FINDING COMMON GROUND

A FIRST AMENDMENT GUIDE TO RELIGION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY

CHARLES C. HAYNES

AND

OLIVER THOMAS

FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER
FUNDED BY THE FREEDOM FORUM

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JOHN FERGUSON, Associate Editor

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FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER 7

Student Religious Clubs

The Equal Access Act: Questions and Answers is jointly sponsored by:

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American Association of School Administrators

American Federation of Teachers

American Jewish Committee

American Jewish Congress

Americans United Research Foundation

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

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National School Boards Association

The Equal Access Act became law on August 11, 1984, passing the Senate 88-11 and the House 337-77. Congress's primary purpose in passing the Act, according to the Supreme Court, was to end "perceived widespread discrimination" against religious speech in public schools. While Congress recognized the constitutional prohibition against government promotion of religion, it believed that non-school-sponsored student speech, including religious speech, should not be excised from the school environment.

The Supreme Court, by a vote of 8-1, held in *Westside Community Schools v. Mergens* (1990) that the Equal Access Act is constitutional. This chapter is designed to help school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, religious leaders and students understand and conform to the Act.

The title—*the Equal Access Act*—explains the essential thrust of the Act. There are three basic concepts.

The first is *nondiscrimination*. If a public secondary school permits student groups to meet for student-initiated activities not directly related to the school curriculum, it is required to treat all such student groups equally. This means the school cannot discriminate against any students conducting such meetings "on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings." This language was used to make clear that religious speech was to receive equal treatment, not preferred treatment.

The second basic concept is protection of *student-initiated and student-led meetings.* The Supreme Court has held unconstitutional state-initiated and state-endorsed religious activities in the public schools. (This Act leaves the "school prayer" decisions undisturbed.) However, in upholding the constitutionality of the Act, the Court noted the "crucial difference between government speech endorsing religion, which the Establishment clause forbids, and private speech endorsing religion, which the Free Speech and Free Exercise clauses protect."

The third basic concept is *local control.* The Act does not limit the authority of the school to maintain order and discipline or to protect the well-being of students and faculty.

While the Act does not cover every specific situation, an understanding of the three basic concepts—as fleshed out by the questions and answers below—should be a sufficient guide for addressing most situations.

Many of the sponsors of these guidelines were actively involved in the debate over equal access. Some supported the Act, others remained neutral, and some opposed it. All of the sponsors, however, agree that the provisions of the Act need to be understood clearly as public secondary schools develop policies concerning student groups.

The Equal Access Act (20 U.S.C. 4071-74)

Denial of Equal Access Prohibited Sec. 4071.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings.

(b) A public secondary school has a limited open forum whenever such school grants an offering to or opportunity for one or more noncurriculum-related student groups to meet on school premises during noninstructional time.

(c) Schools shall be deemed to offer a fair opportunity to students who wish to conduct a meeting within its limited open forum if such school uniformly provides that—

(1) the meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;

(2) there is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees;

(3) employees or agents of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a nonparticipatory capacity;

(4) the meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and

(5) nonschool persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups.

(d) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to authorize the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof—

(1) to influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity;

(2) to require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity;

CONTINUED

(3) to expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings;

(4) to compel any school agent or employee to attend a school meeting if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the agent or employee;

(5) to sanction meetings that are otherwise unlawful;

(6) to limit the rights of groups of students which are not of a specified numerical size; or

(7) to abridge the constitutional rights of any person.

(e) Notwithstanding the availability of any other remedy under the Constitution or the laws of the United States, nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to authorize the United States to deny or withhold Federal financial assistance to any school.

(f) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to limit the authority of the school, its agents or employees, to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at meetings is voluntary.

Definitions Sec. 4072. As used in this subchapter—

(1) The term "secondary school" means a public school which provides secondary education as determined by State law.

(2) The term "sponsorship" includes the act of promoting, leading, or participating in a meeting. The assignment of a teacher, administrator, or other school employee to a meeting for custodial purposes does not constitute sponsorship of the meeting.

(3) The term "meeting" includes those activities of student groups which are permitted under a school's limited open forum and are not directly related to the school curriculum.

(4) The term "noninstructional time" means time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends.

Severabililty Sec. 4073.

If any provision of this subchapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is judicially determined to be invalid, the provisions of the remainder of the subchapter and the application to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Construction Sec. 4074.

