

Williamson County Board of Education

**Adopted Date:**

3/19/01; Editorial
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4.8041

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS, DISPLAY OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND RELIGION IN SCHOOL-SPONSORED PROGRAMS

1 The study of religious holidays may be included as opportunities for teaching about religions. The
2 study of religions serves the academic goals of educating students about history and cultures as
3 well as about the traditions of particular religions in a pluralistic society. Natural opportunities arise
4 for discussions of religious holidays while studying different cultures and communities.
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6 Recognition of and information about holidays may focus on how and when they are celebrated,
7 their origins, histories, and generally agreed-upon meanings. If the approach is objective and
8 sensitive, neither promoting nor inhibiting religion, this study can foster understanding and mutual
9 respect for differences in belief.
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11 Teachers may not use the study of religious holidays as an opportunity to proselytize or to inject
12 personal religious beliefs into the discussion.
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14 The use of religious symbols, provided they are used only as examples of cultural or religious
15 heritage, is permissible as a teaching aid or resource. Religious symbols may be displayed on a
16 temporary basis throughout the school provided they are part of the academic program. Students
17 may choose to create artwork with religious symbols, but teachers should not assign such
18 creations.
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21 Teachers and school personnel may allow students and staff to offer greetings associated with
22 religious holidays. School personnel may also display on school property scenes or symbols
23 associated with religious holidays, if the display includes a scene or symbol of:
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25 (1) More than one (1) religion; or
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27 (2) One (1) religion and at least one (1) secular scene or symbol.
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31 Concerts or school programs should include a variety of selections and may include sacred music.
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33 While recognizing various holiday seasons, none of the school activities should have the purpose,
34 or effect, of promoting or inhibiting religion.
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41 Legal References:

42 T.C.A. 49-6-1033

43 Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 688 (1984)

44 Johnson v. Shiverman, 658 S.W. 2d 910 (Mo.App. 1983)
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Cross References:

4.201 Basic Program

5.600 Academic Freedom