

### **Religious Holiday Policy Guidance Draft 2019**

The policy of the district reflects a commitment to the principles of religious neutrality and the accommodation of diversity, promoting respect and understanding of different beliefs and customs. To include religious music, symbols, art or writings in school programs, displays, performances, classroom activities and/or celebrations, the teacher must demonstrate an educational purpose consistent with the stated objectives of the curriculum. Therefore, reflective preview by teacher and administrator of the content of such activities is necessary and appropriate. In considering any material, the artistic, social and cultural aspects relevant to the purpose for including the material should be taken into account.

### **Commitments from Parkrose:**

- The district and school calendars shall be prepared with the intent to avoid conflicts with the religious holidays of all faiths. Where conflicts are unavoidable, care should be taken to avoid tests, special projects, introduction of new concepts and other activities which would be difficult or impossible to make up. The students who remain in school should continue to have meaningful learning experiences.
- A month by month guide to help provide guidance on how to appropriately observe religious holidays in Parkrose.
- A commitment to reviewing and supporting the implementation of this new policy to ensure we are providing coaching and guidance around this policy.
- We should:
  - Have an approach that is academic and not devotional.
  - Focus on the awareness of religions rather than acceptance of any one religion.
  - Sponsor study about religion, not the practice of religion.
  - Expose students to a diversity of religious views and do not impose any particular view.
  - Educate about all religions — do not promote or denigrate any religion.
  - Inform students about various beliefs, rather than conform students to any particular belief.

## School Year Holidays

Month by Month Guide (These are not areas that must be taught in schools, but can be observed and shared in a thoughtful objective manner to learn more about religious customs and holidays that play a vital role in understanding the beliefs and customs.)

Season	Observance or Holiday	Dates	Notes
Autumn	Navaratri/Dassehra- Hindu	Sept. 29th-Oct. 7th	Hindu holiday of nine nights. Happens 2 times each year at the beginning of summer and the onset of winter
Autumn	Rosh Hashana- Jewish	Sept. 30th-Oct. 1st	Jewish New Year
Autumn	Yom Kippur- Jewish	Oct. 9th	Day of Atonement
Autumn	Day of Indigineous Peoples	Oct. 9th	
Autumn	Sukkot- Jewish	Oct. 14th-20th	Feast of Tabernacles- Biblical holiday
Autumn	Simchat Torah- Jewish	Sundown on Oct. 21st	Immediately follows Sukkot
Autumn	Diwali- Hindu	Oct. 29th	Diwali is a major festival of India. It is celebrated on a new moon night sometime in the months of October and November.
Autumn	All Hallows Eve (Halloween)- Christian	Oct. 31st	This is a commercial and religious holiday in the US. Observances should not include commercial Halloween products or decorations. Students should not dress up. Classes can learn the origins of the holiday and share how it is celebrated.

Autumn	All Saints Day- Christian	Nov. 1st	All Saints' Day is a Christian festival, celebrated to pay tribute to all the saints.
Autumn	Mulad un Nabi- Muslim	Nov. 10th	The Prophet Muhammad's birthday
Autumn	Veteran's Day	Nov. 11th	Veteran's Day is an observed national holiday recognizing the service of military Veterans.
Autumn	Thanksgiving	Nov. 23rd	Thanksgiving is an observed national holiday. Keep in mind that the holiday is recognized nationally, but some of the imagery and messages of Thanksgiving can be insensitive to indigenous peoples of our country.
Winter	Hanukkah	Dec. 23rd-30th	Hanukkah is known as the festival of lights and the Feast of Dedication celebrated by the Jewish community all over the world.
Winter	Christmas- Christian	Dec. 25th	The birth of Jesus Christ. This is also a holiday that has a significant commercial season. Commercial and secular images of Christmas should not be imposed on students and families (trees, candy canes etc..) Our curriculum and celebrations should recognize the many religious observances and celebrations of the winter season. There should not be an overrepresentation of

			Christmas in the curriculum.
Winter	New Years Day- Christian	Jan. 1st	National Holiday in US
Winter	Lunar New Year	Feb. 5th	Recognized in many parts of the world, but often shared as Chinese New Year. Recognize this is the lunar new year that is celebrated by many cultures.
Winter	Martin Luther King Day	Jan. 21st	This is a national holiday to recognize the life of Dr. King. This is also an important time to also recognize other leaders of civil rights across the world. It is also deemed a national day of service.
Winter	St. Valentine's Day- Christian  Oregon becomes a state in 1859	Feb. 14th	This holiday is rooted in Christian religion but is seen and celebrated as a commercial holiday that celebrates romantic love. This holiday should not be observed by imposing the commercial aspects of the holiday into curriculum. Asking students to buy valentine's for all students is not appropriate. We should not impose this expectation. Students can observe by learning the origins of the holiday and celebrating love and friendship. Cards can be created and shared with friends. Crafts around the theme of friendship are okay. Consider equity when it comes to notes of friendship. Snacks or food served on this

