

The District's policy on Religious Expression in the Instructional Program (#8360) is intended to nurture the development of knowledge and respect for the rights of all religious groups within our community.

We have worked hard to ensure an accurate representation of the religions found in our community. This calendar is not intended to include all religious observations. Some additional religious holidays may be shared with District staff in September for use in the instructional program as well as to maintain sensitivity to the needs of District students. If you have a question or suggestion for future calendars, please call the Communications Office at (716) 626-8009.

Below is a summary of the religious observations included on the calendar. Please note that: 1) * Indicates that observance begins at sundown the day before this date; 2) Hindu and Jain holidays are calculated on a lunar calendar and therefore are observed at different times in different regions of the country; 3) some religions have different sects which may celebrate different religious holidays on different dates.

BA = Baha'i; B = Buddhism; C = Christian; H = Hinduism; I = Islam; JA = Jainism; J=Judaism; O = Orthodox Christian; S = Sikh

* Observance begins at sundown day before

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September 16-17 Rosh Hashanah: *
New Year; begins 10 days of penitence ending on Yom Kippur. (J)

September 25 Yom Kippur:
Day of Atonement; a day of prayer, fasting and repentance. (J)

September 27 Mawlid al Nabi:
Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), c. 570 C. E. (I)

September 30 Sukkot: *
Festival of Booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest. (J)

October 7 Shemini Atzeret: *
Eighth and last day of Sukkot. (J)

October 8 Simchat Torah: *
Joyous festival in which the reading of the Torah is completed and its first book begun again. Symbolized by singing, dancing and marching around the synagogue with Torah scrolls. (J)

October 16 Birth of B'ab: *
Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin prophet founders of the Bahá'í faith. (BA)

October 17 Birth of Bahá'u'lláh:
Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Bahá'í faith in 1817. (BA)

October 24 Dussehra:
Celebrates the victory of good over evil: Lord Rama over the demon Ravan, and the Goddess Durga over a demon. (H)

November 12 Diwali:
Festival of Lights; one of four seasonal celebrations in India. (H & JA)

November 27 Birth of Guru Nanak:
Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, founder of the Sikh faith and first of the Ten Gurus, was born in 1469 CE. He was an accomplished poet; 974 of his hymns are contained in the Sikh Scriptures, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. (S)

December 8 Bodhi Day:
Celebration of the enlightenment of Buddha, c. 596 B.C.E. (B)

December 8-15 Hanukkah:
Festival of lights; eight-day commemoration of the rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E. The eight candle Menorah is lighted. (J)

December 25 Christmas: *
Celebration of the birth of Christ. (C)

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January 7 Orthodox Christmas:
Eastern Orthodox Churches, which use the Julian calendar to determine feast days, celebrate Christmas on this day. (O)

January 15 Birth of Guru Gobind Singh:
Anniversary of the birth of the tenth guru. (S)

February 14 Ash Wednesday:
Begins Christian Lent; name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence. (C)

March 8 Maha Shivaratri:
Mahashivaratri is dedicated to Shiva, one of the major deities to whom Hindus direct their devotion. The night before the feast, Hindus recite texts, sing and tell stories in honor of this God whose dynamic cosmic dance creates, preserves, destroys, and recreates the world. (H)

March 11 Ramadan: *
The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sunup to sundown in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). (I)

March 20 Naw-Rúz: *
Bahá'í and Iranian New Year. (BA)

March 24 Purim: *
Feast of Lots; celebrates the deliverance of Jews in ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them. (J)

March 24 Palm Sunday:
Celebrates the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem during Passover. This also commemorates the beginning of Holy Week. (C)

March 29 Good Friday:
The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion. (C)

March 31 Easter:
Celebration of the resurrection of Christ. (C)

April 13 Baisakhi/Vaisakhi:
The first day of the solar year, celebrates the harvest. It is especially important in North India. (S)

April 17 Sri Rama Navami:
Ramanavami celebrates the birth day of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the God Vishnu. During the previous eight days, Hindus read the Ramayana, a Hindu epic, which tells the story of Rama. (H)

April 21 Ridván: *
Commemorates the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh to his followers in 1863. Work is suspended for the 1st, 9th and 12th day. (BA)

April 22-30 Pesach*/Passover:
Marks the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt; Seder ceremonies retell the story and celebrate freedom. (J)

May 5 Pascha/Orthodox Easter:
Orthodox Easter for Christians who follow the Julian calendar, celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. It initiates the 50 day period culminating in Pentecost. (O)

May 10 Eid al-Fitr: *
Festival of the breaking of the fast of Ramadan. (I)

May 24 Declaration of the Báb: *
The Declaration of the Bab commemorates the day in 1844 on which He announced His identity as The Bab, or Gate, the Herald of the new age. (Baha'i's suspend work on this day) (BA)

May 29 Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh: *
Marking the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. (BA)

June 10 Martyrdom of the B'ab: *
Anniversary of the martyrdom of the B'ab, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, in 1850. (BA)

June 12-13 Shavuot: *
Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and Commandments at Mt Sinai. (J)

June 16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev:
Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 C. E., the fifth guru who had built the Golden Temple of Amritsar. (S)

August 13 Tisha B'Av: *
A day of mourning and repentance in remembrance of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. (J)