

NPS Holiday, School work and Religious Service Observances Listening Sessions:

Parent/Community Session Notes:

- Tuesday, April 5th
- 18 attendees
- Presentation by Dr. Nolin and members of the Policy Subcommittee

Notes:

/Being seen is important

/My children have asked for this and they are tired of having to ask again for their holiday to be recognized.

/Adding more days is too much on families and work schedules

Feedback from Survey (2 responses)

Was tonight helpful?

Yes it was nice seeing other families feel the same way that the education piece is more important than taking off the actual holiday; nice to hear how appreciative families are of how Natick tries to educate everyone on various holidays

Can you share one important idea or question that you will take from tonight?

Can you put a policy in place no homework or test on a holiday? Would help everyone feel included; but adding 6 more holidays is too many

The need to keep a balanced sense of educational and family needs

Optional: Please share your secular and or cultural/religious tradition

Jewish (husband is catholic)

Jewish, fall holidays and Passover, mainly

Monday, May 16th - Staff Holiday Homework Calendar Discussion at Kennedy 2:15 - 3:15 p.m.

- Approx 10 staff attended
- Equity perspective - several felt it was important to include Diwali and Eid
- Also curious about schools who have decided to go to federal holidays only
- Homework has not been an issue on these days for 5th and 6th grade. Very sensitive.
Sometimes give long range assignments so that kids who do not celebrate at a certain time

can do the work, others who do have the time they need to complete the task - good for teaching them planning too.

- Asked about how many students need to be out to be considered a low day of attendance
- Teachers need to calendar the whole year early in the school year - first 2 weeks - decide when we will do star renaissance, what unit when, $\frac{1}{2}$ days drop curriculum and do SEL - then MCAS in March/April and we are only $\frac{2}{3}$ done w/ the curriculum.
- Start and Stop of the beginning of the school year - in some ways it can build stamina, in others it is choppy and disruptive to digging into the work
- Anecdotally it feels as if there been an increase in kids being out around certain holidays - if kids don't have school on a random Tuesday, family takes the Monday off too and makes it into a long holiday - difficult from teacher perspective with kids in and out all year

Monday, May 23rd - Student Holiday Homework Calendar

Discussion at Kennedy 2:15 - 3:15 p.m.

- Approx 12 students attended
- Like learning about new cultures and sharing their own

Tuesday, May 10th NHS - Optional discussion with Dr. Nolin re: religious holidays 7:30 - 8:10 a.m.

- Was this recorded?

Student Meeting with Dr. Nolin at NHS - 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.

- 100 students over 3 lunch periods
- Group of Freshman admitted not knowing about some of the holidays, would like to learn
- One student spoke about her experience of EID and it falling every year near finals. Stress of missing the day, making it up especially at such a critical time
- Even when you know it is excused... you know that you will have a ton of catch up work so sometimes it is not possible or doesn't feel feasible.
- Very sympathetic to friends who have had to deal with this year over year.

