

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 2229

By: Cannaday, BigHorse and
Pittman of the House

and

Garrison of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2001, Section 24-152, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 83, O.S.L. 2007 (70 O.S. Supp. 2007, Section 24-152), which relates to Veterans Day and Celebrate Freedom Week; requiring certain content to be grade-appropriate; requiring rules adopted by the State Board of Education to establish different grade-appropriate content and rigor for required subjects; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 24-152, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 83, O.S.L. 2007 (70 O.S. Supp. 2007, Section 24-152), is amended to read as follows:

Section 24-152. A. In order to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom on behalf of this country and the values on which this country was founded, the date of November 11 is hereby designated "Veterans Day", and the week in which November 11 falls is hereby designated "Celebrate Freedom Week" in and for the public schools of this state. In any year in which the date of November 11 is a Saturday or Sunday or classes are not in regular session, the public schools of this state shall observe the previous school day as "Veterans Day" as provided for in this section. For purposes of this subsection, Sunday shall be considered the first day of the week.

B. The board of education of each public school district shall ensure that each school in its district will on Veterans Day conduct and observe an appropriate program of at least one class period remembering and honoring American veterans. In addition, schools may choose, if scheduling allows, to have a one-minute moment of silence beginning at 11:00 a.m. on November 11 of each year. The benefit of such activity, in addition to honoring American veterans, is to serve to educate students about the termination of World War I at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918, which was first recognized by United States President Woodrow Wilson on the first anniversary of the truce in a proclamation eulogizing fallen Allied soldiers and referring to November 11 as Armistice Day.

C. By December 31, 2007, the State Board of Education shall adopt rules which require each public school district in the state to include, as a part of a social studies class, during Celebrate Freedom Week or during another full school week as determined by the board of education, grade-appropriate instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in their historical contexts. The religious references in the writings of the founding fathers shall not be censored. The rules shall require the appropriate grade level study of the Declaration of Independence to include the study of the relationship of the ideas expressed in that document to subsequent American history, including the relationship of its ideas to the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, the American Revolution, the formulation of the United States Constitution, and the abolitionist movement, which led to the Emancipation Proclamation and, the women's suffrage movement, and the civil rights movement and the passage of civil rights legislation.

D. The rules adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection C of this section shall establish different levels of content and rigor of the subject matter required to be covered during Celebrate Freedom Week that is appropriate for the different grade levels and that meet state and national standards.

E. The rules adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection C of this section shall also provide that during Celebrate Freedom Week or another week of instruction selected by the board of education, students in grades three through twelve study and recite the text quoted below:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

~~E.~~ F. Students may be excused from the recitation of the text set forth in subsection D of this section, if:

1. The parent or guardian of the student submits to the school district a written request that the student be excused;

2. As determined by the school district, the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation; or

3. The student is the child of a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2008.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 27th day of February,
2008.

Presiding Officer of the House of
Representatives

Passed the Senate the 23rd day of April, 2008.

Presiding Officer of the Senate