



ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To address the concerns brought up last year regarding Colonial Day, we recently held a meeting with third grade teachers and a separate parent forum. The purpose for each discussion was to examine how Colonial Day activities fit into the social studies curriculum and how it aligns with our goal of becoming culturally competent as a district. A large part of both meetings included a discussion about the expectation of students dressing in colonial attire to accentuate their experience. The sharing of perspectives was very informative and helped to provide valuable insight regarding students dressing up and the overall objective for having the Colonial Day event. After considering multiple perspectives, it has been decided that we will no longer include an expectation of students dressing up in period costumes for Colonial Day. The practice of having students dress up is problematic to our vision of creating an environment in which all students feel honored and welcomed. In addition, dressing up as colonists emphasizes a single perspective that was not shared by all of the cultures that were present during this time in history, which includes Native American culture. This summer, our third grade teachers will be working to update curriculum to ensure that their instruction of the colonial time period is comprehensive and representative of all cultures. Their work will also revisit other aspects of Colonial Day, which may include selecting a different name and revising the activities that we currently have planned. Our overall goal is to ensure all cultures are considered as we teach our students about important historical events and facts.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Colonial Day topic, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Roderick MacNeal, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent