Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle Street
Saint George, Utah 84770
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District Policy 4520

Released Time Classes

Release Time Learning Washington County School District - Adopted 8-79; Revised 1-14-20

1. Purpose:

The practice of schools to release students during the school day in order that they may receive religious instruction had its beginning in 1914. The practice is not confined to any one religion. There is a necessity of separating the institutions involved in released time, i.e., the public school system and the particular church providing religious instruction under the released-time concept. The practice of awarding high school credit for Bible history and literature is not permitted.

2. Policy:

2.1. A religious class may not be held in school buildings or on school property in any way that permits public money or property to be applied to, or that requires public employees to become entangled with, any religious worship, exercise, or instruction.

2.2. A student may attend released-time classes off-campus during the regular school day only upon the written request of the student's parent or legal guardian.

2.3. Records of attendance at religious released-time classes, grades, marks, or other data may not be included in the correspondence or reports made by a public school to parents. A public school may not maintain records of attendance for released-time classes or use school personnel or school resources to regulate such attendance.

2.4. A teacher of a released-time class is not a member of the public school faculty. A released-time teacher may participate in school activities as a community member.

2.5. No school equipment or personnel should be used in any manner to assist in the registration for or conduct released-time classes. No connection of bells, telephones, or other devices should be made between public school buildings and private school religious instruction except as a direct convenience to the public school in the operation of its own program. When any connection of devices is permitted, the pro rata costs should be borne by the respective institutions.

3. Procedure:

3.1. When a student is given permission, upon written request of the parent, to leave the school grounds to attend a class in religious education, the school should not keep records of his/her attendance at such classes or use the school personnel or organization to regulate such attendance.

3.2. Records of attendance at "released-time" classes, grade marks, or other data should not be included in the school report to parents. (All grade marks given to students for released-time classes should be given directly to the student, not through the public schools.)

3.3. Schedules of classes for secondary schools, school catalogs, or registration forms of the school should not include schedules of released-time classes. Registration for released-time classes should occur off the premises of the public school, on forms and supplies furnished by the institution offering the classes, and by personnel employed by that institution.

3.3.1. A public school class schedule or course catalog may not include a released-time class by name. At the convenience of the school, a registration form may contain a space for a released-time designation.

3.4. No school publication should include pictures, reports, or records of functions or personnel of released-time classes.

3.5. A public school teacher, administrator, or other official may not request teachers of released-time classes to exercise functions or assume responsibilities for the public school program which would result in a commingling of the activities of the school and the released-time class sponsor. A released-time class may not use school resources or equipment.

3.6. Institutions offering religious instruction should be regarded as private schools completely separate and apart from the public schools. Those relationships which would legitimately be exercised between the public schools and any private school would be considered an appropriate relationship with these institutions, so long as public property or public funds, or other public resources are not used to aid such institutions.

3.7. A public school may not connect bells, telephones, computers or other devices between public school buildings and institutions offering religious instruction, except as a convenience to the public school in the operation of its own programs.