

Obion County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in November	Descriptor Term: Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs & Holidays	Descriptor Code: 4.803	Issued Date: 01/12/04
		Rescinds: Sec. 14C & 16G	Issued: 02/03/97

1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted by the school system or its employees, and none shall
 2 be belittled. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of each other's views. The school system
 3 shall use its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether
 4 it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs.¹ In that spirit of tolerance, students
 5 and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious
 6 beliefs.

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 8 **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

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 10 Observance of religious holidays² shall be as follows:

- 11 1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be
- 12 observed in the public schools;³
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- 14 2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in
- 15 an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
- 16
- 17 3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the
- 18 curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective
- 19 manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday;
- 20
- 21 4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid
- 22 or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious
- 23 heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. These holidays include Christmas, Easter,
- 24 Passover, Hanukkah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving, and Halloween; and
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- 26 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays
- 27 of all faiths.
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33 Legal References:

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- 35 1. TCA 49-6-2901-2906; State Board of Education Guidelines-
- 36 Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- 37 2. *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, 619 F. 2d 1311 (1980);
- 38 *Washegesic v. Bloomindale Public Schools* 813 F. Supp. 559 (1993)
- 39 3. TCA 49-6-3016

Cross References:

Student Equal Access 4.802
 Staff Rights and Responsibilities 5.600
 Attendance 6.200