

# Wilson County Board of Education

Policy Description:  Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays	Policy Number: 4.803	Amended Date: 12/07/09
	Rescinds:	Reviewed: 03/10 Issued: 06/03/04

1 No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted by the school system or its employees, and none shall be  
2 belittled. All students and staff shall be respectful of the rights of others. The school system shall seek to foster  
3 understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether it involves race, culture, economic  
4 background or religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> In that spirit, students and staff members shall be excused from participating in  
5 practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs except when the student or staff member's participation is  
6 the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling governmental interest.

## 7 8 **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

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10 Recognition of religious holidays<sup>2</sup> shall be as follows:

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12 1. The several holidays throughout the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be  
13 recognized in the public schools;<sup>3</sup>
- 14 2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an  
15 unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination;
- 16 3. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum  
17 for school sponsored activities and programs if presented in an educational and objective manner and  
18 as a traditional part of the academic study of the cultural and religious history and meaning of the  
19 particular holiday;
- 20 4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid or  
21 resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of  
22 the holiday and are temporary in nature;
- 23 5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all  
24 faiths.

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<sup>1</sup> TCA 49-6-2901-2906

<sup>2</sup> Florey V. Sioux Falls, 619 F. 2d 1311 (1980); Washegesic v. Bloomindale Public Schools 813 F. Supp. 559 (1993)

<sup>3</sup> TCA 49-6-3016