

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: July 14, 2009

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO EDUCATION POLICY 6306 – INSTRUCTION: PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS LITERATURE**

ORIGINATOR: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

RESOURCE PERSON(S): Sonja Karwacki, Executive Director, Special Programs PreK-12

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education reviews the proposed changes to Policy 6306.
This is the first reading.

Attachment I – Policy Analysis
Attachment II – Policy 6306

**Policy Analysis for
Board of Education Policy 6306
Prayer and Religious Literature**

Statement of Issues Addressed

Board of Education Policy 6306 was last adopted in 1969. The policy is recommended for revision to ensure compliance with the most current language in the *Annotated Code of Maryland* and COMAR.

Cost Analysis

No fiscal impact is anticipated by the revision of this policy.

Relationship to Other Board of Education Policies

Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Rights and Responsibilities*.

Board of Education Policy 6703, *Patriotic Exercises*.

Legal Requirement

Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-104 and §7-105; COMAR 13A.04.04.01

Similar Policies Adopted by Other School Systems

1. Anne Arundel County, Policy 610.01, *Patriotic Exercises*
2. Carroll County, Policy IMDD, *Moment of Silence*
3. Howard County, Policy 3000, *Religious Observances*
4. Montgomery County, Regulation JFA-RA, *Student Rights and Responsibilities*

Draft of Proposed Policy

Attached

Other Alternatives Considered by Staff

None

Timeline:

- First reading – July 14, 2009
- Public comment – August 11, 2009
- Third reading – September 8, 2009

INSTRUCTION: Prayer and [Bible Reading] RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

I. COMPLIANCE

- A. No [principal, teacher, or other agent] EMPLOYEE of the Board of Education OF BALTIMORE COUNTY (BOARD) may authorize, [direct,] or require the reading of [the Bible] RELIGIOUS LITERATURE or the saying of prayer as a devotional exercise in a public school of Baltimore County.
- B. DAILY SCHOOL OPENING EXERCISES may include UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT APPROVED PATRIOTIC EXERCISES AND/OR a moment of silent meditation.
- C. ANY STUDENT OR TEACHER WISHING TO BE EXCUSED FROM PARTICIPATION IN ANY OPENING EXERCISES SHALL BE EXCUSED.
- D. NO ATTEMPT SHALL BE MADE TO PREVENT A STUDENT FROM ENGAGING IN VOLUNTARY PRAYER OR READING RELIGIOUS LITERATURE PROVIDED IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES REQUIRED OF THE STUDENT.

LEGAL REFERENCES: *ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND*, EDUCATION
ARTICLE §7-104, §7-105
COMAR 13A.04.04.01

RELATED POLICIES: BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 5600, *STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES*
BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 6703, *PATRIOTIC EXERCISES*

Policy
Adopted: 10/31/69
REVISED: _____

Board of Education of Baltimore County