EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Religious Dimension of Education

Administrative Policy 300

1. ***In order that the mission of the Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7 be achieved, the religious dimension of education shall permeate all aspects of life in the district.***
2. ***The district recognizes that formal religious instruction is essential and directs that the Religious Education program shall be taught, as prescribed, in all schools in the district.***

Background

Catholic schools operate within at least two contexts: faith and culture. The faith context arises out of our connection with the Universal Church through the local parish and family. It is this faith context that informs culture through a grasp of the identity, the theological principles, and vision of Catholicism. The faith context, the vision, and theological principles invite Catholics to

- acknowledge the importance of human reason as a means of understanding reality;
- be open to truth and grace wherever they may be found;
- recognize that the divine is at work in all creation;
- attend to the sacred order of creation;
- celebrate life in all its bodiliness and sensuality;
- understand that humanity is created in God's image, created with dignity and freedom;
- affirm different races, nations, cultures;
- enter into community through the Holy Spirit; and
- recognize sinfulness and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation.

The essence of Christian identity in a Catholic school district consists of the reality that Jesus Christ, the human face of God, is our model, our teacher, our saviour, our strength and our life.

A number of characters or dimensions of Catholic identity have been identified as

- Community – each school and department commits to living as a people of God in the world.
- Tradition – past and present experience is clarified by a vision of the future in Christ.
- Humanness – respect is shown for the God-given dignity of each person.
- Sacramentality – a sense of celebration, reverence, and respect for all creation is fostered.
- Rationality – openness to truth draws the community towards the wisdom of God.
- Spirituality – God is experienced through the sacraments, prayer, reflection, and moral living.
- Justice – as a sign of God's Reign, justice educates for personal and social transformation.
- Hospitality – friendly, harmonious, and inclusive relationships are nurtured in all areas.

These characters are neither exhaustive of, nor exclusive to, Catholicism. It is the particular way in which they are woven throughout the Catholic experience that informs the Catholic identity.

Resource: *The Religious Dimension of Education in Catholic Schools – A Manifesto for Catholic Education*

Reference: Board Governance Policy E #1, E #2, EL#5(5) School Act Section 39(1.e),50(1.a),50(1.b), 50(2), 60(2) Alberta Education Policy 1.2.2	Approved: J. Carr
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Cross-reference: AP 104, 200, 201, 207	Date(s) Revised: June 12, 2002, December 15, 2004 March 15, 2005, June 13, 2008