

APPENDIX L

POLICY ON RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION South Windsor Public Schools

1.0 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

- 1.1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted by the school district or its employees and none should be disparaged.
- 1.2 Except as set forth in Paragraph 1.3 below, students and staff members should be excused without penalty from participating in activities which are contrary to their religious beliefs.
- 1.3 Administrators may require students and staff to participate in such activities if, in the administrator's judgment (1) non-participation would seriously impair important instructional objectives, and (2) there is no less intrusive method for achieving those important instructional objectives.

2.0 Religious Days

- 2.1 The school district's calendar should be prepared to accommodate major religious days (a day of historical and cultural significance that affects a number of students) to the extent practicable, so as to minimize conflicts with personal observance of religious days.
- 2.2 Student absences from school, or from extracurricular activities, to observe a religious day shall be excused without penalty.
- 2.3 Parents who wish to have their children excused from school or extracurricular activities for religious purposes shall so advise the principal or designee in writing.
- 2.4 When the school is in session on a major religious day no examinations shall be given, no major new assignments shall be made, and no new areas of study shall be introduced.

3.0 Religion In the Curriculum

- 3.1 The historical and contemporary value, and the origin of the religious days may be addressed in elementary and secondary curricula, if presented in an unbiased and objective manner without indoctrination.
- 3.2 The inclusion of religious literature, music, drama and the arts in the curriculum and in school activities is permitted. Such educational programs must be:
 - a. intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study;
 - b. presented objectively;
 - c. accurate in content; and
 - d. developmentally and age-appropriate.
- 3.3 Such education programs should be the direct and sole responsibility of Board of Education employees whose employment requires a state certificate.

- 3.4 Religious themes in the arts, literature and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should neither promote nor inhibit religious belief or nonbelief.
- 3.5 Religious symbols, such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native American religions, or other symbols that are part of a religious day are permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided that:
 - a. the sole purpose of the religious day display is educational; and
 - b. such symbols are displayed on a temporary basis as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the religious day.
- 3.6 Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or nonbeliefs about religious themes shall be accommodated, provided that classroom instruction shall maintain neutrality as to matters of religion.
- 3.7 Students may express a religious belief or nonbelief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate, provided that such expression does not interfere with classroom instruction or the responsibility to maintain neutrality as to matters of religion in the educational programs of the district. Teachers should not encourage or discourage such expressions.

4.0 Administration

- 4.1 The principal shall be responsible for observing the Board of Education policy and these guidelines in planning and supervising instructional activities in the schools.

(Adopted 6/23/92)

POLICY ON SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

South Windsor Public Schools

Recognition Of Pluralism

To endorse pluralism is to understand and appreciate the differences that exist among the nation's citizens. It is to see these differences as a positive force in the continuing development of a society which professes a wholesome respect for the intrinsic worth of every individual.

The South Windsor school district recognizes its responsibility to prepare students to accept and value diversity and develop positive attitudes about the richness and greatness of a pluralistic society.

Accordingly, the school district shall foster understanding and mutual respect regarding race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background and religious beliefs.

Religious Beliefs And Customs

The school district shall encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be respectful of each other's views on religion. The curriculum at every level presents opportunities for providing learning experiences to develop understanding, appreciation and respect for religious diversity.

Religious institutions and practices are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect of human culture would be incomplete. In presenting information concerning religion, the school district and its staff must recognize the responsibility under the state and federal constitution to remain neutral with regard to religion and not to inhibit or advance any particular viewpoint as to religion. Teaching about religion should be conducted in a factual, objective and respectful manner.

(Adopted 6/10/97)