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To: The Board of Education
From: Doug Larson
Re: Policy Reading
Date: August 31, 2022

Policy and Legal Services will present one First Reading during the next Board of Education meeting. A description of the policy under consideration is provided below.

Article V.C.5 Religious Expression in Schools

This policy is a modification of our prior policy related to prayers at school sponsored events. This policy is drafted in response to the latest iteration of supreme court precedent in this area of the law (*see Kennedy v. Bremerton*). On occasion, we also have employees and students ask for accommodations for personal religious expression. This policy is intended to provide a simple statement about the balance of free speech and non-establishment and provide direction to administrators on navigating this issue.

Article V.C.5. Policy Regarding Prayer at Religious Expression in Schools-Sponsored Events

A. Statement of Purpose

The Granite School District (District) community is highly diverse combining myriad national, linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The Board of Education of Granite School District (Board) affirms that our diverse and pluralistic community is a fundamental asset of the District. Varying cultural and religious traditions are afforded a certain level of expression in schools, and the District protects those lawful expressions.

B. Statement of Policy

To a significant degree, praying and other forms of religious expression are protected under the first amendment in the limited public forum of schools. The first amendment also includes countervailing protections against state establishment of religion.

1. Schools must allow reasonable, personal expressions of faith by students and employees and be receptive to requests for accommodations to allow for such personal expressions. Spontaneous personal expressions of faith should not be limited by District employees.
2. Students may initiate and conduct voluntary religious activities or otherwise exercise their religious freedom on school grounds during discretionary time. However, ~~individuals~~ individuals not currently enrolled as students in the school may neither conduct nor regularly attend the religious activities.
3. ~~District employees School officials and~~ District employees ~~School officials and~~ may neither conduct nor actively participate in the student led religious activities but may be present as necessary to ensure proper observance of school rules and may limit or prohibit student activities under this section which: (1) unreasonably interfere with the ability of school officials to maintain order and discipline; (2) threaten the well-being of persons or property; or (3) violate concepts of civility or propriety appropriate in a school setting.
4. Otherwise, District or school sponsored or endorsed religious expression, including prayers, shall not be hereby reaffirms its policy that public prayers shall not be allowed, given, recited, or encouraged in classes, assemblies, student activities, school-sponsored athletic events, or any other similar activity. However, In addition, no students or District or school employees shall be encouraged students to or discouraged students from participating in private prayer or silent observance during any such school-sponsored activity.

~~B. Commencing with the 1992-93 school year, prayers shall not be allowed in District-sponsored graduation or promotion exercises. This policy shall be reviewed every year for the next three years, and thereafter as necessary, with all faculty members, employees and students involved in planning graduation or promotion exercises; and District and~~

~~school officials and employees will take all reasonable steps to make sure this policy is complied with by all participants.~~

~~C. This policy shall be included in the District's policy manual and administrative memoranda and shall be reviewed with school administrators at the beginning of the school year every year for the next three years and thereafter, in conjunction with any regular review of District practices and policies. In addition, upon its adoption, each principal will be asked to sign a statement indicating that he/she has received the policy and reviewed it with his/her faculty.~~

~~D. Violation of this policy will result in discipline of the responsible administrators and employees to the same extent as violation of any other policy of the district.~~

C. Any individual who believes that the policy has been violated may report the violation to school or District administrators, and contact the Deputy Superintendent at the District offices to complain of the alleged violation. Any such complaint the report will be thoroughly investigated.

~~D. This policy will not be modified, amended or repealed without first giving two week notice to The American Civil Liberties Union of Utah.~~