

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION/PRAYER IN SCHOOL

The District shall comply with state and federal statutes and with Mississippi, United States Supreme Court, and other federal court decisions regarding prayer in schools and at school related activities. No doctrinal, sectarian, or denominational teaching shall be permitted in the schools.

When there is a conflict between laws, the District will follow federal law. No person shall be compelled or coerced into participating in any religious activity. Likewise, no person shall be denied the right to exercise his religious beliefs as long as such exercise is consistent with state and federal law. All inquiries with regard to religious activities, including prayer, taking place during school events or on school property shall be directed to the District Counsel.

Nonsectarian, nonproselytizing prayers which are initiated and led by students at graduation ceremonies shall be permitted. The following statement shall be printed in the graduation program:

The invocation and benediction are student led, student initiated, and are not sponsored by the Jackson Public School District. No one should feel compelled to participate in these activities. While all are asked to bow their head for the invocation and benediction, no one is compelled to join in them, nor will be assumed, by bowing, to have done so.

School personnel, students, and members of the public should contact the District Counsel concerning all requests regarding prayers and other religious activities at school events or on school property.

SOURCE: Jackson Public School District, Jackson, Mississippi
LEGAL REF: Section 37-13-3, 37-13-4; 37-13-4.1 Mississippi Code of 1972; Abington School District vs. Schempp, 374 U.S. 204 (1963); Lee vs. Weisman, 90-1014 (1992); Good News Club v. Milford Central School, 121 S.Ct. 2093, 533 U.S. 98 (2001)
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August 4, 2016