



Administrative Memo

TO: Burlington School District Administrators
FROM: Superintendent Obeng
SUBJECT: Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days- School Year Calendar
DATE: May 21, 2018

Context:

BSD is committed to equity practices that include respect for religious Holy Days. Considering that no faith or religious practice is monolithic, it is difficult as a District to determine what is of primary importance to our students in regards to a religious holy day. Through dialogue with our community leaders, our equity staff, and Board of School Commissioners, we have determined that we need a practice that does not penalize our students for honoring their faith commitments.

Action:

Starting in the school year 2018-2019 and going forward, the days listed on the following “BSD Holy Days” document shall be considered excused absences for students wishing to practice their faith. Additionally, all staff and school buildings will observe the following best practices to ensure our students have the choice to engage in their faith practices without penalty:

- Refrain from scheduling any major school events on any of these dates, including in the evening.
- Do not schedule exams, tests, or any significant assignments on these dates without also providing provisions for students who need to be away.
- Avoid beginning to teach new content on these days unless you have planned to help students get up to speed.
- Avoid using these days as due dates for large projects.
- Teachers will make themselves available for Callbacks/School-wide Supported Study (if applicable) before and after the holy day.
- For attendance taking purposes, please use the code “Absence Excused” or AE.
- Athletic coaches and other co-curricular activity directors will honor these excused absences.

In cases where there is a discrepancy, staff should feel empowered to ask for communication (phone call, letter, text, email, etc.) from the student’s parent/guardian to confirm their participation. Please note that this procedural mandate is for the benefit of our students. Staff should please refer to HR practices regarding the use of personal days around their faith days.

Thank you for working to accommodate the needs of our students and create a more inclusive learning environment for all.

Superintendent Obeng

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courageous people. Join the journey!