Date: June 18, 2019
To: All Employees
From: Russell Lee Sung, Deputy Superintendent
Subject: Student Observance of Religious Holidays and Activities

This memo provides an important reminder and guidance regarding the observance of religious holidays and participation in religious activities by our students. All employees must be knowledgeable of these policies as well as the specific dates of religious holidays each school year.

It is the overall intent of the state law and local policies that students not be negatively impacted or punished for the observance of religious holidays and activities.

**Student Absences**

An absence due to a religious observance or to participate in religious activities is considered as an excused absence.

Education Code 48205 and Board Policy 5113 states:

> “A pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is for justifiable personal reasons such as observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil’s religion, attendance at religious retreats...”

Education Code 46014 and Board Policy 5113 states:

> “Pupils, with written consent of their parents or guardians, may be excused from instruction in order to participate in religious exercises...”

**Makeup Work**

If a student has an excused absence due to religious observance or activity, Board Policy 6154, 5113 and Education Code 48205 requires the following related to makeup work:

- “Students who miss work because of an excused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided.”
- “As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence.”
- “Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time.”
Calendar Planning and Avoiding Conflicts

When calendar planning and scheduling instructional and non-instructional activities, Administrative Regulations 6141.2 states the following:

“Staff shall make every effort to schedule one-time events, such as examinations, school-sponsored trips, special laboratories, picture taking days and class parties, to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays of all faiths.”

While this policy does not specify all examples, the intent of the policy is to avoid scheduling significant one-time events, instructional and non-instructional, that conflict with religious holidays. This is particularly necessary when students and families of that religion are represented in your school community. In addition, it is recognized that there are events and circumstances outside our influence or control such as league sponsored athletic contests, tournaments or other competitions.

Based on the intent of the policy, students should not be pressured into attending a school-related activity in lieu of observing their religious holiday or penalized for their religious observance.

2019-2020 Religious Holidays

Our policy relates to all religions observed by our students. To assist in planning and greater understanding, religious holiday information and dates are provided for major Jewish, Islamic and Christian religions. A calendar for all religions is attached and may be found online at http://www.interfaith-calendar.org.

Jewish Holidays

All Jewish holidays start at sundown. Therefore, students are not available for activities starting in the afternoon the day before the holiday is listed on the calendar and remain unavailable until the morning after the holiday ends. Dates of the Jewish holiday observances change every year.

In planning for the 2019-2020 school year, please use the following dates for Jewish religious observances:

- **Rosh Hashanah** - Students who observe this holiday are unavailable beginning at sundown on Sunday, September 29, 2019 through Tuesday, October 1, 2019, returning Wednesday, October 2, 2019.

- **Yom Kippur** - Students who observe this holiday are unavailable beginning at sundown on Tuesday, October 8, 2019 through Wednesday October 9, 2019, returning Thursday, October 10, 2019.

- **Passover** - Students who observe this holiday are unavailable beginning at sundown on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 through Friday, April 10, 2020, returning Saturday, April 11, 2020.

Islamic Holidays

Islamic holidays are observed by Muslims and start in the evening. Therefore, students are not available for activities starting in the afternoon the day before the holiday is listed on the calendar and remain unavailable until the morning after the holiday ends. Dates of the Islamic holiday observances change every year.
In planning for the **2019-2020 school year**, please use the following dates for Islamic religious observances:

- **Ramadan** - Students who observe this holiday fast (no food and no liquids) during daylight hours for 30 days. Allow students to study in the library or elsewhere during lunch. Monitor students for overheating or dehydration in excessively hot weather. In 2020, Ramadan will begin at sundown on Thursday, April 23 through Saturday, May 23, 2020.

- **Eid al-Fitr** - Students who observe this holiday attend early morning prayers on Sunday, May 24, 2020.

- **Eid al-Adha**
  - Students who observe this holiday are unavailable beginning at sundown on Saturday, August 10, 2019 through Sunday, August 11, 2019.
  - Students who observe this holiday are unavailable beginning at sundown on Thursday, July 30, 2020 through Friday, July 31, 2020.

**Christian Holidays**

In planning for the **2019-2020 school year**, please use the following dates for Christian religious observances:

- **Ash Wednesday** - Students who observe this holiday are allowed to have ash on their forehead during the school day. Ash Wednesday will be on Wednesday, February 26, 2020.

- **Good Friday** - Students who observe this holiday may attend a religious service during the school day. Good Friday will be on Friday, April 10, 2020.

- **Easter** - Sunday, April 12, 2020.

Thank you for your attention to these policies and respecting the religious activities of our students. Please contact your site administrator for questions or clarification.

**Attachments:**

- CA Education Code 46014
- CA Education Code 48205
- Board Policy 5113
- Board Policy 6115
- Board policy 6154
- Administrative Regulations 6141.2
- Interfaith Calendar 2019 and 2020