Washington State Civic Observances

Constitution & Citizenship Day

Observed annually on September 17

RCW 28A.230.170

The law requires the study of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Washington state as a prerequisite for graduation from public and private high schools in Washington state.

Additionally, federal law enacted in December 2004 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..." to commemorate the signing of the United States Constitution on September 17, 1787. The federal law is included in Section 111 of Public Law 108-447 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005. The U.S. Department of Education provides additional information about the law.

Disability History Month

Observed the month of October

RCW 28A.230.158

Requires that all Washington public schools conduct or promote educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities. The activities may include, but not be limited to, school assemblies or guest speaker presentations.

Veterans' Day

Observed annually on November 11

RCW 28A.230.160

The law requires that all Washington public schools observe Veterans' Day by providing educational activities during the school week preceding the eleventh day of November of each year. The responsibility for the preparation and presentation of the activities will be with the principal or head teacher of each school building. The law dictates that activities be at least sixty minutes total throughout the week and will embrace topics

tending to instill a loyalty and devotion to the institutions and laws of this state and nation.

Temperance & Good Citizenship Day

Observed annually on January 16, or the preceding Friday if January 16 falls on a non-school day
RCW 28A.230.150

The law states that on January 16 of each year (or the preceding Friday when January 16 falls on a non-school day) each public school will observe Temperance and Good Citizenship Day.

The original language of the 1923 Washington state law included specific language regarding education of the effects of alcohol and drug use. However, this language was removed when the law was revised in 1969. While many interpret "temperance" to mean prohibition, as defined above, instruction on "temperance" may include information about prohibition, but it is not a specific requirement of the law. The 2013 Legislature added the expectation that on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day public schools provide opportunities for eligible students to register to vote.

Many school districts recognize this day by discussing temperance in connection with good citizenship, specifically addressing self-restraint. This idea of self-restraint is closely tied with many of the activities associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. For example, a district may choose to discuss the accomplishments of peaceful, non-violent protests in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. With the 2013 addition, schools are asked to provide eligible students with the opportunity to register to vote.

Resources

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day Timeline

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Observed annually on the third Monday in January
No legislative mandate

In January 2004, the Washington State House of Representatives passed House Resolution 4676 to recognize Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, honoring the importance of the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The resolution calls on the people of the state of Washington to study, reflect on, and celebrate Dr. King's life and

ideals in order to fulfill his dream of civil and human rights for all people and urges "all the citizens of our state to make Martin Luther King, Jr. Day a day of service-a day on, not a day off." There is no state law or specific regulation that requires school districts to observe this day in any particular way.