The provisions of this subchapter shall supersede all other provisions of Federal law that are inconsistent with the provisions of this subchapter.

QUESTIONS *and* ANSWERS:
EQUAL ACCESS AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following questions and answers indicate how the act is to work:

What triggers the Equal Access Act?
The creation of a "limited open forum." A limited open forum is created whenever a public secondary school provides an opportunity for one or more "noncurriculum-related student groups" to meet on school premises during noninstructional time. The forum created is said to be "limited" because it is only the school's own students who can take advantage of the open forum. Outsiders are not granted an independent right of access by the Act.

Must a school board create a limited open forum for students?
No. The local school board has exclusive authority to determine whether it will create or maintain a limited open forum. However, if a school has a "limited open forum," it may not discriminate against a student group because of the content of the group's speech.

What is a "noncurriculum-related student group"?
In *Mergens*, the Supreme Court interpreted a noncurriculum-related student group to mean "any student group [or club] that does not directly relate to the body of courses offered by the school." According to the Court, a student group directly relates to a school's curriculum only if (1) the subject matter of the group is actually taught, or will soon be taught, in a regularly offered course; (2) the subject matter of the group concerns the body of courses as a whole; or (3) participation in the group is required for a particular course or results in academic credit.

Schools may not substitute their own definition of "noncurriculum-related student group" for that of the Court.

Did the Supreme Court give any examples of"noncurriculum-related student groups"?
The Court noted that unless a school could show that groups such as a chess club, stamp-collecting club, or community service club fell within the definition of curriculum-related set forth by the Court, they would be considered noncurriculum-related for purposes of the Act.

In *Mergens*, the Court found at least three groups that were noncurriculum-related for that school: (1) a scuba club, (2) a chess club, and (3) a service club. Each of these clubs was found to be noncurriculum-related because it did not meet the Court's criteria set forth in the question above.

What examples did the Court give of curriculum-related student groups?

The Court noted that "a French club would directly relate to the curriculum if a school taught French in a regularly offered course or planned to teach the subject in the near future. A school's student government would generally relate directly to the curriculum to the extent that it addresses concerns, solicits opinions and formulates proposals pertaining to the body of courses offered by the school. If participation in a school's band or orchestra were required for the band or orchestra classes, or resulted in academic credit, then those groups would also directly relate to the curriculum."

Who determines which student groups are, in fact, curriculum-related?

Local school authorities, subject to review by the courts. However, the Supreme Court has made clear that a school cannot defeat the intent of the Act by defining "curriculum-related" in a way that arbitrarily results in only those student clubs approved by the school being allowed to meet.

When can noncurriculum-related student groups meet?

A limited open forum requiring equal access may be established during "noninstructional time," which is defined as time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after it ends.

Can noncurriculum-related student groups meet during the day?

The Equal Access Act is not triggered by student club meetings that occur only during instructional time. The constitutionality of allowing or disallowing student religious clubs to meet during instructional time has not been expressly ruled upon by the Supreme Court.

To what schools does the Act apply?

The Act applies only to public secondary schools (as defined by state law) that receive federal financial assistance.

May a school establish regulations for meetings that take place in its limited open forum?

Yes. The Act does not take away a school's authority to establish reasonable time, place and manner regulations for its limited open forum. For example, a school may establish a reasonable time period on any one school day, a combination of days or all school days. It may assign the rooms in which student groups can meet. It may enforce order and discipline during the meetings. The key is that time, place and manner regulations must be uniform and nondiscriminatory.

May schools promote, and teachers participate in, some club meetings and not others in a limited open forum?

Some of the Act's language implies that schools may not sponsor any noncurriculum-related club. Other language suggests that schools can sponsor all noncurriculum clubs except religious ones. Subsequent to the *Mergens* decision, some schools have in fact promoted, or assigned teachers to teach, drama or debate clubs and the like, even though the school does not offer formal instruction in these subjects or give credit to those who participate in such clubs. There may be other clubs (such as political clubs) for which school sponsorship is inappropriate.

School sponsorship of some noncurriculum-related student clubs does not mean, however, that a limited open forum does not exist or that non-sponsored clubs may not meet.

May a school require a minimum number of students to form a noncurriculum-related club?

