

NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Committee Meeting
January 23, 2023
6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Posted Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 @4:10PM, Reposted on Monday, January 23, 2023 @8:40AM

Open Meeting 6:00PM, Executive Session 6:05PM, Open Session 6:45PM. Virtual Meeting Accessed Via: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2038566119?pwd=TmtsdxgXenQ0YXRlN1FicHVpd3hEZz09> Meeting ID: 203 856 6119 Passcode: 987179 One tap mobile +13126266799,,2038566119# US (Chicago) +16465588656,,2038566119# US (New York) Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 646 558 8656 US (New York) Meeting ID: 203 856 6119 Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2038566119?pwd=TmtsdxgXenQ0YXRlN1FicHVpd3hEZz09> . If any member of the public, attending the meeting virtually, wishes to take advantage of public speak, they should email the School Committee Chair, Cathi Collins (cacollins@natickps.org), one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Your email should include your name, town and your request to be called upon during the public speak portion of the agenda. The School Committee Chair will then announce your name and you will be unmuted and prompted to turn on your video for your opportunity to share your remarks. Per our public speak policy, each speaker will have up to 3 minutes.

Posted In Accordance with Provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25

OPEN SESSION

- Roll Call
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Moment of Silence
- Announcements

EXECUTIVE SESSION - this portion of the meeting is not open to the public

1. To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto;
2. To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Superintendent)

PUBLIC SPEAK

Public Speak is scheduled for a period of fifteen minutes. Each speaker will be permitted a maximum of three minutes during which time they can speak about topics within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. All remarks will be addressed through the School Committee Chair. Public Speak is not a time for debate or response to comments by the School Committee.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Acceptance of Dictionaries from Natick Rotary
2. METCO Expansion Discussion and Vote

REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES/CONCERNS

- Teacher Representative
- Student Representative

SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1. Warrant Review
2. LGBTQ+ Resolution

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Donations
2. Approval of School Committee Minutes and Executive Session minutes of December 5, 2022

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Student Services Staffing Update
2. Overview of Proposed FY24 Technology Budget
3. Update on the MSBA Statement of Interest
4. Overview of Proposed FY24 Transportation Budget
5. Overview of Proposed FY24 NPS Budget
6. Family and Community Engagement Center Discussion
7. Update on Holiday Calendar and Homework Policy

Agenda items will be addressed in an order determined by the chair. Times are approximate.

ITEM TITLE: To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto;

DATE:

ITEM TYPE:

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND

INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ITEM TITLE:	To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Superintendent)
DATE:	
ITEM TYPE:	
ITEM SUMMARY:	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE:	Acceptance of Dictionaries from Natick Rotary
DATE:	12/19/2022
ITEM TYPE:	Action
ITEM SUMMARY:	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE: METCO Expansion Discussion and Vote

DATE: 1/23/2023

ITEM TYPE: Action, Report, Discussion

ITEM SUMMARY: **LINK** to memo from Rasheedah Clayton

LINK to Superintendent's Presentation

Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.

BACKGROUND

INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ITEM TITLE: Warrant Review

DATE: 1/23/2023

ITEM TYPE: Report

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ITEM TITLE:	LGBTQ+ Resolution
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Action, Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to Resolution
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE: Donations

DATE: 1/23/2023

ITEM TYPE: Action

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
Donation Report	1.618.2023_School_Committee_Donation_Letter.pdf	Cover Memo



**Natick Public Schools
Central Office**

Dr. Anna Nolin, Superintendent
Timothy Luff, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Peter Gray, Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Susan Balboni, Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation

To: Dr. Anna Nolin, Superintendent
From: Dr. Peter Gray, Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Date: January 18, 2023
Re: Acceptance of Donations

Please request School Committee to accept the following donations:

<u>Source/Donation</u>	<u>Amount/Value</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Vivantio	\$400	Two Dell laptops to be used by the Robotic Team
Vivantio	\$1,500	One-time cash donation to assist the Robotics Team in procuring future parts and supplies

Natick Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, physical and intellectual differences, immigration status, or homeless status.

