

130 – Prayer in Public Meetings Policy



PURPOSE: George Washington Academy (GWA) recognizes that many public bodies in the Washington County area and in the State of Utah have historically opened public meetings with a prayer. Furthermore, the Utah Supreme Court under certain guidelines has upheld the practice of opening public meetings with a prayer. GWA, a public body in the Washington County area and in the State of Utah has determined that it is in the best interest of its stakeholders to establish a policy with regard to prayer at its Public Meetings (defined below).

DEFINITIONS

- Prayer:** Prayer shall be defined as an address of entreaty, supplication, praise, or thanksgiving directed to some sacred or divine spirit or being, or a thought or reading of the presenter’s choosing.
- Public Meeting:** Public Meeting shall be defined as a regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

PRAYER AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

As part of the opening ceremonies of each Public Meeting, there will be time granted for Prayer. The opportunity to give a Prayer at a Public Meeting shall be arranged on a non-denominational and neutral basis to all citizens. The Secretary of the Board of Directors of GWA will post a notice on GWA’s website and at GWA’s school building inviting all religious and civic groups within Washington County, Utah the opportunity to give a prayer at a Public Meeting. This notice shall be posted twice per year, once in the month of January and once in the month of June. If the person scheduled to give a prayer at the Public Meeting is not available or no persons have requested the opportunity to give a prayer at a Public Meeting, the Chairman of the Board of Directors may invite a member of the audience or member of the Board of Directors to give a Prayer.

All Prayers shall be limited to one (1) minute. When the allotted time has expired, the Chairman of the Board shall inform the person that the time has expired and request that the person quit speaking and sit down. If the person fails to promptly comply with the request, the Chairman may direct that person to be removed from the meeting.