IMD School Ceremonies and Observations

Purpose: To establish the board’s vision for school ceremonies and observations.

Pledge of Allegiance

State law requires that all students say the Pledge of Allegiance at a specific time during each school day. Each school will designate this time.

Any person who does not wish to say the Pledge of Allegiance does not have to participate. The district will not penalize him/her for not participating.

Any person who does not wish to participate may leave the classroom or remain in his/her seat. The person may express his/her non-participation in any form that does not materially infringe upon the rights of others or disrupt school activities.

Option: The following language is for districts wishing to adopt a policy on student-led messages.

Student-Led Messages

The district will permit student-led messages at graduation and athletic events according to the following:

- The school will choose students to deliver a message at graduation based on academic standing and/or student office or position (district may add additional objective criteria here).

- For high school athletic events, only the captain of an athletic team or his/her student designee or a student designated by the members of a particular athletic team may deliver the message.

- The message may be an opening or closing message or both and will be two minutes in length or less.

- The student will prepare or select the content of the message.
Neither the board nor any employee of the district will recommend, review, monitor, or censor the student-led message.

The district will not discipline or reprimand any student for the content of any message unless it is obscene, profane, and/or vulgar.

The above provisions do not apply to board policies or school policies practices that relate specifically to more lengthy, extensive, or featured graduation speeches by students such as the valedictorian or salutatorian or other students selected on a basis such as academic standing or position in student government.

Adopted 7/1/03; Revised ^

Legal references:

A. Federal Cases:

B. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   3. Section 59-1-443 - Schools shall provide minute of mandatory silence at beginning of each school day.
   4. Section 59-1-455 - Time for Pledge of Allegiance required.

United States Supreme Court:
   1. *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) - The mandatory saluting of the flag and the repeating of the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional when those practices conflict with religious beliefs of the student. Hence students with religious objections must be exempted from any such requirements.