

SCHOOLS SHOW TOLERANCE FOR RAMADAN

The way the public schools celebrate Christmas has become increasingly controversial given their preference for censorship. As a backdrop, consider how some public schools just got finished celebrating Ramadan, the Muslim holy season that began October 15 and ended November 13.

- During Ramadan, Muslim students at Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord, California, were allowed to use an available room to pray or to avoid sitting in the cafeteria (*Contra Costa Times*, 10-15-04).
- During Ramadan, Tahali Community School in St. Cloud, Florida, provided “a quiet space for students who want to pray in the afternoon” (*St. Cloud Times*, 10-15-04). Muslim students were also permitted to spend lunch time in the library.
- After protests, Muslim students at Brooklyn International High School were allowed to miss class for four Fridays during Ramadan to attend mosque services (*New York Times*, 10-15-04).
- After protests, Muslim students with notes from their parents at Bancroft Intermediate School in Wilmington, Delaware were excused from sitting in the cafeteria at lunchtime during Ramadan (Associated Press, 10-23-04).
- In Herndon, Virginia, “multicultural trainer” Afeeda Syeed brought children from a Muslim school to public schools to teach the students about Ramadan (*Kansas City Star*, 10-9-04 and FrontPageMagazine.com,

“Muslim Re-Education” by Alexis Amory, 10-20-04).

- At Salem High School in New Hampshire, the Muslim Students Association held a Ramadan “Fast-A-Thon” on 10-05-04. They received contributions from classmates and teachers (proceeds went to a local soup kitchen). In a show of support, the teachers skipped lunch as well. In addition, the group held a fast-breaking feast at the public school that day at 4:30 pm (Associated Press, 10-09-04).
- At Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy (a charter school that is publicly funded) all of the students followed the traditional fast during Ramadan, even though not all the students were Muslim (*Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, 10-07-04).
- Sharifa Alkhateeb, president of the Muslim Education Council, stated that more schoolteachers expressed an interest in understanding and teaching about Ramadan this year than ever before (*Kansas City Star*, 10-9-04).
- Last year, as a result of a lawsuit, a federal judge ruled that the Byron Union School District in California “could continue a three-week curriculum that emphasized role-playing exercises” in which seventh grade students recited Muslim prayers. However, school administrators suspended the program due to public outcry (*Kansas City Star*, 10-9-04). Nonetheless, FrontPageMagazine.com reported that role-playing techniques were used anyway (“Muslim Re-Education” by Alexis Armory).
- Gwinnett County Schools (Georgia) Chief of

Staff Bobby Crowson met with local Muslim leaders, a local Muslim parent and Yusof Burke, director of CAIR's North Georgia office, to discuss options that would allow Muslim students to leave school early on Friday afternoons to attend prayer services. Note: This was for all Fridays, not just Fridays during Ramadan. School officials extended the options of substituting missed lessons with classes in the early evening, on-line classes, and enrolling in additional classes to make up lost credits. Local Muslim leaders said they would consider the options and present their favorite to the school board (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, "Muslims, schools draw up prayer deal," 10-27-04).

We know of no complaints issued by the ADL, the ACLU, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, American Atheists or People for the American Way. They're too busy making plans to ban Christmas.