Natick Schools Central Office:

13 East Central Street
Natick MA 01760

<http://www.natickps.org>

508•647•6500 (phone)

508•647•6506 (fax)

www.facebook.com/natickps

ITEM TITLE: Approval of School Committee Minutes and Executive Session minutes of December 5, 2022

DATE: 1/23/2023

ITEM TYPE: Action

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
12-5-22 Draft	12-5-22_Draft.pdf	Cover Memo

Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
December 5, 2022

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, December 5, 2022, at 6:15pm via an in-person and virtual meeting. Chair Collins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:16pm.

Members Present: Cathi Collins, Dr. Shai Fuxman, Elise Gorseth, Hayley Sonneborn, Catherine Brunell
Julie McDonough (Arrived at 6:17PM)

Members Missing: Dr. Donna McKenzie (Arrived during Executive Session)

Others Present:	Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Mr. Tim Luff	Deputy Superintendent
	Ms. Rose McDermott	Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
	Dr. Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
	Ms. Sue Balboni	Director of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
	Dr. Arthur Fergusson	Director of Social Emotional Learning & Equity
	Mr. Tim Cesarini	Teacher Representative (remote)
	Ms. Inkyoung Lee	Student Representative (remote)

Chair Collins moved for approval for the School Committee to enter into Executive Session for this purpose:

1. To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Superintendent)
2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with or to conduct collective bargaining sessions (Administrative Assistants)

Ms. Brunell seconded. Chair Collins called for a roll call vote:

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Ms. McDonough – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Ms. Gorseth – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn – Yes

Chair Collins – Yes

It was unanimously approved 6-0-0.

Chair Collins stated they would be returned to open session at 7:00pm.

The School Committee returned to open session at approximately 7:23pm.

Public Speak

Chair Collins had not received any requests via email. There was no one in person requesting to speak.

Announcements

Dr. Nolin Informed the community that on Saturday, November 19th, 38 Natick High School students traveled to Milton High School to audition for the MMEA 2023 Eastern District Festival, along with

approximately 900 other students from Eastern Massachusetts. There were 22 students from Natick accepted. Mr. Craig Chisholm, Director of Fine Arts and the students were in attendance and together they congratulated the students. They were very proud of their accomplishment. Dr. Nolin also informed the community about the Natick Innovation and Learning Summit that was had on Monday, November 30, 2022. Dr. Nolin gave a shout out to staff who ran professional development sessions for their colleagues. There was also PLC time for all in the afternoon.

Representative Updates/Concerns

Teacher Representative, Tim Cesarini, had nothing new to share. Student Representative, Inkyoung Lee, informed the Committee that last weekend a play was held, Little Shop of Horrors. Dr. McKenzie attended and stated that the singing and the show was amazing. Prior to Thanksgiving break the high school had their annual pep rally. It was great to have it again. The annual food drive ended, and they collected 5,000 items which surpassed their goal.

Dr. Nolin reviewed tonight's agenda.

Update on Social Emotional Learning and Response to Intervention

Dr. Nolin introduced Dr. Art Fergusson, Director of Social, Emotional Learning and Equity. He had provided prior to the meeting, a memo to the School Committee. He discussed Universal screening and that it provides an opportunity for the early identification of students who may be at-risk of developing SEB (social, emotional, and behavioral) challenges and students who could benefit from early intervention. Screening provides us a snapshot of our student's presentation in a moment in time and gives us an opportunity to assess student response to any existing tier 1 interventions. Dr. Fergusson explained that we screen to intervene. Starting this year, in response to the growing clinical needs of our students and developmental research, we've added the SAEBRS (Social Academic Emotional Behavioral Risk Screener) as part of our universal screening process primarily at the middle and high school levels. Dr. Fergusson also informed the School Committee that there have been significant increases in students needing assistance from our staff. We should be able to support the students. Dr. Nolin unveiled the new RTI webpage. She asked for feedback from families and how we can make any processes more family friendly. Parents will be contacted during the goal setting process for their inclusion in creating the goals.

Enrollment Update

Dr. Nolin provided an update. We are down seven students at elementary and up three students at middle school. We haven't seen any more bubbles. We may need to use reserve circuit breaker funding for all students.

