

DATE: November 30, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Multi-Faith Calendar

ORIGINATOR: Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent, Operations and Learning Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Naima Abbas, Youssra Badr, Clarice Anderson, Priti Bagga, Suhkneet Brar, Rachel Miller, Ann Parker, Elizabeth Shen, LeThu Tran

REFERENCE: [HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity Board Policy](#)
[AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments Province of Alberta. \(2012/2020\). Education Act. Statutes of Alberta, 2012. Chapter E-0.3, Current as of August 31, 2021. Alberta Queen's Printer](#)

ISSUE

The Division has created a Multi-Faith Calendar for schools to use to support welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environments for students, staff and families.

BACKGROUND

At the December 8, 2020, Board Meeting, 14 members from the Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA), The Green Room (a youth group from within the IFSSA) and Sangat Youth YEG advocated to the Board for the creation of an interfaith calendar (also referred to as a multi-faith calendar). Such a calendar would recognize faith-based days of significance beyond Canadian statutory and Christian-based holidays and would reflect the increasing diversity across our Division.

CURRENT SITUATION

A draft calendar was created based on a scan of other Canadian school jurisdiction multi-faith calendars and [2021 Federal Census data](#) of predominant religions in Canada. The census indicated the following:

- 63.2 per cent of respondents identified as Christian
- 26.3 per cent of respondents identified as having no religious affiliation
- 3.7 per cent of respondents identified as Muslim
- 1.7 per cent of respondents identified as Hindu
- 1.4 per cent of respondents identified as Buddhist
- 1.4 per cent of respondents identified as Sikh
- 1.2 per cent of respondents identified as other religious or spiritual traditions
- 1.0 per cent of respondents identified as Jewish

In spring 2021, the draft of the Multi-Faith Calendar was shared at two collaborative meetings with the representatives from the advocating organizations and feedback was gathered.

A second round of feedback was collected from approximately 10 multicultural/multi-denominational community agencies to provide further input regarding the draft Multi-Faith Calendar.

Feedback received from consultations included:

- Suggestions for the format and design of the calendar.
- Suggestions for two additional dates to be included in the calendar.
- A desire to have holy days of significance such as Eid acknowledged through the designation of a non-instructional day for students.
- Expressions of gratitude for the creation of a Multi-Faith Division calendar.

The Multi-Faith Calendar is intended to be a planning tool for schools. Division schools will use the Multi-Faith Calendar as a reference when planning school events and activities. For example, a school will use this calendar to avoid, when possible, planning parent-teacher meetings, exams or project deadlines on holy days to support families.

The *Education Act* enables students to be excused from attending school for religious reasons. It states:

Compulsory education

7 (4) *Notwithstanding subsection (1), a student is excused from attending school on a day on which the school is open if*

(b) the day is recognized as a religious holiday by the religious denomination to which the student belongs. (Province of Alberta, 2012/2020, p. 22)

There will be no academic penalty for students who are absent from school for religious reasons.

KEY POINTS

- The calendar was developed using feedback from stakeholder groups and community agencies, statistical data on religions in Canada, and examples from other Canadian school Jurisdictions.
- Students, families and community groups have told us how important it is for them to see themselves in Division policies and practices.
- Knowing the needs and nature of their communities, school staff will use the calendar as a reference when planning school events and activities.
- This calendar supports schools in providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students and staff in accordance with Policy AB.EP.

NEXT STEPS

- The Multi-Faith Calendar will be available to students and families through epsb.ca
- The Multi-Faith Calendar has been provided to schools with key messages to support the use of the calendar including best practices to support students who are absent from school for religious purposes.
- Professional learning will be made available to staff to support the implementation of the Multi-Faith Calendar.
- The Multi-Faith Calendar will be updated annually.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

Attachment I Multi-Faith Calendar 2021-2022

AP:kd

SUBJECT: Multi-Faith Calendar
2021–2022 School Year

LEGEND:

- = Indicates a Holy Day of high significance for the stated religion. Schools will avoid scheduling certain events/activities on these days (e.g., scheduling exams, project completion dates).
- = Indicates that the High Holy Day begins the evening prior to the listed date. School will avoid scheduling certain events/activities on these evenings (e.g., parent-teacher interviews, school performances). Days of significance in the Bahá'í, Jewish, Islamic, and Wiccan faiths begin at sunset on the evening prior to the date shown and end at sunset on the last day shown.
- +/- = Holy Day of high significance may shift by a few days before or after the indicated date due to the use of a purely lunar calendar instead of a solar or lunisolar calendar. The date provided can be used for planning and will be confirmed closer to the listed date. Days of significance in the Islamic/Hijri calendar are based on a lunar calendar.

