

Resolution 2122R-006
Recognition of Juneteenth Day

By Director Carr

WHEREAS, It is a core belief of Milwaukee Public Schools that public education provides the cornerstone of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, It is an equity goal of Milwaukee Public Schools that we will create a district-wide culture of reflection and awareness building; and

WHEREAS, The Civil War, which raged for four years between April 1861 and April 1865, officially ended with the surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, yet, even after this turning point, many parts of the country remained at war; and

WHEREAS, The month of June has become the time of year when many recognize and celebrate what is also called "Emancipation Day", "National Freedom Day," "Liberation Day," and other names, as the day in history when the last state ratified the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, The specific day that freedom had come being less important than the fact that it *had* come, the freed men and women referred to this day as "Juneteenth," which provides the historical reference for Juneteenth National Freedom Day; and

WHEREAS, This date marks the time period where African Americans of Texas received notice from President Lincoln that slavery had been abolished and that the abolition was codified in the 13th amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America - this a full two years after the actions of the Confederacy were first declared null and void; and

WHEREAS, During the years immediately following their emancipation, the freed men and women established a tradition of picnics, music, and thanksgiving, and used the occasion to reflect upon the profound meaning of their freedom – the freedom to choose a life direction, a manner of earning a livelihood, and the ability create a community in which they – as free people - might live with dignity; and

WHEREAS, Americans of all ethnic backgrounds, creeds, cultures, religions and countries-of-origin, share in a common love of and respect for "freedom", as well as a determination to protect their right to freedom through democratic institutions, by which the tenets of freedom are guaranteed and protected; and

WHEREAS, The State of Wisconsin began recognizing Juneteenth day as a paid holiday in 2009; Milwaukee County began offering it as a floating holiday in 2009; and in 2021 the federal government declared June 19th as federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth Day, is particularly important to the people of Milwaukee who have celebrated it since 1971 and where the celebration has grown from a small neighborhood celebration to a full-on street festival and parade that draws hundreds of thousands of participants annually; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee Public Schools values and honors the Juneteenth Day ideals and the commemoration of "America's 2nd Independence Day" as one that completes the cycle of America's Independence Movement, initiated with the "Declaration of Independence" in 1776 and to advance this

country's sincere dialogue of the realization of what Juneteenth historically means to all Americans, promoting racial healing, reconciliation, restoration and justice; and

WHEREAS, The Milwaukee Board of School Directors acknowledges that a day of jubilee can only truly be celebrated as a holiday if it is treated as a holiday; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors directs that Juneteenth Day be instituted as an official holiday within the Milwaukee Public Schools; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Juneteenth Day be a paid day off, structured in the same manner as all other paid holidays currently recognized by the district.

Introduced June 24. 2021