

GRANITE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

INSTRUCTION

POLICY 6130: RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

The Granite Falls School District will promote understanding and mutual respect among students, parents and staff members relative to racial, cultural, religious and economic diversity. It is understood that neither the school district, nor its employees or representatives, shall promote or disparage a religious belief or non-belief. Students and staff members may be excused from participating in non-routine educational activities, which are contrary to their religious beliefs.

The board recognizes that the school must neither promote nor inhibit religion. Since several holidays have both a religious and cultural foundation in our society, the observance of holidays will be presented in a prudent, unbiased and objective manner, without sectarian indoctrination or devotional meanings, and focus on the history, heritage and/or secular aspect of the holiday rather than its devotional meanings.

A variety of activities may be included as part of a holiday theme and therefore music, art, literature and drama programs shall not use the religious aspect of a holiday as the underlying message or theme. Religious symbols may be displayed as part of an academic program. Teachers shall refrain from encouraging or discouraging such creations. Religious symbols, such as nativity scenes (if used), shall be displayed in conjunction with a variety of secular holiday symbols so that the total presentation emphasizes the cultural rather than religious significance of the holiday.

Staff shall avoid assigning work that emphasizes the religious aspects of a holiday. Individual students should be allowed, at their own direction, to use religious personages, events or symbolism for artistic expression. A singular religious perspective shall not be promoted, sponsored or imposed upon the students.

Holiday programs should be planned so as to minimize intrusion into the instructional program.

The above restrictions do not preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays and religious differences. Such instruction can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all citizens in a pluralistic society.

Washington state has identified the following annual civic observances in the educational system:

Veterans Day: Principals will be responsible for the preparation and presentation of educational activities of approximately sixty minutes in duration in observance of Veterans Day. The program will be conducted during the school week preceding the eleventh day of November of each year.

Constitution Day: Shall be observed each year on September 17 in commemoration of the September 17, 1787, signing of the United States Constitution. If September 17 occurs on a non-school day, Constitution Day will be conducted on the preceding Friday.

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day: Shall be observed on January 16 or, if on a non-school day, the Friday preceding January 16. Schools will recognize this day by discussing temperance in connection with good citizenship, while specifically addressing self-restraint. An example of this would be discussing the accomplishments of peaceful, non-violent protests in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. Temperance and Good Citizenship Day includes providing opportunities in our schools for eligible students to register to vote.

Disability History Month: Shall be observed during the month of October by conducting or promoting educational activities that provide instruction and foster greater awareness and understanding of disability history and people with individuals.

Legal References:

U.S. Constitution First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment

Wash. Constitution Art. 9, Sec. 4 and Art. 26

[RCW 28A.230.150](#)

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day — Aids in programming

[RCW 28A.230.158](#)

Disability history month — Activities.

[RCW 28A.230.160](#)

Educational activities in observance of Veteran's Day

[36 U.S.C. §106](#)

Constitution and Citizenship Day

ADOPTED: APRIL 27, 2000

AMENDED: NOVEMBER 5, 2014