

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES/PATRIOTIC EXERCISES

The Board believes that special recognition should be given to national holidays. The building principal should encourage a discreet observance of these holidays which have become a part of the American heritage. These observations may in some instances be in the form of a school assembly while in other instances they are a part of the classroom work.

The Board directs the administration to develop specific activities within each building to convey the meaning and significance of Veterans' Day. The observance must be at least one hour long, except in buildings that schedule class periods of less than an hour. In those buildings, the observance must be at least one standard class period in length.

Religious Holidays and Observances

The following guidelines govern the observance of, and teaching about, religious holidays in the schools.

1. The public school must be neutral in matters of religion. The schools must show no preference for one religion over another. They must refrain from the promotion of any religion or all religions; consequently no religious celebrations may be conducted by the public schools.

“Religious celebration” is defines as:

- A. a formal observance, including worship or religious services of any kind, whether or not conducted by a member of the clergy. Religious observances cannot be justified by the fact that the majority of students or individuals in a given community happen to approve of the practice or by the fact that individual students may absent themselves upon parental request;
 - B. the display of religious objects or symbols, except those that are integral parts of a short-term study in the curriculum, such as art history, etc. The personal jewelry of the staff and students would not be considered a religious celebration in this context and is allowed by the board, or
 - C. the presentation of religious music, except to the extent that such music is presented for its musical rather than its religious content.
2. A program or observance related to a religious holiday in theme or timing should be evaluated as to its purpose and effect. If either the purpose or the effect is judged to be religious rather than secular, the activity should not be undertaken.

Patriotic Exercises

The Board believes one's appreciation of country is promoted by the ceremonies and observances held in the schools and that the United States flag is a symbol of our democratic heritage, ideals and freedom. The U.S. flag will be prominently displayed outside the school on each school day. Proper respect will be given to the flag at all times.

The Board believes that saluting the flag and reciting daily the Pledge of Allegiance help students to learn and to reinforce these principles. Therefore, the Board requires all students, grades kindergarten through 12, to recite the pledge during the school day at a time and manner specified by the building principal.

The Board recognizes that beliefs of some persons prohibit participation in the pledge, the salute to the U. S. flag or other opening exercises; therefore, such persons are excused from participation.

The Board prohibits the intimidation of any student by other students or staff aimed at coercing participation in reciting the pledge.

School Prayer

The Board certifies that it does not have, nor will it adopt any policies that deny or prevent participation in constitutionally protected school prayer. This certification is submitted annually to the Ohio Department of Education by October 1.

Moment of Silence

The Board provides for a moment of silence with participation of students for prayer, reflection or meditation upon a moral, philosophical or patriotic theme.

The Board, administrators or any District employee shall not require a student to participate in a moment of silence, however students are expected to remain respectful of those that are participating.

On September 17 of each year, the District will participate in the celebration of Constitution Day. When the 17th falls on a weekend, the day of celebration will be announced.

Adoption date: December 13, 2005

LEGAL REFS.: U.S. Const. Amend. I, Establishment Cl.
The Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
ORC 5.23
3313.601; 3313.602; 3313.63; 3313.80