



THE GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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William S. McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

To: Parents & PTA Leaders
From: William McKersie, Ph.D.
Date: August 17, 2015
Re: Jewish Holidays – 2015-16 School Year

Accommodating our students, their families, and staff who celebrate religious holidays not already addressed as part of the School Calendar, requires sensitivity, good judgment and some understanding of the significance of the holiday celebration to those observing. In accordance with Attendance Procedure E040.03 students may be excused from school and/or school activities for religious observation.

The Jewish Holidays in particular are celebrated by many of our families and staff and are not entirely accommodated for by the school calendar. Principals have received the direction that follows with regard to the Jewish Holidays. We encourage PTA's to consider these parameters as well when planning events and activities.

Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Sunday, September 13, 2015 and ends at sunset on Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Schools are closed on September 14th. This holiday is an important celebration of the Jewish New Year. While some Jewish families celebrate this holiday on one day, others celebrate it on two days, September 14th and September 15th. Athletic competitions should not be scheduled on these dates and tests or major assignments should not be given, or due, on these dates.

Yom Kippur is a solemn "high holy day" celebrated this year beginning at sundown on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 and ending at sunset on Wednesday, September 23, 2015. Schools are closed on September 23rd. Athletic competitions should not be scheduled on these dates and tests or major assignments should not be given, or due immediately following these dates.

In addition to testing, athletic competitions, and homework assignments, there should not be school meetings or PTA meetings scheduled during either of these two holidays as these are considered to be the highest Jewish holy days of the year.

The only other Jewish holiday that has particular import relative to school activities is **Passover**. The first and second evenings of this holiday are typically celebrated with a Seder, a large evening meal with special prayers. This year the first two nights of Passover occur on Friday, April 22, 2016 and Saturday, April 23, 2016. As during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, athletic competitions should not be scheduled on these dates.

Provided below is a list of the major Jewish holidays. Principals have been directed to work with individual families and staff to support their religious practices beyond the accommodations described above.

2015-2016 Jewish Holidays*

Rosh Hashanah	Monday, September 14, 2015 – Tuesday, September 15, 2015
Yom Kippur	Wednesday, September 23, 2015
Sukkoth	Monday, September 28, 2015 – Tuesday, September 29, 2015
Shemini Atzeret	Monday, October 5, 2015
Simchat Torah	Tuesday, October 6, 2015
Hanukkah	Monday, December 7, 2015 – Monday, December 14, 2015
Pesach (Passover)	Saturday, April 23, 2016 – Saturday, April 30, 2016
Shavout	Sunday, June 12, 2016 – Monday, June 13, 2016

*Jewish Holidays begin at Sundown on the night before the first day

WSM:lv

