

CELEBRATIONS & ACTIVITIES

Activities are determined at the building level with administrator guidance, then consistently at the grade level team's discretion, with all logistics clearly communicated by the grade level classroom educator.

All educators will be considerate of the district policy regarding healthy snacks and focus on activities and collaborative fun.

As per federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, it is crucial that we provide equal opportunities for participation in all school activities, including field trips, class celebrations, fun celebrations, and class rewards, for students with disabilities, including those in special programs. These laws emphasize the principle of inclusion and prohibit discrimination based on disability.

Our multi-disciplinary teams work diligently to create Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSPs) so that learners have access to general education learning and activities. If there are concerns regarding a learner's meaningful access to general education learning and activities, the team should convene to discuss what changes need to be made to ensure the learner's success.

Our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment means that we must ensure that every student feels valued, included, and able to fully engage in all aspects of school life.

Celebration activities, games, etc. need to have an alignment to the curriculum, and should last no more than one hour.

Fall Party: Avoid specifics to Halloween decorations, music, or games centered around witches or jack-o-lanterns.

- Alternative Activities: Focus on themes like autumn, harvest, or general spooky fun that do not tie into specific symbols that might have cultural or negative connotations. Consider activities like pumpkin painting (without carving), fall crafts, and storytelling that emphasizes creativity and fun.

Thanksgiving: Avoid depictions of Native Americans and Pilgrims that are open to interpretation.

- Alternative Activities: Discuss the concepts of gratitude, community, and togetherness without relying on historical depictions. Activities could include writing thank-you notes, creating gratitude trees, or discussing what students are thankful for in their lives. Educators can also share age-appropriate, accurate stories about the history and significance of the holiday.

Winter Holidays: Avoid decorations, music, or games that are centered around specific religious celebrations of the season – or deliberately include ALL holidays.

- Alternative Activities: Celebrate the winter season with inclusive themes such as snow, winter animals, and universal values like kindness and giving. If choosing to acknowledge specific holidays, ensure representation of all cultures and traditions observed by students and staff, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali, and others. Activities could include winter crafts, multicultural holiday storytelling, and learning about different traditions through music and food.

Valentine's Day: Educators must provide either a list of learners for names on each card or the number needed with instructions to sign their own name. Educators must clearly communicate the process for a card exchange and making Valentine containers.

- If a card exchange is included:
 - Learners must bring a card for each classmate.
 - If a child lacks cards, the school will provide heart cut-outs or cards.
 - No baked goods or food items allowed. Avoid candy, instead focus on pencils, erasers, stickers, small toys, and crafts as acceptable options.
- Determine the process for Valentine containers:
 - Allow time for learners to decorate a provided container (e.g., paper bag, cereal box) at school.
 - Ask families to decorate or create a container at home, adhering to size guidelines (for example: minimum of 2x6 inches, maximum 20 inches in any direction).
 - Ensure learners without a container receive materials for a container and cards, and time to make one at school so that everyone can participate.

By following these guidelines, educators can create a welcoming and respectful environment for all students, fostering an appreciation for diversity and inclusion during holiday celebrations.

The statements in this document are intended to provide guidance for daily procedures and practices in order to maintain order, efficiency, and continuity amongst our schools.