

POLICY 25

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The Board believes that our schools have a role in helping children develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, morally and spiritually.

The Board believes in religious tolerance, the acknowledgement of religious diversity, the maintenance of inclusive environments in its school, and the provision of appropriate opportunities for students to give expression to their religious beliefs.

In accordance with the School Act, the Alberta Act, the School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories and the Constitution of Canada, the Board may provide opportunities for students to take part in religious instruction during the last thirty (30) minutes of the day, and may approve religious instruction to be offered to its students.

The Board may permit persons other than teachers to provide religious instruction to its students.

1. Procedure

- 1.1 Whenever parents/guardians request that religious instruction courses be made available at a school, the Principal shall advise the Superintendent, who will advise the Board of Trustees.
- 1.2 The Board of Trustees may, through the Superintendent, direct the Principal to determine the degree of parent/guardian interest around such request for religious instruction courses through surveys, meetings or any other appropriate means of gathering information, and establish a timeframe for such undertaking.
- 1.3 The Principal shall present information obtained, including the rationale for the request for religious instruction courses and the determined degree of parent/guardian interest in the request, to the Board and seek Board approval of such recitation.
- 1.4 The Board shall consider the rationale presented, including the tradition and culture of the school community, as well as the determined degree of parent/guardian interest and may approve the religious instruction courses to be included in the school's course offerings.
- 1.5 For the schools where the Board approves religious instruction courses, the Principal shall typically present information regarding such courses as part of the school's instructional program plan for the coming school year. Such information shall include but not be limited to:
 - 1.5.1. the grades or grade grouping for which religious instruction will be offered,

- 1.5.2 the scheduling, as per legislation, of instruction per week,
 - 1.5.3 the process by which parents/guardians will indicate their approval or non-approval for their child(ren) to participate in a religious instruction course,
 - 1.5.4 the course of instruction to be offered to any student whose parents/guardians indicate that their child in not to participate in a religious instruction course,
 - 1.5.5 notification to the Board if any persons other than teachers are to provide the religious instruction to the students under the supervision of a teacher,
 - 1.5.6 the list of students whose parents/guardians provided written approval to participate in any religious instruction course,
 - 1.5.7 the list of students whose parents/guardians who do not wish to have their child(ren) participate in a religious instruction course,
 - 1.5.8 the provisions made to provide an alternate course of instruction for any student(s) whose parents/guardians do not wish them to participate in a religious instruction course,
 - 1.5.9 a draft budget that shows the delivery of religious instruction will not result in an economic burden to the school division.
2. No staff member shall be required to teach or in any way be involved in religious instruction unless they are willing to do so.

References:

Education Act, Sections 1 and 3, 58(1)(a) and (b), and 58(2)(a) and (b)
 Alberta Act, 1905: Section 17
 School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, 1901; Section 137 and 138
 Constitution Act, 1867: Section 93
 Alberta Human Rights Act, Sections 11.1(1) and (2)

Revised: *December 2013*
 May 2014
 November 2014
 March 4, 2015
 March 18, 2015