

Section 8-40.1. Policy stated; neutrality required. — A. In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the establishment of religion, it is the policy of the School Board to be neutral in matters of religion. This means that Suffolk Public Schools (i) shall will assume no roll or responsibility for the religious training of any student and (ii) shall will in no way become involved in the religious belief, disbelief or doubt of any student.

B. ~~This requirement of neutrality need~~ does not preclude nor hinder the Suffolk Public Schools schools in fulfilling its responsibility to educate educating students to be tolerant and respectful of religious diversity. The division recognizes that one of its educational responsibilities is and to advance the student's knowledge and appreciation of the world that religion has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.

C. Therefore, the division approaches religion from an objective, curriculum-related perspective, encouraging all students and staff members to be aware of the diversity of beliefs and respectful of each other's religious and/or non-religious views. In that spirit of respect, students and staff members may be excused from participating in activities that are contrary to their religious beliefs.

The School Board may authorize, as an elective in grades nine through 12 with appropriate credits toward graduation, a comparative religion class that focuses on the basic tenets, history, and religious observances and rites of world religions. (Adopted January 12, 1995)

Legal Authority – United States Constitution Amendment I. Virginia Code §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-202.1. (1950), as amended.