Review Drafts of Proposed 2023-2024 School Calendars

Dr. Nolin reviewed the proposed calendars. Families like to plan the rest of their vacations for the rest of the year. Dr. Nolin informed the Committee that they will not be voting on the calendar until February. However, she is asking the Committee to consider two calendars. She wanted to signal to our families that there are two possible ends to the school year and that we are almost ¾'s into the second year of discussing the calendar being more inclusive to world religions. There is a policy in front of the policy committee that does make revisions as to the ways that we address all families of all religions. Dr. Nolin also gave her recommendation to the Policy Subcommittee of what she thinks the calendar should be.

This has been a long time sitting in draft. Those families are waiting to hear from us and see signals of inclusion and belonging in our school system. The Policy Subcommittee will review the holiday calendar. Ms. McDonough moved to postpone discussion of proposals or changes to religious observances in the Natick Public Schools school year calendar until the policy sub-committee has provided a report on its findings from their work on this topic over the past year and the full committee has had the opportunity to respond to those findings. Dr. McKenzie seconded the motion. Ms. McDonough felt it was premature to put this out at this time. The full Committee needs time to ask for additional data. The policy subcommittee should come back with their findings. Dr. McKenzie stated that the policy subcommittee is committed to having an inclusive and equitable calendar. The Policy Subcommittee is meeting on December 22nd. There is also another meeting in January. They will come back to the School Committee with recommendations. Dr. Fuxman added a friendly amendment to have the findings and recommendations discussed no later than February 6th. Ms. Gorseth seconded. Ms. McDonough would like an opportunity to receive information and be able to ask for additional work to be done. She doesn't believe she can accept that. Dr. Nolin is pushing them all to make a decision about this. Dr. Nolin reminded the Committee that we are almost two years into this and if we want to live our equity goals, we need to have some urgency. It's been difficult to lead on this process. At approximately 8:14pm Ms. Brunel motioned for a recess. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was approved by a vote of 6-1-0. Chair Collins opposed the recess.

The Committee returned to opens session at 8:20pm. Chair Collins asked for a vote on the motion. Dr. Fuxman revoked his friendly amendment. He offered a new amendment that the subcommittee has to come with findings no later than February 6th. Ms. McDonough accepted with the addition of the findings will be reported no later than February 6th. Dr. McKenzie accepted the amendment. Ms. McDonough adjusted her motion to include the amendment. Ms. McDonough moved to postpone discussion of changes to religious observances in the NPS school year calendar until the policy sub-committee has provided a report on its findings from their work on this topic over the past year and the full committee has had the opportunity to respond to those findings. The findings will be reported no later than February 6, 2023. Chair Collins asked for a roll call vote on the motion.

Dr. Fuxman – Yes

Ms. McDonough – Yes

Ms. Brunell – Yes

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Ms. Gorseth – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn – Yes

Chair Collins – No

It was approved 6-1-0.

Update on FY24 Budget

Dr. Gray gave the first proposed draft with data as of today. There are many unknowns and numerous committee meetings. Major drivers that we have no control over is fuel and utility costs. We are encouraged at the fact that as we go through this process, we will be able to come up with a budget that will be fair and equitable. Dr. Gray had provided the School Committee two documents with numbers and assumptions. This is a long journey through town meeting in April. We are going to have a webinar discussing how districts can budget for Chapter 70. He expects that Governor Baker will put forward his last budget and they will caution us not to be so optimistic. Dr. Gray informed the

Committee that along with our Town partners we are considering doing more joint meetings and more innovated ways to inform our constituents.

Parent Coordinating Council (PCC) Equity Working Group Discussion

Dr. Nolin discussed the PCC meetings and their worries about inequities, fundraising and opportunities. It's come up a lot over the years. It came up when Dr. Nolin was principal at the Wilson Middle School. This isn't a new conversation. The difference now is we have a strategic plan in place that says we will examine all these aspects of our practice and put them into play. We are trying to consider how we can address field trips that take a full day of school. Shouldn't we pay for that and make sure each student gets the same experience. Ms. McDonough believes they were very receptive to the idea. Chris Therrien, PCC member said that a lot of good information was gathered at last meeting. We should be able to make an equity working group.

