

Wisconsin Public School Observance Days

Many of the dates you see on the Activities Calendar in italics are Wisconsin Public School Observance Days. These 20 days are part of state statutes governing general school operations. Honoring observance days can teach the elements of tradition that preserve U.S. society and foster an awareness of our cultural heritage.

September 16	Mildred Fish Harnack Day	Born in Milwaukee in 1902, moved to Germany with her husband in 1930, leaders of the resistance group “Red Orchestra”, she was the only native-born American known to have been executed by the Gestapo.
September 17	U.S. Constitution Day	Representatives of 12 of the 13 original states signed the U.S. Constitution on this day in 1787.
September 17	Wisconsin Day	Salutes “every important activity in the state from agriculture to industry to tourism, from business to labor to recreation, and from education to good government to the state’s varied products”.
September 17	POW-MIA Recognition Day	Established to recognize those who suffered or suffer captivity in foreign countries while in active service with the U.S. armed forces.
September 28	Frances Willard Day	A teacher and lecturer, she was influential in the early women’s movement and was president of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.
October 9	Leif Erickson Day	Born in Iceland, Norse saga written 300 years after his death describe his exploration, believed to be on the North American continent.
October 11	Columbus Day (Observed)	At 2 a.m. on this date in 1492, the expedition lead by Christopher Columbus sighted land somewhere in the Bahamas. His voyages led to widespread European exploration and settlement of the Americas.
November 11	Veterans Day	This day honors all veterans of the U.S. armed forces.
January 17	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Observed)	A leader of the American civil rights movement in the 1950’ and 1960’s, his efforts contributed to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
February 12	Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday	Elected president in 1860, he was commander-in-chief during the Civil War. In 1863 he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that slaves held in the rebellious state “are, and henceforward shall be free.”
February 15	Susan B. Anthony’s Birthday	An early suffragist, organized campaigns across the U.S. advocating the rights of women to vote, to get an education, and to own property. 14 years after her death, the 19 th Amendment to the Constitution granted women the right to vote was adopted.
February 22	George Washington’s Birthday	Was inaugurated as the first president of the United States in 1789.
March 4	Casimir Pulaski Day	Born in Poland in 1747, he came to America in 1777 and joined forces with General Washington. After saving Washington’s life, Pulaski was made brigadier general of the American Cavalry.

March 17	The Great Hunger	When a fungus ruined the potato crop in Ireland three out of four seasons between 1845 and 1849, an estimated 750,000 Irish people died from disease and starvation and another 2 million emigrated to Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States. Also known as the Great Potato Famine.
April 9	Prisoner of War Remembrance Day	Commemorates the date during World War II when the largest number of Americans were captured in the Conquest of Bataan.
April 13	American's Creed Day	William Tyler Page, a messenger in the U.S. House of Representatives, wrote the Creed in 1917.
April 19	Patriot's Day	Established to mark the beginning of the Revolutionary War at Lexington in 1775.
April 22	Earth Day	Founded in 1970 by former Wisconsin governor and U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson to organize a national public demonstration that would bring attention to the environment.
April 22	Arbor Day	Began in the 1800's to promote conservation and beautification of the environment. All 50 states observe Arbor Day with annual tree planting ceremonies.
June 14	Robert La Follette Sr. Day	Widely regarded as Wisconsin's most distinguished political leader – he served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1885 to 1891, as Wisconsin Governor from 1900 to 1906, and in the U.S. Senate from 1906 until his death in 1925.