			day should be considered healthy and sweets should be moderated by teacher.
Winter	President's Day	Feb. 18th	A recognized national holiday honoring former presidents of the US.
Winter	Maha Shivaratri- Hindu	March 4th	Maha Shivratri, which literally translates to "great night of Shiva" is a Hindu festival largely celebrated in India as well as in Nepal.
Winter	Ash Wednesday- Beginning of lent- Christian	March 6th	Ash Wednesday is the first day of <u>Lent</u> and occurs 46 days before <u>Easter</u> .
Winter	St. Patrick's Day	March 17th	The day is celebrated every year on 17th March or a Monday closest to 17th March. This festival is celebrated to honor St. Patrick, an Irish Saint who helped convert the people of Ireland to Christianity. Again, this is a commercial holiday in the US. This holiday should not be observed using commercial ideas/products to impose a christian holiday or to create misconceptions of the holiday's meaning.
Spring	Purim- Jewish	March 21st	Purim is a Jewish festival which is celebrated to commemorate the protection of Jewish people from Haman, according to Hebrew Bible- the Book of Esther.
Spring	Holi- Hindu	March 21st	Holi is a festival of colors, celebrated primarily in India.

			The festival falls on the last full moon day of Falgun according to Hindu calendar.
Spring	Palm Sunday- Christian	April 14th	<b>Palm Sunday</b> is a Christian <u>moveable feast</u> that falls on the <u>Sunday</u> before <u>Easter</u> .
Spring	Passover	Apr. 20-27th	Passover is the most celebrated Jewish holiday. The festival commemorates the famous biblical story of the Exodus, when Jewish slaves were released out of bondage in Egypt.
Spring	Easter	April 21st	Easter is a festival celebrated by Christians to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Spring	Ramadan to Eid al Fitr	May 6th-June 4th	<b>Ramadan</b> , Arabic <b>Ramaḍān</b> , in <u>Islam</u> , the ninth <u>month</u> of the <u>Muslim calendar</u> and the holy month of <u>fasting</u> . It begins and ends with the appearance of the new moon.  For Muslims Ramadan is a <u>period</u> of introspection, communal <u>prayer</u> ( <i>ṣalāt</i> ) in the <u>mosque</u> , and reading of the <u>Qur'ān</u> . God forgives the past sins of those who observe the holy month with fasting, prayer, and faithful intention.
Spring	Shavout- Jewish	June 8th-10th	Shavuot, the feast of weeks, is celebrated seven weeks after the second Passover seder. Although Shavuot began as an ancient grain harvest festival,

			<p>the holiday has been identified since biblical times with the <u>giving of the Torah</u> on Mount Sinai.</p>
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### Being Culturally Responsive

When it comes time to highlight specific cultural holidays, how do you pick the right culturally responsive materials? No matter what you choose to shed light on the subject (a lesson plan, ongoing unit study, field trip, cultural fair, special performance presentation, etc.), the goal is to expand your students' knowledge, interest, and respect for the group being featured. Here are some ideas to help you highlight multicultural and religious holidays appropriately, and select the right activities and materials:

**Recognize various talents and accomplishments when focusing on people.** Do not limit your commemoration to famous leaders and heroes. Go beyond Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and Susan B. Anthony to find other little-known role models who are historical and contemporary.

**Consult more than one internet or library source and do not expect a student to be your sole "ambassador" or resource for finding out about a whole culture or ethnic background.** Multiple sources are always a good idea for formulating knowledge about a particular subject. More importantly, do not put a particular student on the spot without asking them beforehand if they are comfortable sharing information with the whole class. Each student is an individual and their experiences may or may not be similar to that of the group they represent.

**Incorporate the information you select into existing lesson plans or special projects.** Don't miss out on the opportunity to make this into an ongoing process for learning. One great source of information is children's books, which often have background information and activities, such as these titles about [Ramadan](#), [Chinese New Year](#), and [Día de los muertos](#).

**Make it more than just about food, music, or popular icons.** As with the earlier tips on holiday celebrations, it is best to precede these type of events or approaches with meaningful and thoughtful pre-planned lessons, information, and learning. There is more to St. Patrick's Day than wearing green and pinning up images of leprechauns — turn the holiday into an opportunity to learn about the Irish people and their history.

**Seek various representatives to show the diversity within a common group.** Keep in mind that no one group is as homogenous as it might seem. To

illustrate, Latinos may share the same language and have very similar customs but there are many cultural differences between countries — for example, only Mexicans celebrate Cinco de Mayo; Argentinians, on the other hand, will most likely have never heard of the celebration or know what it stands for, and will celebrate different holidays. "Chinese" New Year, on the other hand, is not only celebrated by the Chinese. Other Asian cultures refer to it as Lunar New Year.

**Plan ahead of time.** Don't wait until the day of the celebration or designated month to bring up the subject. If the topic at hand involves a heritage group represented in your classroom, consult with the student and their families about your plans, and find out if they are interested in and comfortable sharing stories, traditions, or family history. Ask them for suggestions and ideas.

**Encourage other children who may not have "official" holidays representing them or whose families have lived in the U.S. for multiple generations to explore and share their own heritage and background.** For children who come from the mainstream background, ask them where their ancestry is from. Students may not realize that people of European background do not share the same languages or traditions — for example, explore the differences between countries like Sweden and Portugal or Hungary and Scotland. While they may not relate to the language and customs of their ancestors anymore, it is important to point out their own immigrant roots and emphasize how rich we are as a nation because of our immigrant heritages.