

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 observances may, in some instances, be in the form of a school assembly while in other instances they are a part of the classroom work.

Veterans Day

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.

Constitution Day

The Board directs the administration to provide an educational program on the United States Constitution to all students on September 17. When September 17 falls on a weekend or other day school is not in session, the day of celebration should be held in the previous or next week.

Religious Holidays and Observances

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

1. The public schools 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 defined 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., or

- C. the presentation of religious music, except to the extent that such music is presented for its musical rather than its religious content. Songs or music programs that have significance for a particular religion should not be sung or performed in the school during the period that coincides with the community celebration of the events portrayed in the music. Festive songs that cannot be associated with a religious celebration are permitted.
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.
3. The school should avoid any activity, display or exhibit that promotes or gives its approval to religious matters.

Patriotic Exercises

The Board does not require the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. However, the Board encourages reciting of the pledge on a regular basis as determined by the classroom teacher or building principal. The District is prohibited from preventing a teacher from having students recite the Pledge of Allegiance in the teacher's classroom.

In addition, District administrators, staff and students are prohibited from altering the wording of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board recognizes that beliefs of some persons prohibit participation in the pledge, the salute to the United States 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 by October 1 to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Moment of Silence

The Board may provide 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.

[Adoption date: August 6, 1991]

Revised: July 21, 2010
March 18, 2020
August 19, 2020
October 15, 2025

Legal References

U.S. Constitution Amend. I, Establishment Cl.
Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
Section 111(b) of title I of Division J of Public Law 108-447
ORC 5.23, ORC 3313.601, ORC 3313.602, ORC 3313.63, ORC 3313.80, ORC 3320.01, ORC 3320.02, ORC 3320.03, OAC 3301-35-04