

POLICY

**PATERSON
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Juneteenth Commemoration

8210.01 JUNETEENTH COMMEMORATION

The Board of Education recognizes June 19th as "Juneteenth Independence Day", the oldest known celebration of the abolition of slavery in the United States and the oldest African-American holiday observance.

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day Union soldiers landed in Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and the enslaved were free, creating cause for jubilant celebrations that evolved into a general celebration of freedom. Celebration of Juneteenth is generally marked by family gatherings, picnics, prayers and speakers, and is a time for education and encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures.

As an emancipation celebration, Juneteenth was first given official state recognition in 1980 when Texas made it an official state holiday and a campaign exists today to establish Juneteenth as a national holiday. Throughout New Jersey, towns and cities organize festivities to reflect on and rejoice in the freedom, opportunity, and cultural respect associated with Juneteenth.

In recognition of the historical and cultural significance of Juneteenth, and in order to foster respect for all cultures, the Board officially recognizes June 19th as "Juneteenth Independence Day". The Board thereby directs the Superintendent to include on the School Calendar, on or about June 1st, an early dismissal for students at the end of a half-day of instruction regarding the historical significance of Juneteenth, the end of slavery, systemic racism, and other relevant topics.

The Board further directs the Superintendent to develop and implement a plan to provide professional development for all teachers, as well as age-appropriate Juneteenth-related activities and curricula for students in grades K-12. The Superintendent shall ensure this curriculum is delivered to



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students in grades K-12 during the month of June and during the half-day of instruction on or about June 1st.

Adopted: 12 August 2020

