



# Independent School District 152



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## Definitions and Prayer Times

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## Definitions and Prayer Times

### A. Observance of Religious Holidays

When religious holidays are recognized, they should be as closely related to the curriculum as possible. The educational values should be such that they could be taught as part of the curriculum at any time during the year. Religion, including its religious aspects, may be studied, and the secular aspects of the holiday may be celebrated. However, the holiday may not be observed or promoted as a religious event.

### B. Definition of Religious Symbols

A religious symbol is any object that suggests the existence of a supreme being or universal being, deity, or force. Examples of such religious symbols are the Cross, Menorah, Crescent, Star of David, signs of the zodiac, nativity scenes, Buddhist symbols, and any other symbols which are a part of a religious celebration. Other symbols, which may be of seasonal or geographic significance, are the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, Menorah, Dreidel, Shofar, Easter eggs, and Easter bunnies. Any of the aforementioned symbols may be displayed as a part of a broad cultural study and left on display for the time their presence is necessary to the study.

### C. Religious Expression Within the Schools

The distribution of literature, display of posters, and groupings and assemblies of students which encourage or oppose religious or non-religious thought or action shall be governed by the same rules which apply to their secular counterparts. Religious and non-religious themes and symbols may be used in independent student-initiated projects in art, shop, or other school activities such as reports and class discussions as a mode of personal expression or in an informative capacity. The instructor should exercise caution so as not to either encourage or discourage religious or non-religious

themes to the advantage or disadvantage of any belief or other appropriate secular projects. Exhibition of such works shall be given prominence and duration equal to that of any comparable project.

#### D. Prayer During the School Day

Students have the right to engage in individual or group prayer during the school day in a non-disruptive manner and subject to the rules that normally pertain in applicable settings. Students who request a private place to pray will be supported by finding an empty classroom or room in the library. Buildings may identify a specific room for this purpose. Students may feel self-conscious praying in public and may not be able to respond when another person is speaking to them, so privacy is optimal.

#### E. Moment of Silence

State Statute 121A.10 states, "A moment of silence may be observed." Official school functions such as Commencement or any meaningful or mournful occasion may be recognized with a "moment of silence." The moment of silence allows individuals to use it as they see fit. Some constraints accompany this practice. Anyone calling for a moment of silence should not ask participants to stand, bow, or pray. Any responses to the moment of silence are left to the discretion of the individual.