

Advantages and Disadvantages for the two options

Option 1 - Add Diwali and Eid

Advantages

1. Continues the current religious holidays adding Diwali and Eid. This means adding one day to the end of the school year in 2023-2024
2. No religious holiday is "taken away" from those who currently enjoy them
3. Members of the Hindi community especially did not want others to lose their holidays in order to add one of theirs (eg., substitute Diwali for Good Friday)
4. In a time of increasing anti-semitism in our schools, Jewish students would continue to have their holidays off not having to be singled out by missing school for Yom Kippur for example.

Disadvantages

1. Judgements are made among religious celebrations deeming some more significant than others. For example, Orthodox Holy Thursday is not viewed as as significant as traditional Good Friday celebrations
2. This list of celebrations is "incomplete" and will have to be reevaluated periodically to reflect changing demographics. For example, Lunar New Year is not considered to be major while some districts like aHopkinton have it off
3. Not everyone in Natick belongs to a major faith community or any faith community at all. This may appear to force religious celebrations on them,

Option 2 - No Religious Holidays

Advantages

1. All religious celebrations appear to be on equal footing as judgements are not made vis a vis their significance
2. No days are added to the school year
3. This assumes family and student initiative. Decisions re: religious holidays and school attendance are placed in the hands of families
4. This will be less disruptive to plans to add regular professional development days/ weekly early release days
5. Students begin to take responsibility for their participation in their traditions. It is not a given based on an automatic day off from school
6. The district continues to support the religious expression of its members by offering supports to make religious holiday celebrations possible without detriment to students' academic success. Arts and sports activities do not happen on category 2 days of religious holidays

Disadvantages

1. Given that change is hard, members of religious communities may perceive this option as the district nullifying their celebrations, subtracting from their importance.
2. In a climate of anti-semitic and religious discrimination, students who take off school for religious celebrations may be subject to harassment and bullying