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 2021	4	Paryushan Parva ●	Jainism
	7-8	Rosh Hashanah ● ○	Judaism
	10	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hinduism
	11	Nayrouz	Christianity (Coptic Orthodox)
	11	Samvatsari Parva/Daslakshan Parva begins	Jainism
	16	Yom Kippur ● ○	Judaism
	19	Daslakshan Parva ends	Jainism
	21	Sabatt of Mabon	Wiccan
	22	Mabon	Wiccan
	21-27	Sukkot	Judaism
	28	Shemini Atzerat	Judaism
	29	Simchat Torah	Judaism

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
OCTOBER 2021	7	Sharad Navaratri begins	Hinduism
	13	Durga Ashtami	Hinduism
	15	Dassehra/ Vijaya Dashami/Dasara ●	Hinduism
	19	Mawlid-al-Nabiy	Islam
	20	Installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji	Sikhism
	20	Pavarana	Buddhism (Theravada)
	24	Karva Chauth	Hinduism
	31	Samhain	Wiccan

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
NOVEMBER 2021	4	Sigd	Judaism
	4	Bandi Chhor Divas ●	Sikhism
	4	Diwali/Deepavali ●	Hinduism
	4	Diwali/Lakshmi Puja ●	Jainism
	5	Gujarat New Year/Enlightenment day of Gautam Swami	Jainism
	6	Bhai Tika	Hinduism
	6	Birth of Báb ● ○	Bahá'í
	7	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh ● ○	Bahá'í
	9	Ladh Panchami ●	Jainism
	19	Guru Nanak Jayanti (Birth Date) ●	Sikhism
	24	Guru Tegh Bahadur (Martyrdom)	Sikhism
	26	Day of the Covenant	Bahá'í
	28	Advent begins	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	28	Ascension 'Abdu'l-Bahá	Bahá'í
	28	Nativity Fast begins	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
29	First day of Hanukkah ● ○	Judaism	

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
DECEMBER 2021	6	Last day of Hanukkah	Judaism
	8	Bodhi Day	Buddhism
	21	Solstice	Indigenous
	21	Yule	Wiccan
	25	Christmas ●	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
JANUARY 2022	1	New Year	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	6	Epiphany	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	7	Christmas ●	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	9	Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti (Birth Date)	Sikhism
	13	Lohri	Sikhism
	14	Makar Sankranti (Start of Dhanu Sankranti) ●	Hinduism
	14	New Year	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	17	Tu B'Shvat	Judaism
	18	Mahayana New Year	Buddhism (Mahayana)
	19	Epiphany	Christianity (Julian Calendar)

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
FEBRUARY 2022	1	Lunar New Year ●○	Buddhism
	2	Imbolc	Wiccan
	5	Vasanta Panchami ●	Hinduism
	15	Parinirvana/Nirvana Day ●	Buddhism/Jainism
	16	Magha Puja Day ●	Buddhism
	28	Maha Shivaratri ●	Hinduism
	26-29	Ayyám-i-Há	Bahá'í

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
MARCH 2022	1-19	Bahá'í Fast	Bahá'í
	2	Ash Wednesday	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	3	Losar/Tibetan New Year	Buddhism (Tibetan)
	7	Clean/Pure Monday	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	17	Purim	Judaism
	17	Holi ●	Hinduism
	18-20	Hola Mohalla	Sikhism
	20	Naw Rúz	Bahá'í
	20	Ostara	Wiccan

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
APRIL 2022	2	Vasant Navratri ●	Hinduism
	3	First day of Ramadan ● ○ +/-	Islam
	10	Shri Ram Navami	Hinduism
	14	Holy/Maundy Thursday	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	14	Mahavir Jayanti (Birth Date) ●	Jainism
	14	Vaisakhi ●	Sikhism
	15	Good Friday ●	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	16-23	Passover ● ○	Judaism
	16	Theravada New Year	Buddhism (Theravada)
	17	Easter ●	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	20	First day Ridván ● ○	Bahá'í
	21	Holy/Maundy Thursday	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	22	Good Friday ●	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	24	Pascha/Easter ●	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	28	Yom HaShoah	Judaism
	28	Ninth of Ridván ● ○	Bahá'í

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
MAY 2022	1	Beltane	Wiccan
	1	Twelfth of Ridván ● ○	Bahá'í
	3	Eid al-Fitr ● ○ +/-	Islam
	4	Yom HaZikaron	Judaism
	5	Yom HaAtzmaut	Judaism
	16	Vesak/Wesak/Buddha Day ●	Buddhism
	19	Lag B'Omer	Judaism
	28	Ascension Of Bahá'u'lláh ● ○	Bahá'í
	29	Yom Yerushalayim	Judaism

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
JUNE 2022	5-6	Shavuot ● ○	Judaism
	5	Pentecost	Christianity (Gregorian Calendar)
	12	Pentecost	Christianity (Julian Calendar)
	16	Guru Arjan Dev Ji (Martyrdom)	Sikhism
	21	Litha	Wiccan
	21	National Indigenous Peoples Day/Solstice	Indigenous

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
JULY 2022	9	Eid al-Adha ● ○ +/-	Islam
	10	Martyrdom of Báb ● ○	Bahá'í
	13	Asalha Puja/Theravada Dharma Day	Buddhism
	30	First of Muharram	Islam

MONTH	DATE	DAY OF SIGNIFICANCE	REFERENCE
AUGUST 2022	1	Lammas	Wiccan
	18	Sri Krishna Janmashtami ●	Hinduism
	23	Paryushana Parva ●	Jainism
	31	Samvarsari Parva	Jainism
	31	Vinayak Chaturthi ●	Hinduism

PROPOSED RELIGIONS AND DATES FOR INCLUSION:

The last national census that identified religious affiliations is from 2011 and is summarized on the [Statistics Canada Website](#). The religions included in this calendar represent the religions in Alberta with more than a thousand followers during that census. Other religions with large worldwide populations include Caodaism, Confucianism, Muism, Shintoism, Taoism, Traditional Spirituality (Indigenous) and Zoroastrianism. Over a million Albertans identified no religious affiliations in the 2011 census.