

October 26, 2015

World Language Students and Parents:

November 1st and 2nd mark an important holiday in Latin American culture, “El Día de los Muertos” (The Day of the Dead). As part of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, World Language students are required to learn the cultural aspects surrounding this holiday and how it compares to holidays in their own culture. Students will learn about the connection of Day of the Dead to All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day. We will also compare and contrast the Day of the Dead with Halloween. It is important that students understand that these holidays have some similarities, but all many significant differences.

The Day of the Dead is not a holiday for costumes, trick or treats, and scary creatures, but rather a celebration of the circle of life and the remembrance of those who have already passed on. Like many holidays, the origin of the Day of the Dead tradition is also rooted in religion, but it is certainly not necessary no my intention to edify its religious aspects in order to teach its meaning. With that in mind, my goal is to help students understand various customs of the cultures we are studying, which is an integral part of World Language education.

As a way to help the students realize the meaning and importance of this holiday, I would like to have each class simulate its own Día de los Muertos celebration. A part of this activity encourage students to think about a real person in their lives who has passed away and to think of reasons why they would like to remember and celebrate the life of this person. Another option is to remember a famous person, a family friend or a neighbor, or even a pet that has passed away. This activity should evoke thought and emotions, which, I think, make it more “real” for the students and therefore have more of an impact. I stress that this lesson is not meant to be depressing, but rather an enriching and positive experience. However, I do understand that circumstances may cause you to prefer that your child not participate in the activity. If that is the case, please sign and return the portion below.

Thank you,



Señorita Lizbeth Monaghan
Ashland Middle School
World Language

I prefer that my student, _____, NOT participate in the Day of the Dead activity; however, I do understand that he/she is responsible for knowing the lesson material and completing an informational packet instead.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____