Warrant Review

Chair Collins has signed 4 accounts payable warrants since November 10th which totaled \$1,481,032.25 and one payroll warrant of \$2,783,723.70. She expects the next payroll to be slightly higher because longevity payments will be made.

Action Items

1. Approve Policy Changes to IK-STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS, ILBA - DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS, IMB-TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS, JF-A-RESIDENCY POLICY, JICFB-BULLYING PREVENTION, JICK- HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, JJE-STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES, JRD-STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS, KDD- NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES, AD-MISSION STATEMENT, ADC-TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED, ADF-WELLNESS POLICY, JJA-STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, JJH-R-STUDENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS, JLCC-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, JRA-STUDENT RECORDS, IC/ICA-SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR, ID-SCHOOL DAY, IE-ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION, IGA-CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, IHAM-HEALTH EDUCATION, IHB-SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS (PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS), JB-EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, JC-ATTENDANCE AREAS, JCA-ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS, JEB-ENTRANCE AGE, JF-SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, JH-STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES, JHD-EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, JICFA-PROHIBITION OF HAZING, JICH-ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED, JRA-STUDENT RECORDS, IHBEA-ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, KF-PUBLIC USE OF NATICK SCHOOL FACILITIES, FLAG POLICY, MEDICAL POLICIES

The School Committee had been provided original and redlined versions. Dr. Nolin stated that these were mostly small changes that had been backlogged from last year. There are three medical policies. However, she asked how the Committee would like her to proceed because it has come to her attention that there may be some motions coming on the floor. The decisions were made by the policy subcommittee for the revisions. As well, our attorney Andy Waugh also vetted them. Ms. Brunell felt that this was all a surprise to her. She had never received a response to her email. Chair Collins asked for her to elaborate. Ms. Brunell sent the email on Friday and in the email, she asked questions and feels that this is going against our norms. Mr. Luff responded stating that we had received her email on Friday. He had a very long schedule on Friday, and it took him a long time to go through her possible motions. He also felt that the Committee should have the conversation and make the motions they felt appropriate, and we would assist in recommendations. Dr. McKenzie, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee was going to

respond to Ms. Brunell, which she did. Dr. McKenzie summarized Ms. Brunell's feelings that she feels the public needs more time to review policies before being voted on. Ms. Brunell recommends not voting on nine policies. Ms. Brunell is disagreeing with the decision made by the Policy Subcommittee because she didn't attend the last meeting and had she been there, she would have brought these up. Dr. Nolin is concerned because many of the policies are not grammatical changes. Even though Ms. Brunell was not present, they did review each of the extensive notes for each policy and then sent to our attorney again review them. Mr. Luff and Ms. McDermott then had to spend the day crosschecking them back and verifying notes. All of them were addressed except for two items that are small fixes. Dr. Nolin wanted to move forward with this backlog that has been before the public for two meetings. Dr. Fuxman asked for clarification. He proposed that they approve the ones they want to approve. Dr. McKenzie assured the public that the Policy Subcommittee carefully vetted the policies and went methodically through all of Ms. Brunell's suggestions before they made the recommendations. The public may have confidence in what the Subcommittee has recommended. Dr. Fuxman moved to approve Policy IK as stated in our documents. Ms. Collins seconded. Ms. Brunell moved to amend paragraph three in Policy IK to read "in addition to the periodic reports, parents and guardians will be notified when a student's performance warrants attention". This sentence would replace the current paragraph three. Ms. McDonough seconded. Chair Collins called for a vote. Ms. Brunell asked for a recess and Chair Collins stated they would return to open session at approximately 9:20pm. The School Committee returned to open session at 9:21pm. Ms. Brunell felt the language we are proposing in our policy is different from The Massachusetts Association of School Committees. Dr. Nolin explained that the reason we don't automatically accept/adapt their policies is that we have an attorney/firm that review all policies. Our public speak policy was a perfect example as to why you don't want to wholesale adopt MASC policies. Sometimes the attorneys have a different way to look at policy changes because they look at all our policies. A lot of these pieces were just updating citations. Ms. Brunell feels we need to be very sensitive about the communication with parents. Dr. Fuxman withdrew his motion. Chair Collins asked for a vote on Ms. Brunell's amendment. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-0. Ms. Brunell moved that we pull Policies, IMB, JF, JJE, ADF, IH, AM, JC, JCA and JF from tonight's vote. Ms. McDonough seconded. Chair Collins motioned to approve all of these and anything that needs to change shall come back to the Policy Subcommittee which already took most of the comments for consideration. Dr. Fuxman seconded. Ms. McDonough motioned to approve the policies that haven't been named by Ms. Brunell. Dr. Nolin relisted the policies that Ms. Brunell had read. Ms. Brunell seconded. Chair Collins called for a vote on Ms. McDonough's motion of removing all those named by Ms. Brunell and voting affirmatively on all the rest. The motion was passed by a vote is 7-0-0. Dr. Nolin asked if this is the way they want to run their subcommittees? Dr. McKenzie, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee does not want to run the subcommittee like this. They vetted all these policies. They reviewed all of Ms. Brunell's edits. They had a quorum and voted. Subcommittees shouldn't make recommendations that have been voted on and then have one member that does not agree with the outcome and have everyone have to go back and re-edit them again. This does not seem the most productive way forward. Ms. Brunell did not agree and stated it was an unfair categorization. Some of these policies are shifting entirely. Dr. McKenzie asked if anyone on the full Committee had any questions warranting them being pulled from being voted on this evening. Dr. McKenzie reaffirmed that these were vetted by the subcommittee. Dr. Fuxman believes we have already had access to these policies already at the previous meeting and were there any changes made since then? No changes had been made. Dr. Fuxman fully supports that we vote these tonight. We reviewed them last meeting, the public has had them, the Policy Subcommittee has approved them and the idea that we must keep delaying things to make ourselves feel important is not a good way to

