

Human Resources reminds all district employees that the law requires public schools and their employees or representatives to be neutral in their treatment of religion, showing neither favoritism toward nor hostility against religious expression. This includes references on district network services (e-mails and all communication avenues). While engaged in the course and scope of employment, whether on campus or in attendance at a district sponsored function, employees are acting as government representatives. Therefore, school employees and agents of public schools must not interfere with this objective.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the First Amendment requires public school officials to be neutral in their treatment of religion, showing neither favoritism toward nor hostility against religious expression such as prayer. When a practice is alleged to be violative of the First Amendment, our courts are guided by the three-part test enunciated in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 612-13, 29 L. Ed. 2d 745, 91 S. Ct. 2105 (1971):

"First, the statute or practice must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; finally, the statute or practice must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion."

For references to district policy regarding this area please see (CQ, DAA, and DG Legal).