

Board Policy 8800.01

In order to ensure compliance with Board Policy 8800 “Religious/Patriotic Ceremonies and Observances” and legal and constitutional requirements, the Board mandates that all employees receive at least annual in-service training regarding this policy and Board Policy 2270 “Religion in the Curriculum.” The Superintendent shall ensure that all employees are trained on this policy prior to beginning employment within the school system. In addition, in-service training must be conducted on an annual basis for all employees. The annual in-service training shall include written training materials and shall cover Policy 8800 and conduct of employees consistent with compliance of Policy 8800 when it comes to religious matters involving students.

Monitoring compliance with Board Policy 8800 and legal and constitutional requirements is expressly delegated by the Board to the Superintendent and each building principal. The Superintendent and each building principal will attempt in good faith to monitor school graduations, assemblies, athletic events, and other school-sponsored activities [“school events”] to ensure compliance by all employees with this policy. In any event, should the building principal not attend any such school event but learn of a potential violation of this policy, the principal shall report the potential violation within seven days to the Superintendent, who is authorized to investigate and take remedial action.

Employees are not permitted to initiate religious worship with students as part of any classroom or club setting, including prayer, worship, or other religious activity. While acting in their roles as employees of the school system, employees are not permitted to engage in the following activities in the presence of students: proselytizing, denigrating students on the basis of religious belief or lack of belief, encouraging or discouraging students from attending particular places of worship for the primary purpose to engage in religious or worship services or activities; encouraging or discouraging students from praying; or inviting or encouraging any other person to engage in such activities.” However, the Board may provide students with fliers or information offered from various groups, organizations, or clubs in the manner set forth in Policy 9700(D), and with the disclaimer required therein.

Consistent with the Equal Access Act, Board Policy 2430, and when permitted by school rules, secondary school students may form clubs that are religious and may host meetings in the same terms as other non-curricular clubs during the school day. Any such club must be a bona-fide student club that is both student-initiated and student-run. Consistent with the Equal Access Act, any employee who serves as an advisor or monitor of the club shall be present at club meetings only in an advisor capacity. This means that employees shall not initiate or lead any religious activities with students as part of club activities. Employees are expressly prohibited from initiating school religious clubs on their own accord.