



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

**TOPIC:** Approval to designate September 12-16, 2011 and January 23-27, 2012 as "Celebrate Freedom Week"

**SUBMITTED BY:** Pamela R. Juarez **OF:** Instruction Department

**APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ August 17, 2011

## **Recommendation:**

In accordance with TEC 29.907, administration recommends that September 12-16 of the 2011-2012 school year be designated as Celebrate Freedom Week for students in grades 3-12. In addition administration recommends the designation of January 23-27 as a second designated week for high school students enrolled in social studies courses only in the Spring semester.

## **Rationale:**

## **Budgetary Information:**

## **Board Policy Reference and Compliance:**

## CELEBRATE FREEDOM WEEK PROPOSAL

"Constitution Day ensures that the September 17, 1787, signing of the Constitution is commemorated in schools receiving federal funding. Public Law 108-447, Section 111(b) states, "Each educational institution that receives federal funds for a fiscal year shall hold an educational program on the United States Constitution on September 17 of such year for the students served by the educational institution"

(<http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2005-2/052405b.html>). When September 17 falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, Constitution Day shall be held during the preceding or following week."

(<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/taa/polprog091310.html>)

The introduction of the social studies TEKS for grades 3-12 requires that the following be taught during Celebrate Freedom Week:

Excerpt from Middle School Introduction

"(7) State and federal laws mandate a variety of celebrations and observances, including Celebrate Freedom Week.

(A) Each social studies class shall include, during Celebrate Freedom Week as provided under the TEC, §29.907, or during another full school week as determined by the board of trustees of a school district, appropriate instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in their historical contexts. The study of the Declaration of Independence must include the study of the relationship of the ideas expressed in that document to subsequent American history, including the relationship of its ideas to the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, the American Revolution, the formulation of the U.S. Constitution, and the abolitionist movement, which led to the Emancipation Proclamation and the women's suffrage movement.

(B) Each school district shall require that, during Celebrate Freedom Week or other week of instruction prescribed under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, students in Grades 3-12 study and recite the following text: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness--That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed."



In addition, the U.S. History since Reconstruction TEKS, 11.1A, B, C, specifically makes reference to Celebrate Freedom Week topics that students need to master since they will be tested.

c) Knowledge and skills.

(1) History. The student understands the principles included in the Celebrate Freedom Week program. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze and evaluate the text, intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, and identify the full text of the first three paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence;

(B) analyze and evaluate the application of these founding principles to historical events in U.S. history; and

(C) explain the contributions of the Founding Fathers such as Benjamin Rush, John Hancock, John Jay, John Witherspoon, John Peter Muhlenberg, Charles Carroll, and Jonathan Trumbull Sr.

### Recommendations

It is our recommendation that Week 4 of instruction (September 12-16) of the upcoming 2011-2012 school year be designated as Celebrate Freedom Week for students grades 3-12 students. In addition, it is our recommendation that the week of January 23-27 of the spring semester for high school also be designated as Celebrate Freedom Week. During the designated weeks, we are recommending that the required recitation of the lines of the Declaration of Independence be done daily during the morning announcements and that all students grades 3-12 participate in the recitation. The format would be as follows: Pledge of Allegiance, Texas Pledge, lines from Declaration of Independence, moment of silence.