

REQUIRED OBSERVANCES

The purpose of observing Disability History Month is to encourage students to respect individuals with disabilities rather than pity them, to focus on their strengths and to promote understanding rather than stereotypes. Students will be encouraged to recognize the whole person rather than just an individual's disability.

While observing Disability History Month as required by law during the month of October, and year-round when feasible, the district will conduct a variety of educational activities of its choice designed to foster greater awareness and understanding of individuals with disabilities. The activities may include, but are not limited to, school assemblies, guest speaker presentations, research and writing projects, book studies, art projects and/or film studies. At a minimum, all activities should provide students with the opportunity to learn how people with disabilities have been treated throughout history, how they have been instrumental in changing history and/or how they became active participants in changing societal attitudes about their needs, desires and capabilities.

Suggested topics for activities include:

- Examination of common word usage that stigmatizes people with disabilities;
- Biographical study of important people throughout history who have or had disabilities (e.g., Muhammad Ali, Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Lewis Carroll, Michael Phelps, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Michael J. Fox, Franklin Delano Roosevelt);
- Study of the history of the disability civil rights movement;
- Presentations by adults with disabilities in the community, including veterans with disabilities;
- Discussion of disability etiquette;
- Focus on community-based resources for people with disabilities, or the need therefor;
- Volunteering for community service organizations that work with people with disabilities;
- Study of art/music/film that tells the story of a person with a disability or examines the portrayal of people with disabilities;
- Study of a particular historical period focusing on the experience of persons with disabilities.