

Descriptor Term:
RELIGIOUS-BASED EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Descriptor Code:
3.3700

Legal References: U.S. Const., and amendments; N.C. Const. art. § 14; G.S. 115C-36, -47

Cross References: 1.7550/4.3500 Student Grievance Procedure

The curriculum of the school system will be based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study or Essential Standards. The board and the school system shall exercise its authority to select appropriate materials and teach the curriculum in an effective manner. The board supports the free exercise of religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion. While students are expected to participate in all required courses and school activities, the board recognizes that at times parents may object to a specific school course or activity. This policy is designed to provide parents with a process for seeking a religious-based exemption for their child from a required school course or activity.

If parents have religious-based objections to certain programs, they may petition to exempt a child from participation in that program. Any request for exemption shall be submitted to the superintendent or his/her designee in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. the request must be in writing;
2. the request must specify the activities or studies that violate their religious beliefs and explain how their religious beliefs are violated by the activity; and
3. the request may suggest a proposed alternate activity or study.

The superintendent or his/her designee shall review the request in accordance with any constitutional or statutory standards and shall accommodate the request when required to do so by law. If accommodation is not required by law, the superintendent or his/her designee may choose to accommodate such a request after weighing factors, such as the interest of the child, the impact on other students, and the availability of alternative activities or materials

An appeal of the superintendent's decision may be made to the board through the student grievance procedure.