Not if it "limit[s] the rights of groups of students." Care must be exercised that the school not discriminate against numerically small student groups that wish to establish a club. If the number of clubs begins to tax the available space in a particular school, one teacher might be used to monitor several small student groups meeting in the same large room. The key is to be flexible in accommodating student groups that want to meet.

What does "student-initiated" mean?

It means that the students themselves are seeking permission to meet and that they will direct and control the meeting. Teachers and other school employees may not initiate or direct such meetings, nor may outsiders.

May outsiders attend a student meeting?

Yes, if invited by the students and if the school does not have a policy barring all "nonschool persons." However, the nonschool persons "may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups."

A school may decide not to permit any nonschool persons to attend any club meetings, or it may limit the number of times during an academic year a nonschool person may be invited to attend.

Obviously, no nonschool person should be permitted to proselytize students who are not voluntarily attending the meeting to which the nonschool person is invited.

May teachers be present during student meetings?

Yes, but there are important limitations. For insurance purposes or because of state law or local school policy, teachers or other school employees are commonly required to be present during student meetings. In order to avoid any appearance of state endorsement of religion, teachers or employees are to be present at student religious meetings only in a "nonparticipatory capacity." The Act also prohibits teachers or other school officials from influencing the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity.

May a teacher or other school employee be required to be present at a student meeting if that person does not share the beliefs of the students?

The Act provides that no school employee may be required to attend a meeting "if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs" of that employee. If a school establishes a limited open forum, however, it is responsible for supplying a monitor for every student group meeting if a monitor is required.*

**Editor's Note: Although the endorsers of this guide agreed on this answer, legal experts are divided about whether or not school officials are required to provide a monitor.*

Does the assignment of a teacher to a meeting for custodial purposes constitute sponsorship of the meeting?

No.

Does the expenditure of public funds for the incidental cost of providing the space (including utilities) for student-initiated meetings constitute sponsorship?

No.

If a school pays a teacher for monitoring a student religious club, does this constitute sponsorship?

Congressional debate apparently took for granted that payment of a school-required monitor for any club was an "incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings."

Does the use of school media to announce meetings of noncurriculum-related student groups constitute sponsorship of those meetings?

No. The Supreme Court has interpreted the Act to require schools to allow student groups meeting under the Act to use the school media—including the public address system, school paper and school bulletin board—to announce their meetings if other noncurriculum-related student groups are allowed to use the school media. Any policy concerning the use of school media must be applied to all noncurriculum-related student groups in a nondiscriminatory manner. Schools, however, may inform students that certain groups are not school-sponsored.

Do school authorities retain disciplinary control?

Yes. The Act emphasizes the authority of the school "to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at meetings is voluntary." Furthermore, the school must provide that the meeting "does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school." These two provisions, however, do not appear to authorize a school to prohibit certain student groups from meeting because of administrative inconvenience or speculative harm. For example, a group cannot be barred at a particular school solely because a similar student group at another school has caused problems.

What about groups that wish to advocate or discuss changes in existing law?

Students who wish to discuss controversial social and legal issues such as abortion, drinking age, the draft and alternative lifestyles may not be barred on the basis of the content of their speech. The school is not required, however, to permit meetings in which unlawful conduct occurs.

What if some students object to other students meeting?

The right of a lawful, orderly student group to meet does not depend on the approval of other students. All students enjoy the constitutional guarantee of free speech. It is the school's responsibility to maintain discipline in order that all student groups are afforded an equal opportunity to meet peacefully without harassment. The school must not allow a "hecklers' veto."

May any groups be excluded?

Yes. Student groups that are unlawful or that materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities may be excluded. However, a student group cannot be denied equal access simply because its ideas are unpopular. Freedom of speech includes ideas the majority may find repugnant.

Must noncurriculum-related student groups have an open admissions policy?

The Act does not address this issue. There are, however, several federal, as well as state and local, civil rights laws that may be interpreted to prohibit student groups from denying admission on the basis of race, national origin, gender or handicap.

What may a school do to make it clear that it is not promoting, endorsing, or otherwise sponsoring noncurriculum-related student groups?

A school may issue a disclaimer that plainly states that in affording such student groups an opportunity to meet, it is merely making its facilities available, nothing more.

What happens if a school violates The Equal Access Act?

The law contemplates a judicial remedy. An aggrieved person may bring suit in a U.S. district court to compel a school to observe the law. Violations of equal access will not result in the loss of federal funds for the school. However, a school district could be liable for damages and the attorney's fees of a student group that successfully challenges a denial by the school board of its right to meet under the Act.

