

# Policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HORTONVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AND OBSERVANCES

The Board acknowledges that the U.S. Constitution prohibits it from adopting any policy or rule promoting or establishing a religion or any policy that unlawfully restricts any person's free exercise of the individual right to worship enjoyed by all person. Within the confines to this legal framework, the Board adopts the following policy to address the scope of these rights and the District's authority within its own facilities or during events.

As public employees, while on duty and acting within the scope of employment or pursuant to official duties, District staff members shall not use prayer, religious readings, or religious symbols as a devotional exercise or in an act of worship or celebration. Staff are expected to avoid circumstances where staff member's expression of religious views could be reasonably construed as an endorsement or approval of the message by the school or District. Nothing in this policy or its application shall serve to prohibit or interfere with any staff member's free exercise of their religious views in circumstances not covered by this policy.

Nothing in this policy prohibits teaching about various religions and religious practices in a manner consistent with any adopted District course curriculum. This instruction may include discussion of religious holidays and customs in a manner related to the curriculum that does not give the appearance of an endorsement of one religion over other religions or favoring either a system or religious beliefs or of other beliefs, such as atheism or agnosticism. Observance of religious holidays through devotional exercises or acts of worship is also prohibited.

Distribution of any outside organization's materials, including a request by any person wishing to facilitate dissemination of materials on District property, may make a request in accordance with Policy 7510 – Use of Facilities and Properties; Policy 9700 – Relations with Special Interest Groups; and 9700.02 – Distribution of Materials on School Premises.

Students are not prohibited by this policy from engaging in the free, individual, and voluntary exercise or expression of the student's religious beliefs. However, such exercise or expression may be limited to lunch periods or other non-instructional time periods when students are free to associate, or on an individual basis in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process.

Celebration activities involving nonreligious decorations and use of secular works are permitted, but it is the responsibility of all faculty members to ensure that such activities are strictly voluntary, do not place an atmosphere of social compulsion or ostracism on groups or individuals, and do not interfere with the regular school program.

The Board shall not conduct or sanction a baccalaureate service in conjunction with graduation ceremonies.

Board Approved 9/3/14; 1/22/18; 6/22/20; 2/22/21-T; 6/26/2023  
Adoption Resolution 10/13/14

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Legal References:

118.06(2), Wis. Stats.

20 U.S.C. 4071 et seq.

29 C.F.R. 1910.1030

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