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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Richmond 16

SUPTS. MEMO. NO. 2685
September 28, 1951

TO: The Division Superintendent

FROM: Dowell J. Howard, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Special Days and American Education Week

Special days that are set aside for observance in the schools may be classified as follows; (1) The birthdays of men who have contributed to the development of our democracy; (2) days that have special significance to large groups of our citizens; and (3) days that call attention to significant movements that are in progress. This is to suggest that appropriate teaching activities be undertaken in all school divisions which will make the importance of these special days clearer and more worthwhile to pupils.

The Observance of Birthdays of National Figures.

In these days when all of our people are attempting to get a better grasp of the meaning of democracy, it would be helpful if the contributions of our national leaders could be presented to pupils. Teaching activities in classes could make it clearer that these men have helped us to take a forward step in the development of our way of life. Appropriate observance could also be held in classes or in the school as a whole. The birthdays of Washington (February 22), Jefferson (April 13), Lincoln (February 12), Woodrow Wilson (December 28), Theodore Roosevelt (October 27), and others are examples of birthdays that should be recognized.

The Observance of Days That Have Special Significance to Large Groups of Citizens. Such days as Thanksgiving Day (November 22), Arbor Day (March 14), Columbus Day (October 12), Constitution Day (September 17), and Memorial Day (May 30) afford the teachers of the public schools an opportunity to acquaint the pupils with some of the most profound idealism in the thinking of the American people. Every teacher should be encouraged to capitalize on these opportunities to help pupils understand the basis of the observance of these days and their influence on our way of life.

Weeks and Days That Call Attention to Significant Movements That Are in Progress. From time to time special weeks and days have been set aside to direct the attention of our people to urgent problems confronting our society; for example, American Education Week, Fire Prevention Week, Red Cross Week, National Safety Week, Cancer Prevention Week, Rural School Charter Day, Conservation Week, and United Nations Day. The dates for these observances are not given since we have not been informed definitely concerning them. It is suggested that plans for observing these occasions be discussed with teachers at the beginning of the school year and that they be encouraged to observe them in such ways as seem appropriate in connection with their regular teaching programs.

American Education Week has been celebrated in our schools for many years. This year the observance will be held during the week of November 11-17. Materials that may be of assistance in making your plans for celebration of this week may be obtained from the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington 6, D.C.

DJH/fc