Should a school formulate a written policy for the operation of a limited open forum?

If a school decides to create a limited open forum or if such a forum already exists, it is strongly recommended that a uniform set of regulations be drawn up and made available to administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The importance of having such a document will become clear if the school either denies a student group the opportunity to meet or is forced to withdraw that opportunity. When the rules are known in advance, general acceptance is much easier to obtain.

What about situations not addressed in these guidelines?

Additional questions may be directed to the organizations listed as sponsors of these guidelines.*

*See Appendix A for contact information for these organizations.

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FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER 8

Student Religious Practices

Our first challenge in America today is simply to open our eyes to these changes, to discover America anew, and to explore the many ways in which the new immigration has changed the religious landscape of our cities and towns, our neighborhoods and schools.

—Diana L. Eck
A New Religious America

Many school districts are making efforts to inform administrators and teachers about the religious practices of their students. Knowledge about students' religious needs and requirements promotes understanding between parents and school officials and prepares teachers for questions or concerns when they arise.

Adherence to religious requirements such as special diet or dress is the responsibility of parents and students, not of the public school. In some cases, however, parents may request special accommodation (e.g., excusal from participation in certain school parties or events). Most of these requests may be easily granted without disrupting the educational work of the school.

An Educator's Classroom Guide to America's Religions

Greenwood Press publishes Benjamin Hubbard, John Hatfield and James Santucci's guide to the beliefs and practices of a number of the world's religions. Designed specifically for teachers, the book examines each religious group in terms of its origins, beliefs, sacred scriptures, practices, main subgroups, common misunderstandings and stereotypes, and classroom concerns.

In rare cases, requests for accommodation may be impossible to grant for practical or constitutional reasons. Even in these instances, some accommodation may be offered. For example, schools are unable to prepare special foods for some religious needs, but they can label foods and offer a variety of choices. When considering these requests, school officials should use the First Amendment framework discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 as a guide to treating the claims of religious conscience seriously and sensitively without putting the school in the position of endorsing or sponsoring religion.

The following information about student religious practices was compiled by the Religious Community Task Force in the Dallas Independent School District as part of a comprehensive policy on religion and schools issues. It is included here as an example of how a large, religiously diverse school district has acted to inform teachers and administrators about the religious practices of many students in the community. For the complete policy of the DISD and for more information about the task force that helped create the policy, contact Jane Didear, Communications Division, Dallas Independent School District, 3700 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75204.

Religious Practices Within Dallas Public Schools

A NOTE FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

The following information was collected from members of the Dallas Public Schools Religious Community Task Force . The items listed are general in nature. Some situations described are a blend of religious/ethnic/cultural practices which might have an impact on students during the school day. If you have questions or need more information about any of the items mentioned, inquiries are invited.

Most of the members of the Task Force represent large organizations, within which are many different levels of religious observation. Some students within each faith may follow all the dictates of the religion and others may observe only a few rituals. If the school can allow those things which do not disrupt normal classroom operations to occur, it avoids conflict for the student who feels under obligation to comply with family and religious mandates. If there must be an accommodation made for a practice to occur away from class, please arrange that through the principal.

Regarding the following material: Task force members have submitted the following information for easy reference, to cover areas which do not follow general cultural trends. The symbolic reference codes below indicate:

- Rx — Medical restrictions
- Special diet or foods
- Particular dress/clothing
- Observances or rituals during school hours
- ☑ — Possible absences due to High Holy Days

Various Protestant Christian Traditions

The following Christian denominations on the task force: **Baptists, Disciples, Episcopalians, Evangelicals, Lutherans, Methodists** and **Presbyterians**, have students in Dallas Public Schools whose beliefs and practices are culturally predominant, and therefore do not require special accommodations during school time. For example, many families worship on Sunday mornings and/or on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, when school is not in session. There are no medical, dietary, clothing or holiday needs that require special attention. However, some denominations report that extracurricular school activities and parent conferences conflict with some evening worship.

Baha'i

- Rx — None.
- Students 15 years and older may refrain from eating or drinking during school hours between March 2-20.
- None.
- None.
- ☑ — Eleven holy days throughout the year, during which students may be absent or not allowed to do ordinary work.

