

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

Federal and state constitutional law prohibits actions by the school district which have the purpose or effect of endorsing religion or excessively entangling the school district in the affairs of religious organizations. Thus, the School District shall refrain from taking a position on questions of religious belief and from making adherence to religion relevant in any way to an individual's standing in the District.

Sectarian beliefs, symbols, music, drama, and literature having religious themes may be described, analyzed, and discussed in classrooms of the School District when such instruction is a part of the curriculum of the class. Classical music, seasonal songs, or traditional carols may be used in the School District if they are presented in an objective manner, without sectarian indoctrination or other endorsement of religion. The purpose and the effect of such instruction shall only be to provide educationally significant instruction concerning such areas as literature, history, and cultural traditions. Such instruction shall not be used to promote or advance any religious belief.

No student shall be excluded from usual school privileges nor have an academic grade adjusted due to the student's decision to not participate in a school activity which the student considers to be contrary to his or her religious convictions. Refusal to participate in a school activity because of a religious conviction will not result in exclusion from usual school privileges, nor will it result in having an academic grade adjusted; however, alternative assignments may be required.

Adopted: May 26, 1993

Legal Refs: Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment 1;
Constitution of the State of Missouri, Article I, 5-7;
Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421, 82 S. Ct. 1261 (1962);
School District of Abington Township v. Schempp
374 U.S. 203, 83 S. Ct. 1560 (1963);
Epperson v. Arkansas, 393 U.S. 97, 89 S. Ct. 266 (1968);
Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S. 39, 101 S. Ct. 192 (1980);
Wallace v. Jaffree, 472 U.S. 38, 105 S. Ct. 2479 (1985);
Edwards v. Aguillard, 482 U.S. 578, 107 S. Ct. 2573 (1987);
Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S._____, 112 S. Ct. 2649 (1992);
Florey v. Sioux Falls School District 49-5, 619 F.2d
1311 (8th Cir. 1980) cert. denied, 101 S. Ct. 409 (1980).

The School District of Springfield R-XII, Springfield, Missouri