

## NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF RELIGION

Descriptor: ACD                      Issued: **Draft 8/2010**  
Rescinds: ACD;ACD-R              Issued : 9-11-2001

### **BOARD POLICY**

1. The **District Board** recognizes the right of every person to make personal decisions about religion free from school or government involvement. ~~The District encourages~~ All students and staff **are encouraged** to appreciate, respect and be tolerant of each other's religious decisions and views.
2. Out of utmost respect for religious rights, the **District Board** adopts an official policy of religious neutrality, neither endorsing nor inhibiting any religion or religious belief. The District does not endorse any action by its employees, staff, students or visitors that would indicate that any religion, denomination or sect is favored, disfavored, promoted or discouraged.
3. District employees may not plan, lead, encourage, discourage, prohibit or endorse religious activities at school and/or school events.
4. The **District Board** views instruction about and understanding of the Free Exercise clause and the Establishment clause of the First Amendment as an essential part of citizenship education
5. The motto of the United States of America, "IN GOD WE TRUST," shall be displayed in each classroom, school auditorium and school cafeteria in the District.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**

1. **In accordance with state law and controlling case law**, the following represent a sampling of permissible activities for reference by District personnel that respect both the Free Exercise clause and the Establishment clause:
  - 1.1. Student-led, non-sectarian prayer at graduation ceremonies where seniors voted for prayer.
  - 1.2. Student-led voluntary prayer, individually or in groups, before or after school and/or school activities, or in between classes.
  - 1.3. A brief period of quiet reflection for not more than sixty seconds at the opening of the school day; however, this is not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise but is considered an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection.
  - 1.4. Voluntary discussions between students of religious topics.
  - 1.5. Meetings of non-instructional clubs during school time consistent with this policy.
  - 1.6. Wearing of religious clothing or other symbols by students.
  - 1.7. Wearing of unobtrusive religious jewelry by teachers.
  - 1.8. Student-led, non-sectarian voluntary prayer before, during or after ballgames; however, these prayers may not be given over a loud-speaker system.

1.9. The display of, or reading from historical documents relating to the founding of the United States of America and/or Mississippi despite the inclusion of religious quotations, references or illustrations.

1.10. References to religion or references to or the use of religious literature, history, art, music or other things having a religious significance, when such references or uses do not constitute aid to any religious sect or sectarian purpose and when such references or uses are incidental to or illustrative of matters properly included in the course of study.

2. The following represent a sampling of prohibited activities that do not respect both the Free Exercise clause and the Establishment clause:

2.1. Clergy-led, non-sectarian (neutral) invocation or benediction at graduation or ballgames.

2.2. Bible readings as a devotional each morning or during instructional time for any purpose other than literary or historical reference.

2.3. Any other religious exercise that is a regularly scheduled event on school property, and under teacher(s) supervision as part of a daily routine.

2.4. A "moment of silence" within the school day for ~~voluntary meditation~~ or prayer.

2.5. Recital of prayers (non-denominational or otherwise) by students in class.

2.6. The encouraging or requesting by coaches and/or staff of student prayers before, during or after ballgames.

2.7. ~~Wearing of religious clothing or dress by teachers.~~

### **EXHIBITS**

ACD 1.0810

### **REFERENCES**

MCA §~~37-13-161~~; 37-13-163; HB 51

### **FORMS**

None