Teaching About Religion

The inclusion of religion in the study of history, culture, literature, music, drama, and art is essential to a full and fair presentation of the curriculum. The inclusion of religious elements is appropriate as long as the material included is intrinsic to the field of study in which it is presented and as long as it is presented objectively.

The District's approach to teaching about religion shall be academic, not devotional. Emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history shall be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and thorough study of these areas. Such studies shall not foster any particular religious tenet nor demean any religious beliefs, but shall attempt to develop mutual respect among students and advance their knowledge and appreciation of the role that religious heritage plays in the social, cultural, and historic development of civilization.

Religious Texts

Use of religious texts in instruction shall be guided by the principles set forth above. Other than texts used in an appropriate course of study, the District shall not distribute religious texts or materials to students. Such materials may be indexed, shelved, and circulated as library materials. [See FNAA regarding student distribution of nonschool literature and GKDA regarding nonstudent distribution of nonschool literature]

Religious Music

District music groups may perform or receive instruction regarding religious music as part of the secular program of instruction. The primary purpose of the inclusion of religious music in performances or instruction shall be academic, not devotional. Performances and instruction shall reflect religious diversity when appropriate.

Religious Symbols

Religious symbols may be displayed as a teaching aid. Their display shall be temporary and limited to specific teaching activities; such displays shall not be permitted for devotional purposes.

Religious Elements in Student Work

Students may choose to include religious elements in their schoolwork, such as papers, presentations, or artwork; however, students' work must fulfill the purpose of the assignment and be evaluated by secular academic standards.