operate our committee. He was elected to make decisions and move the district forward. It's important not to get stuck in neutral and he plead to the Committee to vote on these tonight and do our jobs. Dr. McKenzie assured anyone again that these were vetted. Chair Collins is a MASC Officer, and she believes in MASC but she doesn't believe we should take everything that they say verbatim. We did our due diligence. Mr. Luff reminded the Committee that we have developed our policies based on Natick values and guidelines for many years. Mr. Luff's concern is that we have the Policy Subcommittee do the work and they voted for these policies. This is so we can then get to work on other things. Not everyone's voice is going to be accepted in terms of what they vote for but the Policy Subcommittee did incorporate recommendations. Dr. Nolin asked what is the point or role of the Policy Subcommittee if we are going to do the same work here that was already done? Ms. McDonough motioned to place the nine policies that we pulled on the 12/19 agenda with a limited discussion time. Chair Collins stated we don't need a motion for that.

At approximately, 9:55pm, Dr. McKenzie motioned to adjourn. Dr. Fuxman seconded. It was unanimously approved 7-0-0.

Anna Nolin
Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Rose McDermott
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Attest:_____

Documents Provided in Novus Agenda and materials used at this meeting:

Superintendent's Presentation

Dr. Fergusson Memo on Universal Screenings

Drafts of Two Proposed 2023-2024 School Year Calendars

Holiday and Cultural Observances Draft

FY24 NPS Budget and Assumptions

Enrollment Report

Policies: IK-STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS, ILBA - DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS, IMB-TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS, JF-A-RESIDENCY POLICY, JICFB-BULLYING PREVENTION, JICK- HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, JJE-STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES, JRD-STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS, KDD- NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES, AD-MISSION STATEMENT, ADC-TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED, ADF-WELLNESS POLICY, JJA-STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, JJH-R-STUDENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS, JLCC-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, JRA-STUDENT RECORDS, IC/ICA-SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR,ID-SCHOOL DAY, IE-ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION, IGA-CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, IHAM-HEALTH EDUCATION, IHB-SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS (PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS), JB-EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, JC-ATTENDANCE AREAS, JCA-ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS, JEB-ENTRANCE AGE, JF-SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, JH-STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES, JHD-EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, JICFA-PROHIBITION OF HAZING, JICH-ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY

