

PRAYER IN SCHOOLS

The Terrebonne Parish School Board shall permit school authorities of each school to allow an opportunity at the start of each school day for those students and teachers desiring to do so to observe a brief time in silent prayer or meditation

Public schools shall be prohibited from adopting or using any official or standard prayer. Voluntary, student-initiated, student-led prayer in accordance with the religious views of the student offering the prayer may be permitted, however; no student attending the school shall be required to participate in any religious activity at school.

No law, rule, or policy shall deny to any student attending a public elementary or secondary school the right to participate in voluntary, student-initiated, student-led prayer during school or on school property, before or after school or during free time. Athletic teams shall not be prohibited in engaging in voluntary, student-initiated, student-led prayer.

No law, rule, or policy shall prevent any student who attends a public elementary or secondary school and who is responsible for or presiding over a meeting of a school organization or assembly from calling upon a student volunteer to offer an inspirational quotation or statement, offer a voluntary prayer, or lead in silent meditation, at the sole option of the student volunteer.

A student organization shall not be denied recognition or any privilege or benefit solely because it is religious in nature, has a religious affiliation, or has no religious affiliation.

School officials shall be prohibited from censoring for religious content the speech of a high school student invited to speak at a commencement ceremony at the school he/she is attending.

When student volunteers are called upon to offer an inspirational quotation or statement, offer a prayer, or lead in silent meditation, such students shall be selected at random by a student from among student volunteers without respect to their individual religious beliefs or lack thereof. No student shall be called upon to offer an inspirational quotation or statement, offer a voluntary prayer, or lead in silent meditation unless the student has volunteered to do so.

STUDENT-INITIATED PRAYER

Upon the request of any public school student or students, the principal or his/her designee may permit students to gather for prayer in a classroom, auditorium, or other space that is not in use, at any time before the school day begins when the school is open and students are allowed on campus, at any time after the school day ends provided that at least one student club or organization is meeting at that time, or at any

non-instructional time during the school day. A school employee may be assigned to supervise the gathering if such supervision is also requested by the student or students and the school employee volunteers to supervise the gathering.

Any school employee may attend and participate in the gathering if it occurs before the employee's work day begins or after the employee's work day ends.

Any parent may attend the gathering if the parent adheres to school procedures for approval of visitors on the school campus.

The students may invite persons from the community to attend and participate in the gathering if other school organizations and clubs are allowed to make similar invitations. Such persons shall adhere to school procedures for approval of visitors on the school campus.

March 1999

Revised: December 1999

Revised: October 2002

Revised: October 2013

Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:2115, 17:2115.1, 17:2115.2, 17:2115.3, 17:2115.4, 17:2115.5, 17:2115.6, 17:2115.7, 17:2115.8, 17:2115.9, 17:2115.10, 17:2115.11; Board minutes, 3-16-99, 12-14-99, 10-15-02, 10-15-13.