

## FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

**Instruction****RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS**

The County Superintendent or designee shall ensure the following for the recognition of religious beliefs and customs in County Superintendent-operated schools:

1. The approach to religion is academic and not devotional.
2. The goal is for student awareness of religion in historical and contemporary societies.
3. The students may not be pressed to accept any one religion.
4. The study of religion as part of the history-social science curriculum may be included, but the practice of religions may not be sponsored.
5. The students may be exposed to and educated about a diversity of religious views and beliefs, but a particular view or belief may not be imposed, nor may any one religion be promoted or denigrated.

Staff shall make every effort to schedule one-time events, such as examinations, school-sponsored trips, special laboratories, picture-taking days and class parties, to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays of all faiths.

Programs and Exhibits

When school programs and exhibits are in any way related to instruction about religion or religious holidays, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. The lead site administrator or designee shall ensure that school-sponsored programs are presented in an objective manner, consistent with County Superintendent/County Board policy.
2. The lead site administrator or designee shall be kept informed of the program's development.
3. Program or exhibit planners shall take into consideration the diverse religious faiths represented in the community, student body and staff.

Opt-Outs

When a parent/guardian submits a written request to opt the parent's/guardian's student out of instruction based on religious beliefs, customs, or practices, the request shall include the following:

1. The specific instructional content of which the student should be opted out.

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2. The specific religious belief(s), custom(s), and/or practice(s) with which the specific instructional content substantially interferes.
3. How the specific instructional content substantially interferes with the specific religious belief(s), custom(s), and/or practice(s), including any grade level or individual student characteristics relevant to the opt-out request.

As necessary, County Superintendent Legal Services may be consulted to evaluate each opt-out request and determine whether it shall be granted.

Adopted: 10/20/2011

Amended: 11/19/2020, 11/21/2024, 03/19/2026