



**NORTH ALLEGHENY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>OPERATIONS</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES</b>
<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>10/26/16</b>
<b>REVISED:</b>	

**803 - HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES**

**Section 1. Purpose**

- a. The North Allegheny School District recognizes that it is first and foremost a provider of education in regards to holiday observations.
  - It is our goal that each student feels included and that we foster understanding and respect is fostered for each other.
  - The North Allegheny School District approves the observation and acknowledgment of holidays, but does not sanction the religious celebration of these holidays.
  - No religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the District or its employees and none should be disparaged.
- b. The District may include the study of religious holidays in its' educational process; however, such study will be presented in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.

**Section 2. Definitions**

- a. Religious Holiday - a day or period of time which is set aside to ritually celebrate an event of importance for a religious group.
- b. Secular Holidays - non-religious holidays that may be included in the educational process. Such holidays may include, but are not limited to: Native American Heritage, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, St. Valentine's Day, and Halloween.
- c. Observation - giving respectful attention to.
- d. Acknowledgement - recognizing the existence of.
- e. Religious Celebration - engaging in prayer, worship, glorification, or rituals.
- f. Secular Celebration - non-religious activities such as parties, parades, decorations and/or events that recognize the seasonal time of year.

Pol. 003

Pol. 103, 103.1, 104

**Section 3. Recognition of Religious Holidays**

- a. A school may display, in a central location only, for a limited time equal to any other religious holiday, displays, symbols of a religious holiday, and a brief explanation of that religious holiday and what it represents.
- b. Classroom bulletin board displays or artwork in the hallways associated with curriculum, secular, or legal holidays are not limited to any specific time.

**Section 4. Music, Art, Literature and Drama**

In regards to music, art, literature and drama, students may be engaged in these activities as they relate to holidays, provided they are presented in a balanced and objective manner within the curriculum.

- a. A student may not be prohibited from depicting holiday symbols of religious significance, nor be expected to do so.
- b. A student may not be prohibited from expressing religious belief or nonbelief in compositions, art forms, music, drama, speech, and debate unless such expression leads to or creates disruption in the educational environment.

**Section 5. Participation**

Students and employees have a right to be excused from active participation in any holiday observation activity.

**Section 6. School Attendance**

- a. Every attempt shall be made to avoid scheduling school-related programs during religious holidays.
- b. A student's absence from school on a religious holiday must be recognized as an excused absence without penalty. For the purpose of attendance awards, etc., he shall be recognized as present.

**Section 7. Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Administration to act as a reference point and establish guidelines to ensure neutrality in regard to holiday displays and sensitivity to all students.

**References:**

Board Policy – 003, 103, 103.1, 104, 204

**Replaces Policy:**

2600

Pol. 204