

## SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The Board of Education recognizes the value of school-sponsored programs and ceremonies during school hours and at other appropriate times. Recognizing achievement and talent encourages further learning. School-sponsored programs, ceremonies and observances also provide an opportunity to involve the community in public education.

The flag of the United States of America will be prominently displayed, either on the outside of the building or upon a pole erected in the school yard, at every school in the district during school hours.

Pursuant to state law, the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited in at least one (1) scheduled class of every student no less than once a week. However, no student will be required to participate in the recitation.

### **Religious Content in Programs and Ceremonies**

Religious content included in student performances will be selected on the basis of independent educational merit, and will seek exposure to a variety of religious customs, beliefs and forms of expression. The emphasis on religious themes will be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study or presentation. Student participation in a program or performance which involves personally offensive religious material or expression will be voluntary. No pupil shall be excluded from usual school privileges nor have an academic grade adjusted because of failure to participate in activities or observances contrary to his or her religious convictions.

This policy should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching *about* religions, religious holidays and religious differences. Such instruction can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all citizens in a pluralistic society.

To the extent required by law, school employees or school officials shall not lead attendees of a school-sponsored event in prayer or any other religious ritual, nor shall they direct, whether implicitly or explicitly, a student to lead attendees in a prayer or any other religious ritual. However, this policy shall not be used to deny any student, employee or school official any personal legal right of expression.

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***Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.***

FILE: IND  
Critical

Adopted: 03/03/1997

Revised: 05/10/2004; 04/10/2006

Cross Refs: KG, Community Use of School Facilities

Legal Refs: Mo. Const. art. I, §§ 5 - 8, art. IX, § 8  
§§ 9.030, .040, .070, .072, .100, .105, .110, .115, .130, .138, .140, .141, .161,  
160.360, 170.049, 171.021, RSMo.  
U.S. Const. amend. I  
Patriotic and National Observances and Ceremonies, 36 U.S.C. § 106  
*Santa Fe Independent Sch. Dist. v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290 (2000)

Columbia School District No. 93, Columbia, Missouri