

**CRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CRANFORD, NEW JERSEY**

POLICY: MULTICULTURAL INSTRUCTION, CELEBRATIONS, AND OBSERVANCES

The Cranford Public Schools will promote meaningful multicultural learning experiences for all students. This includes teaching about various cultures and religious holidays but not celebrating them.

Holidays and special events may be recognized in the district's schools so long as such recognition respects the rights of others and is consistent with law.

It is not proper for teachers to use holidays or customs to teach religion or inject their personal religious beliefs into discussions.

The use of religious symbols, provided they are used only as examples of cultural and religious heritage, is permissible as a teaching aid or resource.

Songs and customs which have come to us from various elements of our national population may be used to broaden our pupils' awareness of the many elements that make up our American culture. Programs and concerts by student groups should reflect this plurality of culture.

School concerts that present a variety of selections may include religious music, but not dominate it especially when they coincide with a particular religious holiday.

Parents requests that their children be excused for religious reasons from classroom discussions or activities (including parties in the elementary grades) related to particular holidays should be granted in order to show respect for that student's religious beliefs.

Requests for total secularization and exclusion of multicultural activities from the educational program should be deemed educationally unsound.

The national flag will be flown on the school grounds from before the opening to after the close of school on all school days, weather permitting, including school holidays. A United States flag will be displayed in each classroom and auditorium during school hours.

The morning opening exercises will include the pledge of allegiance. Those pupils who have religious or conscientious objections may be excused from participating, but will not be permitted to disrupt the exercises.

Appropriate recognition shall be given in all schools on the last school day preceding:

- A. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday;
- B. Lincoln's Birthday;
- C. Washington's Birthday;
- D. Memorial Day;
- E. Columbus Day;
- F. Veterans' Day;
- G. Thanksgiving Day.

Suitable exercises as required by law in all New Jersey public schools shall be conducted in observance of Flag Day, Arbor Day, and Commodore John Barry Day. The Board authorizes the Chief School Administrator to conduct school observances in commemoration of other persons and events of special historical significance.

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Pupils shall be encouraged to develop and/or take part in events and activities in connection with special "days" and "weeks" proclaimed by the nation, state or community. These shall include but are not limited to Black History Month, Womens' History month and Holocaust and Genocide Education.

Legal References:	N.J.S.A.	18A:36-3	Display of salute to flag; pledge of allegiance
	N.J.S.A.	18A:36-6	Observance of flag day
	N.J.S.A.	18A:37-7 through -9	Designation of Arbor Day
	N.J.S.A.	18A:36-10 through -12	Designation of Commodore Barry Day
	N.J.S.A.	18A:36-13	Patriotic exercises preceding holidays

Lipp v. Morris, 579 F. 2d 834 (1978) (3rd Cir.)
Holden v. Elizabeth Board of Education, 46 N.J. 281 (1966)

Adopted: October 17, 1988
Revised: March 21, 1994
Revised: March 22, 1999