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<b>References</b>	Administrative Council
<b>Links</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	School Services

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1. It is the policy of the Ministry of Education that boards of education may provide optional programs in education about religion in grades one to eight and in secondary schools. These programs must not indoctrinate in or give primacy to any particular religion or religious beliefs.
2. Optional secondary school courses may be developed based on the *Ontario Curriculum, Grade 11 and 12, the Social Sciences and Humanities, 2000*. The Board has made no provision for an optional program of education about religion in elementary schools as defined in Regulation 298, Section 29.
3. Schools may need to address questions about the inclusion of religious components in the regular curriculum and co-instructional programs. Some examples are the role of religion in the historical development of Canada, inclusion of sacred music in choral repertoires, and special assemblies or concerts associated with seasonal or religious festivals.
4. The following planning principles are provided to supplement direction given in Policy/Program Memorandum 112 and Regulation 298.
  - 4.1 Religious Components in the Curriculum
    - 4.1.1 Where a curriculum unit of study includes a religious component, accurate information about the particular cultural and religious traditions is essential.
    - 4.1.2 Information about religion should not idealize any faith or challenge its integrity.
    - 4.1.3 Open discussion, in a manner appropriate to the ages and levels of maturity of the students, should be promoted to increase understanding and mutual respect.
    - 4.1.4 Where a student initiates work which includes religious content, (e.g. creative



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writing, spelling words, choice of literature) the student's choice should be respected and supported provided the work is consistent with the objectives of the learning experience.

- 4.1.5 Learning opportunities in all aspects of school life should be planned to enable all students to have the opportunity to participate without pressure to conform to particular religious beliefs and practices.
- 4.2 Concerts and Festivals
  - 4.2.1 Concerts and festivals which have a religious component should educate students about the cultural traditions associated with the occasion.
  - 4.2.2 Concerts and festivals including appropriate decorations may be organized around a specific religious tradition. Schools should also make every effort to educate students, at appropriate times throughout the school year, about other celebrations of other religious traditions.
  - 4.2.3 Concerts and festivals organized around a seasonal theme may include common elements from different religious traditions.
  - 4.2.4 Indoctrination of any particular religious beliefs must be avoided.
  - 4.2.5 No student will be required to participate in any part of a concert or festival involving religious themes.
- 5. It is the role of the public schools to treat religion in a manner that promotes understanding and mutual respect within and beyond the school's community. In this, principals and teachers will recognize the need to be sensitive to the needs and situations of individual students and their families.

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