

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

TO: Dr. Mike Riggle
FROM: Dr. Rosanne Williamson
RE: Public Hearing: Legal School Holiday Modifications
DATE: April 4, 2011

Critical Question: Why must the district hold a Public Hearing regarding legal school holiday modifications?

Background:

On August 24, 2009 Public Act 96-640 was enacted and took effect immediately. With the enactment of P.A. 96-640, districts can use legal school holidays for other purposes and no longer have to submit a modification request to and obtain approval from ISBE.

These changes can now be made at the local level with no need to use the waiver/modification law; however, the entity choosing to exercise this authority first must hold a public hearing about the proposal. In addition, the person/persons honored by the holiday must be recognized through instructional activities conducted on that day or, if the day is not used for student attendance, on the first school day preceding or following that day. This Act provides that a school board or other eligible entity is authorized to hold school or schedule teachers' institutes, parent-teacher conferences, or staff development activities (including school improvement and in-service training) on the following legal school holidays:

- The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (third Monday in January)
- The birthday of President Abraham Lincoln (February 12)
- The birthday of Casimir Pulaski (first Monday in March)
- Columbus Day (second Monday in October)
- Veterans' Day (November 11)

Recommendation:

The administration recommends modifications of all legal school holidays listed above. Existing holiday modifications approved under the former statute for Lincoln's Birthday, Pulaski Day, and Columbus Day expire June 30, 2011. Given that P.A. 96-640 provides the flexibility of declaring holiday modifications at the local level, we are adding the two remaining holidays as part of our proposal. This provides flexibility with regard to the use all legal school holidays going forward. It should be noted that the district always has the option of maintaining any or all of the days listed above as legal school holidays in which school would not be in session.

Description of Proposed Modifications:

The Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

School will be held and students will be in attendance, or this day will be used for a teacher institute day. Northfield Township High School District #225 will conduct special school activities and discussions on the third Monday in January, or on the day prior to the institute day or the day following the institute day designed to enhance student knowledge about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Social studies teachers will be able to plan their lessons about Dr. King and deliver instruction so that our students clearly understand his historical importance.

The Birthday of President Abraham Lincoln

School will be held and students will be in attendance, or this day will be used for a teacher institute day. We propose to schedule a school holiday on the third Monday in February, Presidents' Day. Northfield Township High School District #225 will conduct special school activities and discussions on February 12, or on the day prior to the institute day or the day following the institute day designed to enhance student knowledge about President Abraham Lincoln. Social studies teachers will be able to plan their lessons about President Lincoln and deliver instruction so that our students clearly understand his historical importance.

The Birthday of Casimir Pulaski

This day will serve as a teacher institute day, or school will be held and students will be in attendance. Northfield Township High School District #225 will conduct special school activities and discussions on the day prior to the institute day or the day following the institute day, or on the first Monday in March designed to enhance student knowledge about Casimir Pulaski and his role in the Revolutionary War. Social studies teachers will be able to plan their lessons about Casimir Pulaski and deliver instruction so that our students clearly understand his historical importance.

Columbus Day

School will be held and students will be in attendance, or this day will be used for a teacher institute day. Northfield Township High School District #225 will conduct special school activities and discussions on the second Monday in October, or on the day prior to the institute day or the day following the institute day designed to enhance student knowledge about Christopher Columbus. Social studies teachers will be able to plan their lessons about Columbus and deliver instruction so that our students clearly understand his historical importance.

Veterans' Day

School will be held and students will be in attendance, or this day will be used for a teacher institute day. Northfield Township High School District #225 will conduct special school activities and discussions on November 11, or on the day prior to the institute day or the day following the institute day designed to enhance student knowledge of the contributions of US veterans. Social studies teachers will be able to plan their lessons around this topic and deliver instruction so that our students clearly understand the historical importance of military veterans.