



Policy & Legal Services
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To: The Board of Education
From: Doug Larson
Re: Policy Reading
Date: September 28, 2022

Policy and Legal Services will present one Second 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

Again, 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. There were no questions from parents, patrons, or employees regarding this policy and no changes recommended by the Board. It is recommended the Board take final action on this policy.

Article V.C.5. Religious Expression in Schools

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. Reasonable, personal expressions of faith by students and employees shall not be denied by the District or schools, and the District and schools shall be receptive to requests for accommodations to allow for such personal expressions.
2. Students may initiate and conduct voluntary religious activities or otherwise exercise their religious freedom on school grounds during discretionary time. However, individuals not currently enrolled as students in the school may neither conduct nor regularly attend the religious activities.
3. District employees may neither conduct nor actively participate in 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 allowed, given, recited, or encouraged in classes, assemblies, student activities, school-sponsored events, or any other similar activities. However, no students or District employees shall be encouraged or discouraged from participating in private prayer or silent observance during any such school-sponsored activity.

- C. Any individual who believes that the policy has been violated may report the violation to school or District administrators, and the report will be thoroughly investigated.