

# Key Points of Information

## RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



### Public School Defenders Hub 2023

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- School boards are rejecting curriculum materials and/or textbooks when they find something that counters their personal religious views
- Taxpayer dollars being used to purchase and use materials that favor religion
- Specifically, foundational evangelical Christian ideology and representative groups want their religion to be reflected in public schools

When local school boards permit religious influences

- students receive incomplete and (many times) inaccurate information
- students of different or no religious faith are indoctrinated with the board's favored religion

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Good public school policy provides that:

- Students can learn ABOUT religion in context to enhance their understanding of history or literature, for example. But they cannot be taught any faith is better or more desirable or more accurate than another or than no faith.

- When religious rights and the right to NO religion are violated, students cannot learn as well because they are being treated unfairly.
- Students of the faith being advocated have an unfair learning advantage. •Students learn that the Constitution does not matter.
- Staff should not be expected to teach any religion or to use materials that advocate for a religion as that violates their rights as well.

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Public tax dollars are not to be spent on instruction or instructional materials that violate the First Amendment of the Constitution.

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- Thomas Jefferson penned a letter to the Danbury Baptists in 1802, celebrating the First Amendment for “building a wall of separation between Church & State.”
- The Supreme Court has endorsed this view in 1878 and “in 1947, 1948, 1961 (three times), 1962, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1977, 1982, and again and again in countless concurrences, dissents, and lower court opinions.”
- Our Constitution guarantees a secular government to protect religious freedom for all.
- All schools receiving public tax dollars should spend that money in a way that respects the Constitution and the rights of all students.
- All students are entitled to a fair and equitable secular education with instruction or materials that do not advocate for religious beliefs.

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### Source Citations

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” – First Amendment

Thomas Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists “Courts on First Amendment” PDF Amendment I (Religion): James Madison, Detached Memoranda