



205 S Colorado, Celina, Tx 75009

Phone 469-742-9100

Fax 972-382-3607

---

## **CISD Board Agenda Item Synopsis**

### **Subject: Resolution Regarding a Period of Prayer and Reading of Religious Text During the School Day**

#### **Background Information:**

Senate Bill 11 requires each board of trustees of a school district and each governing body of an open-enrollment charter school to take a record vote, not later than six months after the effective date, on whether to adopt a resolution described by Section 25.0823(a-1) of the Education Code. Despite the intention to grant greater freedom of religious expression, Section 25.0823 of the Education Code does not grant any additional rights or increased freedom of religious expression which was not already possessed by all employees and students of the District. Rather, Section 25.0823 merely provides additional restrictions and legal requirements which must be followed for employees or students to exercise their first amendment rights in certain settings (during the established prayer periods). Specifically, Section 25.0823 includes the following restrictions:

1. To participate in the period of prayer and religious reading, an employee or parent or guardian of a student must submit a signed consent, expressly waiving their right to bring a legal claim on a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment or a related state or federal law.
2. The prayer and religious reading must not be done in the physical presence or hearing of a person for whom a signed consent was not submitted.
3. The prayer and religious reading may only be observed in classrooms or other areas in which a consent form has been submitted for every employee and student, before normal school hours, or by methods recommended by the Texas Attorney General or the district's legal counsel.

In accordance with federal and state law, District Board Policy currently allows students to engage in prayer, reading of religious text, and religious expression on school property and during the school day. Board Policy FNA (LEGAL) states, "A public school student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A student shall not be required or coerced to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity." Further, FNA (LEGAL) states, "Nothing in the Constitution as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court prohibits any public school student from voluntarily praying at any time before, during, or after the school day."

Additionally, Board Policy FNA (LOCAL) states, "The District shall treat a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner the District treats a student's voluntary expression of a secular or other viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject and shall not discriminate against the student based on a religious viewpoint expressed by the student on an otherwise permissible subject." Further FNA (LOCAL) states, "Students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, 'see you at the pole' gatherings, and other religious gatherings before,

during, and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other noncurricular student activities and groups.”

Lastly, Board Policy DG (LEGAL) states, “The right of an employee of a school district or open-enrollment charter school to engage in religious speech or prayer while on duty may not be infringed on by the district or school or another state governmental entity, unless the infringement is necessary to further a compelling state interest; and narrowly tailored using the least restrictive means to achieve that compelling state interest.”

Therefore, Section 25.0823 does nothing more than provide additional restrictions and prohibitive legal requirements to which school districts must adhere for employees and students to exercise the same first amendment rights they already possessed under current federal and state law and District Board Policy. As such, employees and students currently have well-established rights to engage in religious expression on school grounds, before, during, and after school and will be free to continue exercising these rights regardless of whether the Board adopts the resolution proposed in Section 25.0823. Accordingly, District Administration recommends that the Board decline the option to adopt a resolution pursuant to Senate Bill 11.

**Goals:**

- ☒ 1. We will provide and support a safe, civil and collaborative culture.
- ☐ 2. We will continuously provide and support effective teaching in every classroom.
- ☐ 3. We will provide and support a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- ☐ 4. We will continue to foster a love of reading and commit to continual growth in childhood literacy.
- ☐ 5. We will foster strong numeracy skills and commit to continual growth in math success.
- ☐ 6. We will provide targeted strategies and practices to prepare students for post-secondary education, career readiness, and military participation.
- ☐ 7. We will attract, recruit, develop, and retain high-quality professional staff.

**Budgetary Impact:**

None

**Recommendation:** District Administration recommends that the Board decline the option to adopt a resolution pursuant to Senate Bill 11.

**Submitted by:**

*Jason Johnston, Ed.D.*  
*Sr. Chief*

**Recommended by:**

*Tom Maglisceau, Ph.D.*  
*Superintendent*

**Meeting Date: December 15, 2025**