

# NYC SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR DOES A 360: RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION THROWN OVERBOARD

New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy, who just yesterday had given approval to a new policy that would allow school officials to designate a specific area where Muslim students could gather to pray during Ramadan (which begins today), has now reversed himself saying that no such accommodation will be tolerated.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“Yesterday, I faxed a letter to Schools Chancellor Harold Levy commending him for his decision to accommodate the religious rights of Muslim students during Ramadan. Then I said, ‘In the spirit of inclusiveness, I am asking that you also accommodate the interests of Jews and Christians.’ But all this has been undone by the latest flip-flop.

“We contacted the Schools Chancellor’s office late yesterday afternoon to find out if there were any new developments regarding this issue. We were told there were not. We also told his office that I was going on national television to discuss this issue (I appeared on the Fox News Channel show, ‘Hannity and Colmes.’) Yet today we learn that the policy has been reversed. Is it because the Catholic League was requesting parity for Jews and Christians?

“There is another troublesome aspect to this story. The initial decision to accommodate Muslim students was never publicly announced—the *New York Post* broke the story—but the decision to do a 360 was formally posted on the Board of Education’s website. Was Levy trying to slip this by New Yorkers? What accounts for his duplicity?

"We have contacted Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg's office asking that he question Levy about both his reversal and his tactics when they meet today for lunch. Something smells about all this and we hope Bloomberg (who has said he supports school prayer) gets to the bottom of it."