

**Policy IND: CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES**

**Status:** DRAFT

**Original Adopted Date:** 12/16/1999 | **Last Revised Date:** 11/16/2023 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 11/16/2023

**24B UPDATE  
EXPLANATION**

Senate Bill 139 (2023) officially changed the name of the observance during the first week of March to match the more common phrase, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). MSBA has updated this policy to reflect that change.

The board of education recognizes the value of district-sponsored programs and ceremonies during school hours and at other appropriate times. Recognizing achievement and talent encourages further learning. District-sponsored programs, ceremonies, and observances also provide an opportunity to involve the community in public education.

### Programs, Ceremonies, and Observances

1. The flag of the United States of America will be prominently displayed, either on the outside of the building or upon a pole erected in the school yard, at every school in the district during school hours.
2. Pursuant to state law, the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited in at least one scheduled class of every student no less than once per school day. However, in accordance with law, no student will be required to participate in the recitation.
3. The text of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution will be displayed in all school buildings in a conspicuous and legible manner.
4. Teachers and students should observe the following days with the appropriate exercises, as required by law:
  - Bird Appreciation Day (March 21)
  - Prisoners of War Remembrance Day (April 9)
  - Holocaust Education Week (the second week of April or another week designated by the district)
  - Patriots Day (April 19)
  - Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (September 17, or the preceding or following week if this date falls on a weekend or holiday)
  - Missouri Day (the third Wednesday of October)
  - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (December 7)
5. The district may observe the following days and months, as recommended in state statute:
  - Missouri Lifelong Learning Month (February)
  - ~~Math, Engineering, Technology and Science~~, **Math, Engineering, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)** Week (the first week of March)
  - Arbor Day (the first Friday in April)
  - Jefferson Day (April 13)
  - Emancipation Day (June 19)
  - Emergency Services Day (September 11)
  - POW/MIA Recognition Day (the third Friday of September)

- Disability History and Awareness Month (October)
  - Bill of Rights Day (December 15)
6. The district may host a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans Day for any veteran receiving an honorary diploma from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) pursuant to "Operation Recognition."
  7. Each school in the district shall, prior to any scheduled Veterans Day observance, conduct programs and activities that convey the meaning and significance of Veterans Day. Veterans Day observances will be held as closely as possible to November 11, and the duration of activities and programs that lead up to such an observance shall be the equivalent of at least one class period.

The superintendent or designee will create administrative procedures addressing how ceremonies and observances will be conducted.

## Religious Content in Programs and Ceremonies

The schools of the district, as well as all employees of the district as governmental officials, are required by law to remain neutral and refrain from endorsing any particular religious belief. However, this policy should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences.

In particular, music, art, literature, and drama with religious themes and programs involving religious themes will be permitted if presented in an objective manner without sectarian indoctrination. Religious content included in any student performance or ceremony will be selected on the basis of independent educational merit.

To the extent required by law, district employees or officials shall not lead attendees of a district-sponsored event in prayer or any other religious ritual, nor shall they direct, whether implicitly or explicitly, a student to lead attendees in a prayer or any other religious ritual. However, this policy shall not be used to deny any student, employee, or district official any personal legal right of expression.

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**Policy Reference Disclaimer:** These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

### State References

	Description
§ 160.360, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
§ 161.700, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
§ 162.946, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
§ 170.049, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
§ 171.021, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
§§ 9.030, 9.040, 9.070-.072, RSMo.	<a href="#">State Statute</a>
Mo. Const. art.I §§ 5-7	<a href="#">State Constitution</a>
Mo. Const. art.I §§ 5-7	<a href="#">State Constitution</a>
Mo. Const. art.IX § 8	<a href="#">State Constitution</a>

### Federal References

	Description
36 U.S.C. § 106	<a href="#">Federal Statute</a>
FEDERAL COURT	<a href="#">Santa Fe Independent Sch. Dist. v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000)</a>
U.S. Const. amend. I	<a href="#">U.S. Constitution</a>

**Cross References**

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**Description**[PROHIBITION AGAINST ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION](#)[STAFF CONDUCT](#)[COMMUNITY USE OF DISTRICT FACILITIES](#)[COMMUNITY USE OF DISTRICT FACILITIES](#)

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