in the Pledge.

The building principal or administrator shall be responsible for determining the appropriate time and manner for reciting the Pledge, with due regard to the need to protect the rights and the privacy of a nonparticipating student.

20 U.S.C. 4071 et seq.

M.C.L.A. 380.1347, [380.1347a](#), 380.1565

Gregoire vs. Centennial School District 907 F 2d 1366
(3rd Circuit, 1990)

8-12-13