STUDENTS PROHIBITED, JRA-STUDENT RECORDS, IHBEA-ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, KF-PUBLIC USE OF
NATICK SCHOOL FACILITIES, FLAG POLICY, MEDICAL POLICIES
School Committee Minutes of September 19, 2022, October 3, 2022, and October 17, 2022 and Executive
Session minutes of September 19, 2022 and October 3, 2022
New England Institute of Technology Information
Lil' Rhody Rumble Information
Donations
Revised School Handbooks with New Dress Code Policy
FY23 First Quarter Financial Update
FY23 Staffing Update
FY23 Grants Update
Budget Outlook Presentation for Town of Natick
FY23 – FY25 Natick Public Schools Budget Projections
MCAS Presentation with Update and NEAP Results
Tiered Focus Monitoring Report – Student Services Report
Enrollment Report

ITEM TITLE: Student Services Staffing Update

DATE: 1/23/2023

ITEM TYPE: Report

ITEM SUMMARY: **LINK** to Memo

LINK to Superintendent's Presentation

Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.

BACKGROUND

INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ITEM TITLE:	Overview of Proposed FY24 Technology Budget
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Report
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to budget presentation LINK to Superintendent's Presentation <i>Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.</i>
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE:	Update on the MSBA Statement of Interest
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Action, Report
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to Memo LINK to Superintendent's Presentation <i>Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.</i>
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE:	Overview of Proposed FY24 Transportation Budget
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Report, Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to Budget Presentation LINK to Superintendent's Presentation <i>Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.</i>
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE:	Overview of Proposed FY24 NPS Budget
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Report
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to Proposed FY24 Budget LINK to Superintendent's Presentation <i>Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.</i>
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE:	Family and Community Engagement Center Discussion
DATE:	1/23/2023
ITEM TYPE:	Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:	LINK to Memo LINK to Superintendent's Presentation <i>Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.</i>
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE: Update on Holiday Calendar and Homework Policy
DATE: 1/9/2023
ITEM TYPE: Report, Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY: **LINK** to Superintendent's Presentation
Please note changes may be made to presentation up until the meeting time.

**BACKGROUND
INFORMATION:
RECOMMENDATION:**

ATTACHMENTS:

Description File Name		Type
Listening Session presentation meeting notes October	Listening_Session_Presentation_(2).pdf	Cover Memo
Proposed Policy and SOP Holidays and Cultural Observances	Meeting_Notes_October_2021-July_2022_about_Religious_Holidays.pdf	Cover Memo
psc timeline	Proposed_Policy_and_SOP____Holidays_and_Cultural_Observances.pdf	Cover Memo
options considered religious holidays option 1 and 2	PSC_Timeline_on_Homework_Holiday.pdf	Cover Memo
notes from NPS listening sessions significant religious holidays identified other districts calendar summary holiday homework calendar summary	Options_Considered_at_the_SubCommittee_prior_to_the_Recommendation.pdf	Cover Memo
	Religious_holidays__option_1_or_option_2_(1).pdf	Cover Memo
	Notes_from_NPS_Holiday__School_work_and_Religious_Service_Observances_Listening_Sessions_.pdf	Cover Memo
	Significant_Religious_Holidays_Identified__(1).pdf	Cover Memo
	Other_Districts_Calendar_Summary_-_Sheet1.pdf	Cover Memo
	Holiday_Homework_Calendar_Summary_Document_(1).pdf	Cover Memo



Thank you for coming! We will begin at 7:05 p.m.
As we wait for people to enter the zoom, please consider these prompts:

- What was your favorite Holiday as a child and why it was so?
- What was/is your experience of holidays attending school as a student? What do you/did you know of others' experiences?
- What is your current experience of holidays and NPS?



AGENDA FOR THE EVENING

7:05 - Introductions and Goal of the Night

7:10 - Overview & Summary of our work thus far

7:30 - Break Out Rooms & Small Group Discussion

7:50 - Large Group Reflection & Continued Discussion

8:20 - Next Steps



MAIN GOAL

Tonight, we invite you to REFLECT, SHARE, LISTEN and CONSIDER ideas to support the most inclusive and respectful approach to our school calendar, holidays and school work.



