

SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The District supports an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of religions and their customs in our community and provides a respectful and safe environment for all.

Furthermore, the District believes that an education is incomplete without knowledge of diverse religions, beliefs, and spiritual practices. Educating about the impact of religions, religious practices, and beliefs is appropriate when it fosters mutual understanding, respect for, and sensitivity to the values and beliefs of others. The curriculum includes the study of religions and the impact of religious beliefs and practices in literature, history, music, and the arts. Students are instructed in a climate in which ideas can be discussed in an objective way for their educational value, with an emphasis on their impact on history, literature, art, music, science, ethics, and social institutions. The District requires that the school environment be honest, respectful, caring and safe, and that diversity be recognized, accepted, and promoted through inclusive practices.

The District recognizes the rights of students and staff to exercise their religious freedoms in ways that are consistent with applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The First Amendment directs that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." In accordance with the Establishment Clause, PCSD will not endorse specific religious practices or doctrines, nor coerce participation in religious activity. The District will maintain official neutrality regarding sectarian religious issues and will neither advance nor inhibit religion. With respect to the right of free exercise of religion, the schools will give students the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as given to engage in comparable non-religious activities. Students and staff may express personal religious views or beliefs within the parameters of the law and as explained in the accompanying Regulations.

The Superintendent or designee is charged with developing Regulations in accordance with this policy.

United States Constitution, First Amendment
Equal Access Act,
20 United States Code (USC) Sections 4071-4074
Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 9524, as amended by the No Child
Left Behind Act of 2001
Education Law Sections 1609(9) and (10), 1709(1) and (3), 3204(5) and 3210
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations
(NYCRR) Sections 16.2 and 109.2
NOTE: Refer also to Policies:
#7460 -- Constitutionally Protected Prayer in the Public Schools
#8330 -- Objection to Instructional Materials

Pittsford Central School District Adopted: 11/14/77, 6/28/82, 6/22/87, 2/20/89,
4/8/96,