Buddhism

- Rx — Ethnic medical attitudes may differ.
- Students may prefer to be vegetarians; and some may abstain from dairy products and eggs.
- None.
- Beliefs do not include the existence of a creator. Terms such as idol-worshippers or heathens are offensive to these students. Students follow five moral Precepts & the Noble Eightfold Path which include respect for all animal and human life. Some students may object to participation in the dissection of animals and insects.
- ☑ — Holy Days established on lunar calendar: Birth of the Buddha; Bodhi Day; the Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese New Year.

Christian Science

- Rx — Reliance on prayer for effective health care. Legal exemptions from innoculations, vaccinations and immunizations. Request exemption from disease study. No medications, no physical exams, no testing of vision, hearing or intelligence.
- No caffeine, tobacco or alcoholic beverages.
- None.
- None.
- ☑ — None.

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints *(Mormon)*

- Rx — None.
- No coffee, tea, tobacco, alcoholic beverages.
- Modest clothing.
- None.
- ☑ — Normal school holidays.

Religious Practices

Eastern Orthodox

(includes: Antiochan, Armenian, Ethiopian (Coptic), Greek, Kenyan, Korean, Lebanese, Mexican, Syrian, and 5 Slavonic peoples: Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian)

- None.
- Fasting (abstinence) is the refraining from eating identified foods and is not considered a special diet. Certain Feast Days are observed with a fast either prior to or on the feast day itself. If a student is fasting, he/she may: 1) fast every Wednesday and Friday except for designated fast-free periods, or 2) fast from at least meat or dairy products. Students who observe strict fasts may bring food from home. Lunchroom menus provide a varied selection for either fast.
- None required.
- None other than fasting, which occurs during lunch hour; no academic interruptions.
- Students may attend services on their nameday to celebrate the Saint whose name they bear; or the following: Elevation of the Cross, beginning of the 40 Day Fast of the Nativity; Nativity; Epiphany; Great Lent; Annunciation of the Virgin Mary; Holy Week; Pasca (Resurrection) and Ascension Thursday.

Hare Krishna

- No animal-derived medications.
- Lacto-vegetarians (do not eat meat, fish, fowl or eggs).
- Male students may have small tail of hair at back of head (Sikha).
- None. Students respectful of authority.
- Dates according to lunar calendar. Janmastami; Vyasa-Puja Day; Diwali; Govardhana-Puja; Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance Day; Nityananda's Appearance Day; Gaura Purnima; Ram Navami; Nirshringhadev's Appearance Day.

Hinduism

- None.
- Students may be strict vegetarians.
- An area at home or office is often designated as an altar.
- Students may have paint-like mark on the forehead from morning worship, usually done with family at home.
- Dates according to Lunar calendar. Diwali; Govardhana-Puja, Ram Navami.

Islam

- Males examined by male doctors; females examined by female doctors. No injections during Ramadan.
- No alcohol. No pork and any blood. No animals unless they are slaughtered (with prayer). Fish, if caught alive, may be eaten.
- Males must cover bodies from abdomen to knees; females must cover all except face, hands, feet.
- Worship prayers (Salah) five times: at dawn, noon, afternoon,sunset and night. Students need silent and convenient places to perform daily prayers. Weekly Friday noon prayers for males. Polytheistic or atheistic statements and negative words against any Holy Books may not show respect for students.
- Ramadan Feast or Eidul-Fitr (end of fasting month); Eidul-Adha. Dates depend on actual sighting of the moon.

Jain Society Temple

- None
- No eating of root plants (for some members)
- None
- Fasting from 1-14 days.
- Late August through early September.

Jehovah's Witnesses

- Parents may request no blood transfusions.
- No addictive or habit-forming drugs or tobacco.
- None.
- The only celebration is the memorial of Christ's death (lunar calendar—the first full moon after spring, after sunset).
- Views on nationalism prohibit participation in flag saluting, the singing of national anthems or voting on elective offices. No participation in any religious celebrations or national holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc. Areas that are a matter of conscience include extra-curricular activities such as sports, cheerleading, dating, attending parties or joining clubs. Alternative classroom materials and assignments could be directed to seasons versus holidays (such as "winter" rather than Christmas).

