

Religieuze indoctrinatie?

Voor de openbare scholen in Temecula (Californië) geldt een verbod op religieuze indoctrinatie. Dat is vastgelegd in de richtlijnen van het schooldistrict. Maar sommige scholen weten daar niet goed raad mee (Fox News 14/1/2014).¹ Het was in de laatste schoolweek vóór Kerstmis. De leerlingen van groep 3 moesten iets mee naar school nemen dat bij hen thuis tot de kerstraditie behoort. Ieder kind moest daarover een éénminuutpraatje houden. Brynn had de ster van Bethlehem meegenomen. Die zetten we altijd op de top van de kerstboom, vertelde ze aan de klas, ter herinnering aan de drie koningen die de ster volgden, op weg naar het kindje Jezus, onze Heiland. Vervolgens wilde ze Johannes 3 vers 16 opzeggen, maar daar kwam ze niet aan toe.² Ze werd resoluut door de juf afgekapt en naar haar plaats teruggestuurd. De moeder van Brynn was geschokt toen ze daarvan hoorde. Ze riep het schoolhoofd de volgende dag ter verantwoording. Maar die gaf haar leerkracht gelijk: we zijn aan regels gebonden om de leerlingen tegen indoctrinatie te beschermen. Inmiddels buigen de bestuurders van het schooldistrict zich over deze kwestie. We mogen aannemen dat zij die onprofessionele interpretatie van Richtlijn #6141.2 zullen rechtzetten.

RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS (Board Policies #6141.2)³

The Governing Board [of Temecula Valley Unified School District] recognizes that students' education would be incomplete without an understanding of the role of religion in history. As appropriate for a particular course, teachers may objectively discuss the influences of various religions, using religious works and symbols to illustrate their relationship with society, literature or the arts. The Board expects that such instruction will identify principles common to all religions and foster respect for the diversity of religions and customs in the world.

In order to respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is clearly forbidden in the public schools. Instruction about religion must not favor, promote or demean the beliefs or customs of any particular religion or sect nor show a preference for one religious view over another. Staff shall be highly sensitive to their obligation not to interfere with the religious development of any student in whatever tradition the student embraces.

As part of their official duties, staff shall not endorse, encourage or solicit religious or anti-religious expression or activities among students during class time. They shall not lead students in prayer or other religious activities. However, staff shall not prohibit or discourage any student from praying or otherwise expressing his/her religious belief as long as this does not disrupt the classroom.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in their homework, artwork and other class work if the expression is germane to the assignment. Such work shall be judged by ordinary academic standards, free of discrimination based on religious content.

Religious Holidays: Whereas teaching about religious holidays is a permissible part of the educational program, celebrating religious holidays is not allowed in the public schools. School-sponsored programs shall not be, nor have the effect of being, religiously oriented or a religious celebration. School and classroom decorations may express seasonal themes that are not religious in nature.

Music, Art and Literature: Music, art, literature or drama programs having religious themes are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in an objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided that such symbols are displayed as an example of cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.

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<http://www.onderwijsethiek.nl>

¹ <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/01/14/first-grader-told-to-stop-talking-about-bible/>

² <http://biblehub.com/john/3-16.htm>

³ http://www.tvusd.k12.ca.us/cms/page_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1249633722064