

Section I:

**Instructional  
Goals and  
Objectives**

**Knox County Board of Education Policy**

Descriptor Term:

**Religion in the Curriculum**

Descriptor Code:

**I-431**

Issued:

**7/95**

Reviewed:

**8/23**

Revised:

**10/23**

The Board affirms that it is essential that the teaching about religion—and not of a religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner in accordance with the following:

1. The inclusion of religion shall be for educational purposes only;<sup>1</sup>
2. Music, art, literature, or drama with a religious theme or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs provided it is essential to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively;
3. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history shall be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies shall never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs; and
4. Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.

Rights of students:<sup>1</sup>

1. Pray in a public school, vocally or silently, alone or with other students to the same extent and under the same circumstances as a student is permitted to vocally or silently reflect, meditate or speak on nonreligious matters alone or with other students in the public school;
2. Express religious viewpoints in a public school to the same extent and under the same circumstances as a student is permitted to express viewpoints on nonreligious topics or subjects in the school;
3. Speak to and attempt to share religious viewpoints with other students in a public school to the same extent and under the same circumstances as a student is permitted to speak to and attempt to share nonreligious viewpoints with other students;
4. Possess or distribute religious literature in a public school, subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions to the same extent and under the same circumstances as a student is permitted to possess or distribute literature on nonreligious topics or subjects in the school; and
5. Be absent, in accordance with LEA attendance policy, from a public school to observe religious holidays and participate in other religious practices to the same extent and under the same circumstances as a student is permitted to be absent from a public school for nonreligious purposes.

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Legal Reference:

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- 1. T.C.A. § 49-6-2901.

Approved as to Legal Form  
 By Knox County Law Director 8/21/2023  
 /Gary T. Dupler/Deputy Law Director