

Purposes/Goals/Objectives

Commitment to Religious Neutrality

In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution of the United States of America prohibiting the establishment of religion, it is the policy of the Ledyard Board of Education that the Ledyard Public Schools shall, at all times and in all ways, be neutral in the matters of religion.

It is further the policy of the Board to not prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in the District's schools, consistent with current guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The Board recognizes that the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment imposes two equally important obligations on public schools regarding students' religious rights:

- First, schools must not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs.
- Second, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, and students may not coerce participation in religious activity.

Schools must give students the same rights to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity. Generally, this means that students may pray in a non-disruptive manner during the school day when they are not engaged in school activity and instruction, subject to the same rules as apply to other speech.

This policy supercedes any other Board policy and/or District regulations that might be inconsistent with it.

Related Policies:

1140 – Distribution of Materials to and by Students

5113 – Attendance and Excuses

5145.13 – Student Surveys

5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression

6112 – School Day

6141.2 – Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

6142.2 – Multiculturalism

6144 – Controversial Issues

6144.1 – Exemption from Instruction

6145 – Extra-Class Activities – Limited Open Forum

6145.3 – Student Publications

Policy adopted: July 6, 2005

LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Ledyard, Connecticut