

POLICY IHAL

Board of Education Las Cruces Public Schools

Related Entries: IHAL-R
Responsible Office: Associate Superintendent for Instruction

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGIONS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of Policy IHAL is to ensure the school district shall neither actively sponsor nor interfere with religions.

II. BACKGROUND

Las Cruces Public Schools recognizes that religions have played an undeniable role in the formation of world civilizations, the foundation of our country and the lives of its citizens.

III. POSITION

- A. The place of religions in our society should be recognized as an important one. As allowed by the First Amendment of our Constitution and as expressed by the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, the proper role of religions in the public schools is in its educational value and not in religious observance or celebration. The public schools can play a vital role in bringing about an understanding between peoples of different backgrounds. In that capacity and when appropriate, the LCPS instructional program shall be guided by adopted New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks.
- B. Belief systems will be discussed in an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect. Non-religious intercultural programs and/or curriculum focusing on the role that religions ~~has~~ have played in history, literature or in the development of society and the influence that religions have had on historical figures or movements are acceptable and desirable. It is anticipated that students will also develop tolerance and mutual respect as they become aware of diverse belief systems and their current and historical impact on human culture.
- C. Teaching sectarian doctrines is prohibited in the Las Cruces Public Schools. The provisions of §22-13-15 1978 expressly prohibit any person from teaching sectarian doctrine in a public school. Any school district employee violating §22-13-15 and/or this policy by teaching sectarian doctrine in the school district shall be immediately discharged by the Superintendent of Schools pursuant to the statutory provisions related to the discharge of school personnel and under the provisions of the School Board's policies.
- D. No employee of the school district shall induce or compel any student or staff member to disclose their personal religious preferences or beliefs, or those of their family members. No student or employee shall be compelled by an

employee of the school district to profess a religious belief or disbelief. Employees engaging in such conduct may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge and termination of their employment with the school district.

- E. No religious instruction shall be conducted on school property or by any employee or member of the school board during school hours.
- F. The Superintendent shall promulgate a regulation for the implementation of this policy.

IV. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.



Board of Education, President

May 17, 2011

Date Approved

History: Formerly Policy 424 (8.18.92); revised as IHAL: Religions in the Schools, 5.17.11

Legal Reference: Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. § 4071-4074; N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-5-4 (2003); N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-13-15 (2003); § 6.29.6; 6.29.10; and 6.29.11 NMAC.