

504.08 Freedom of Expression

Friday, August 11, 2023

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Student expression, other than student expression in student-produced official school publications, made on the school district premises or under the jurisdiction of the school district or as part of a school-sponsored activity may be attributed to the school district; therefore, student expression must be responsible. Student expression must be appropriate to assure that the students learn and meet the goals of the school activity and that the potential audience is not exposed to material that may be harmful or inappropriate for their level of maturity.

Students will be allowed to express their viewpoints and opinions as long as the expression is responsible. The expression shall not, in the judgment of the administration, encourage the breaking of laws, defamation of persons, be obscene or indecent, or cause a material and substantial disruption to the educational program. The administration, when making this judgment, shall consider whether the activity in which the expression was made is school-sponsored and whether review or prohibition of the students' speech furthers an educational purpose. Further, the expression must be done in a reasonable time, place, and manner that is not disruptive to the orderly and efficient operation of the school district.

Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary measures under student conduct policies.

Prayer in School

The board of education of this school district shall not officially endorse any prayers, invocations, or benedictions presented at any school events.

Prayer in School Prayers may be presented at graduation ceremonies if the following criteria are observed:

1. The students shall determine if the prayer is desired to solemnize the occasion. Students in the senior class shall vote to determine if they wish to have a prayer

presented. If the vote is favorable for a prayer, the prayer shall be prepared and presented by a member or members of the senior class.

2. Students shall not be required to attend the event. This shall include members of the graduating class or any students participating in the ceremony.

3. The prayer shall be non-sectarian and non-proselytizing. It shall not advance or inhibit any religion.

4. No member of the school staff or the board of education shall participate in the development or presentation of the prayer.

This school district and all of its board of education members, administrators, employees and agents, do not sponsor or in any way endorse the views, aims, policies, opinions, or contents of any speaker at graduation ceremonies and remain totally neutral thereto.

Legal Reference: U.S. Const. amend. I. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988). Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986). Tinker v. Des Moines Ind. Comm. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969). Bystrom v. Fridley High School, 822 F.2d 747 (8th Cir. 1987).

Cross Reference: 506 Student Activities 604.10 Academic Freedom 1005.10
Distribution or Posting of Materials