

RUSD BOARD POLICY 6115: CEREMONIES, OBSERVANCES, AND FLAG DISPLAYS

The RUSD Board of Education is committed to maintaining an educational environment that focuses on academic achievement and the holistic development of all students. To ensure this goal, the Board proposes to adopt a policy to guide the selection and scope of school-sponsored events and celebrations. The intent of this policy is to maintain a patriotic, safe, appropriate, and welcoming environment for all teachers, students, administrators, staff, parents/guardians and other members of the community.

This policy specifies the District's schedule of observed holidays, commemorative exercises, patriotic exercises, the display of American and Californian flags, and guidelines for miscellaneous events and celebrations. This policy serves to protect children from ideological and politically divisive observances and practices. The intent of this board is to maintain a non-exclusionary and welcoming environment for students, staff, and parents.

Furthermore, RUSD will not sponsor, endorse, or facilitate events, celebrations, or activities either in-person or online that promote or advocate for political, social, or ideological movements.

I Holidays

District schools shall be closed on the following holidays (Education Code 37220):

New Year's Day: January 1

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Third Monday in January or the Monday or Friday of the week in which January 15 occurs

Lincoln Day: The Monday or Friday of the week in which February 12 occurs

Washington Day: Third Monday in February

Memorial Day: Last Monday in May

Independence Day: July 4

Labor Day: First Monday in September

Veterans Day: November 11

Thanksgiving Day: The Thursday in November designated by the President

Christmas Day: December 25

Holidays which fall on a Sunday shall be observed the following Monday. Holidays which fall on a Saturday shall be observed the preceding Friday. If any of the above holidays occurs under federal law on a date different from that indicated above, the Board of

Trustees may close the schools on the date recognized by federal law instead of on the date above. (Education Code 37220)

II Commemorative Exercises

District schools shall hold exercises in accordance with law to commemorate special days of observance in accordance with Education Codes 37220, 37221, and 45460.

III Patriotic Exercises

Each school shall conduct patriotic exercises daily. These patriotic exercises shall consist of the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and may also include instruction that promotes understanding of the concepts of "pledge," "allegiance," "republic," and "indivisible" and understanding of the importance of the pledge as an expression of patriotism, love of country, and pride in the United States. (Education Code 52720, 52730)

At elementary schools, such exercises shall be conducted at the beginning of each school day. (Education Code 52720)

At secondary schools, such exercises shall be conducted during the homeroom period. Individuals may choose not to participate in the flag salute for personal reasons. Students not reciting the Pledge of Allegiance shall maintain a respectful attitude and silence.

IV Display of Flag

The flag of the United States and the flag of California shall be displayed during business hours at the entrance or on the grounds of every district school and on or near the district office.

At all times, the national flag shall be placed in the position of first honor. (Government Code 431, 436; 4 USC 6)

The flag should not be displayed during inclement weather unless an all-weather flag is used. (4 USC 6)

The national flag shall fly at half-staff on the following occasions (4 USC 7):

- For 30 days from the death of the President or a former President

- On other occasions by order of the President and in accordance with presidential instructions or orders

No flag other than the United States of America and State of California may be displayed on school grounds, unless it is a country, state, or United States military flag used solely for

educational purposes within the adopted curriculum. This includes posters, digital displays, flyers, and any other related display. Any other flag must be approved by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee prior to displaying if, and only if, it is used for educational purposes and only during the related instructional period. Exceptions may be made for displays of school championship flags, flags associated with academic achievement, and various national flags within classrooms, recreational rooms, or gymnasiums.

V Miscellaneous Events and Celebrations

Focus on Academics:

School-sponsored events and activities must align with the district's educational goals, promoting academic excellence, skill development, and civic understanding without emphasizing or endorsing particular political, social, or religious beliefs. To ensure that all students, staff, and families feel welcome in our schools, the district staff will follow board policy 6144 with respect to celebrating or commemorating any events that may be perceived as divisive, controversial, or exclusive.

Promotion of Inclusivity and Neutrality:

- Celebrations of broadly recognized national and cultural holidays (e.g., Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Black History Month) that align with the district's mission of fostering historical and civic understanding. Reference section I for comprehensive list and Ed Code 37220
- Events related to core educational themes (e.g., literacy drives, science fairs, history months) that maintain a neutral and inclusive approach.

Prohibited Activities:

- Promotion or recognition is prohibited by district employees (while acting in his/her capacity as a representative of the district), volunteers while on school grounds or school sponsored events, and district social media platforms, that center on advocacy of political or social agendas, activism, or ideological and highly controversial positions.