

# MONTGOMERY: School board approves revisions to policy on religion

By Lea Kahn, Staff Writer Updated 10 hrs ago  0



MONTGOMERY — Prayer during classroom time, as well as organized prayer groups, will be allowed in the Montgomery Township Public School District, following the school board’s approval of revisions to the school district policy that addresses religion in public schools.

The Montgomery Township Board of Education approved the revised policy at its Oct. 18 meeting. The revised policy is a state-mandated policy. This policy replaces earlier versions of the policy that were adopted in 1999 and 2005.

The former policies stated that “no devotional exercises or displays of a religious character will be permitted in this district, nor shall instructional activities be permitted to advance or inhibit any particular religious sect or religion generally.”

But prayer in the classroom and organized prayer groups are among the activities that will be permitted in the school district — “provided the activity is consistent with current United States Supreme Court decisions regarding the relationship between government and religion,” the newly revised policy states.

The policy adopted last week recognizes that students are protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and by the New Jersey State Constitution, both of which ban the establishment of religion in the schools. It also acknowledges that religion is a personal matter.

The policy also stipulates that school officials “will be neutral in their treatment of religion in the

school district” and that they will not show favoritism or hostility regarding religious expression. “Accordingly, devotional exercises will be permitted in the district,” it states.

Those “devotional exercises” include prayer during classroom time; organized prayer groups and activities; and religious expression and prayer in classroom assignments.

It also includes student assemblies and extra-curricular events; prayer ant graduation and baccalaureate exercises; devotional exercises and other prayer and/or religion-related activities.

“(But) the school district will not permit an activity if the activity advances or inhibits any particular religious expression that is protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution,” according to the newly revised policy.



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**27**

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OCT  
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OCT  
**27**

### [The Art of Discovery Art Exhibit](#)

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OCT  
**27**

### [Veterans Career and Resource Event](#)

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OCT  
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OCT  
**27**

### [Community Invited to Open House at Kessler Rehabilitation Center in Flemington](#)

Thu, Oct 27, 2016 @ 4:00 pm

OCT

### [Friends of the West Windsor Library Book Sale](#)

Thu, Oct 27, 2016 @ 5:00 pm

**27**

OCT **27** [Fiction Book Discussion](#)  
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