Judaism

- None.
- Some boys may wear a skull cap and/or a fringed undergarment under their shirts. Some girls may dress with arms and legs covered.
- Some students may ask to wash hands or pray before a meal. Some students may refrain from doing school projects that occur on Friday evenings and/or Saturdays before sundown. Some students will not be able to participate in musical experiences and on programs whose content affirms religious positions that differ from their own.
- Kosher food (marked with Kosher seal, "K", Ⓤ, etc.). Meat and chicken slaughtered by ritual law allowed. No shellfish or fish that do not have scales. No mixing of milk and meat products. No pork products. During Passover, a restricted diet allows no leavened food items such as bread; other holidays may require fasting.
- Holidays begin at sundown the day before. Sabbath begins at sundown each Friday night and is complete at sundown on Saturdays. *Rosh Hashanah*; Yom Kippur; *Sukkot*; Shemini Atzeret; Simchat Torah; Chanukah; Purim; *Passover* (first two and last two days of eight); and *Shavuot*. (Holidays in italics may be observed for two days.)

Religious Practices, *continued*

Native American Religions
(American Indians: 114 tribes)

- None.
- None.
- The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, a few of whom attend Dallas Public schools, observe religious feast days throughout the year. Importance of attendance at religious or healing ceremonies in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota or Arizona is related to the tribe with which the student is affiliated; children are expected to accompany their parents. Some tribes have "days of mourning" or "mourning periods" for the deceased of immediate or extended-family members.
- Longer hair length for some male students; some older high school students wear medicine bags which may be seen conspicuously. Beaded and silver-crafted bolo ties. Girls wear hair/braid tie and beaded hair combs.
- Religious observances vary from tribe to tribe. Students' practices and self image are derived from the tribes in which they are enrolled. Dallas Schools observe American Indian Heritage Month in November. The Parents Advisory Committee of the American Indian Education Program plans various cultural enrichment activities for the month.

Roman Catholic

- No "contraceptive" teaching.
- No meat on Ash Wednesday or Fridays of Lent, for students 14 or older. There is a period of fasting during the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter.
- Modest. Some wear religious medals. Ashes are placed on the foreheads of Catholics on Ash Wednesday as reminder of mortality.
- Sign of the Cross before taking a test, before meals, as an act of thanksgiving or petition.
- Holy Days include: Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary; All Saints Day; All Souls Day; Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary; Our Lady of Guadalupe (preceded by 9 days of special prayers and services); Advent, 4 weeks before Christmas, observed as a "waiting" period; The Posada, celebrated 9 days before Christmas, with visiting each evening to different homes and churches; Christmas Day; Mary, Mother of God; Lent, 40 days before Easter; Ascension Thursday; Pentecost. *Special note:* Many Hispanic families travel to their native countries for Holy Week celebrations at Easter time. Family ties are strengthened by summer visits to grandparents.

Seventh Day Adventists

- None.
- No pork or pork products. May prefer to be lacto-vegetarians. No habit forming drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
- Modest dress.
- None.
- Sabbath begins at sundown Friday and concludes at sundown on Saturday. Students may not be able to participate in school events on Friday nights.

Sikh

- None.
- No alcohol or tobacco.
- Baisakhi (Brotherhood), Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev.
- None.
- Boys wear headgear or turbans.

Unitarian/ Universalists

- None.
- None.
- None.
- Families would like to have their children participate in public school activities without having them required to pray publicly. Students have the choice of whether or not to salute flags or pledge certain allegiances.
- During the spring, 13-14 year old students are often taken to U/U historic sites in other parts of the country.

Zoroastrian

- None.
- None.
- Muslin undershirts with wool cords at waist for boys and girls (may be taken off for sports).
- None.
- New Year at Vernal Equinox, usually during March of each year.

Quick reference symbolic codes:

- Medical restrictions
- Special diet or foods
- Particular dress/clothing
- Observances or rituals during school hours
- Possible absences due to High Holy Days

For more information from RCTF members, call Dallas Schools Communications Department, 989-8329

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

FIRST AMENDMENT
U.S. CONSTITUTION

The First Amendment Center works to preserve and protect First Amendment freedoms through information and education. The center serves as a forum for the study and exploration of free-expression issues, including freedom of speech, of the press and of religion, the right to assemble and to petition the government.

The First Amendment Center, with offices at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and Arlington, Va., is an independent affiliate of the Freedom Forum and the Newseum, the interactive museum of news. The Freedom Forum is a non-partisan foundation dedicated to free press, free speech and free spirit for all people.

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