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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

June 17, 2022

Action Required
 Informational

BULLETIN NO. 037-22 Government Relations

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Clarifying Juneteenth as a School Holiday in Washington State

CONTACT: Anna Hernandez-French, Policy Analyst
707-599-9591 Anna.Hernandez-french@k12.wa.us

BACKGROUND

Through the passage of [House Bill \(HB\) 1016](#), the 2021 Washington State Legislature designated Juneteenth as a state legal holiday. The 2022 Legislature found that there was ambiguity about whether the Juneteenth state holiday is also a school holiday. In March 2022, Governor Inslee signed into law [HB 1617](#) to clarify that Juneteenth, like all other state legal holidays, is a school holiday on which school may not be taught. The law has a July 1, 2022 effective date.

Establishment of Juneteenth as a Washington State Holiday

The 2021 Washington State Legislature designated Juneteenth as a state legal holiday to celebrate the end of slavery. The Legislature encourages that this be a day to engage in fellowship with Black/African Americans, revisit our solidarity and commitment to anti-racism, educate ourselves about the history of slavery, and continue having conversations that uplift every Washingtonian.

Juneteenth marks the day of June 19, 1865, two and one-half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and two months after the end of the Civil War. On that day, news finally reached Galveston, Texas, that the Civil War had ended and that all enslaved persons were now released from the bondage of slavery.

IMPACT OF JUNETEENTH ON SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF

Effective July 1, 2022, Juneteenth is a school holiday on which school may not be taught. State law ([RCW 28A.150.050](#)) makes clear that a school district cannot make a reduction to a teacher's time or salary due to the fact that a school day happens to be on a school holiday. The law does not specifically address whether school staff—certified or non-certified—can be required to work on the Juneteenth holiday, only that school cannot be taught. The law does not address recognition of the Juneteenth holiday when Juneteenth falls after the last day of school for those staff whose work year extends beyond 180 days.

Beginning June 2023, all school districts must recognize Juneteenth as a school holiday. Several districts are honoring the holiday in the current school year, prior to the effective date of the legislation. Districts should consult with their legal counsel and their collective bargaining agreements to determine if and how they honor the state holiday for the current school year, June 2022.

RESOURCES FOR RECOGNIZING AND HONORING JUNETEENTH

To support educators, families, and other community members in recognizing and honoring Juneteenth, OSPI content specialists have produced a [list of Juneteenth resources](#) for adults, children, and youth.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Anna Hernandez-French, at 707-599-9591 or email anna.hernandez-french@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162/TTY: 360-664-3631; or P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200; or equity@k12.wa.us