At the end of the night, we hope to have:

- 1) a better understanding of desires in the community
- 2) shared with you what we have learned from local leaders and example calendars from other districts



OVERVIEW

The Policy Subcommittee, with Dr. Nolin, met with Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Coptic, Christian, Catholic and Interfaith leaders in Natick and the metrowest area. Please see the list of participants [here](#).

We met:

- To understand key religious observances for members of our school community, especially for minority groups*.
- To consider our current policy of religious observances and philosophy behind it.
- To explore options that committees and school boards across the country are enacting.

*If we missed your experience and please reach out.



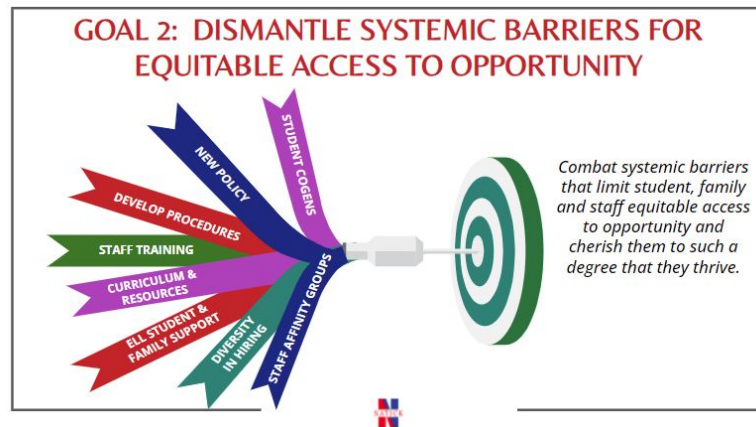
BELONGING AND NPS GOALS

Key areas:

Homework/Tests & Days off (e.g. Andover vs. Westborough)

Education about and for our full community: being seen/
representation/education

Changes for 2023-24 calendar





SPECIFICS IN THE CALENDAR

- We currently take 9 Federal and 1 State Holiday(s) off of school.
- We currently have 3 days off for Jewish, Catholic/Christian Holidays (that occur outside of winter break.)
- If we added Orthodox, Hinduism, Islamic Observances and Lunar New Year, we would add up to 6 more days off to our school calendar.

[A more complete list of observances*](#)

*In trying to compile a comprehensive list, we run the risk of leaving a group out unintentionally. We welcome your feedback and honesty!



OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) **Stay the Same and add recognition**- No change to current days off - Increase awareness of celebrations that are celebrated by smaller groups within our community, ensure that on those days, students are not penalized for taking time off to celebrate a holiday within their own tradition. (Natick Calendar Link [Here](#))
- 2) **More Inclusive** - “If it’s a major celebration for one group, we acknowledge it for all.” (Ashland Policy Link [Here](#))
- 3) **Observed Federal, State Holidays off and Winter Break Only** -- ensure that no tests or homework are due on religious holidays or the day after. (Andover Policy Link [Here](#))
- 4) Additional Ideas

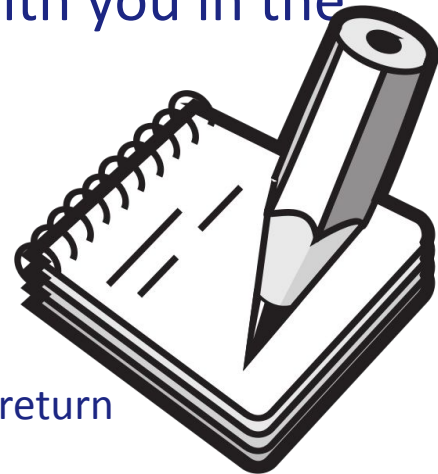


BREAK OUT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite holiday and why?
2. Why did you come tonight?
3. What challenged you, surprised you, resonated with you in the presentation?
4. What else should we consider?



Please have one person in your group ready to share a few notes when we return





NEXT STEPS -

- Listening sessions with staff and students forthcoming
- Weigh Input
- Continue to receive stakeholder feedback
- Develop a DRAFT policy for public consideration to be vetted at a future, televised public meeting
- This will inform the development of the 2023-2024 school year

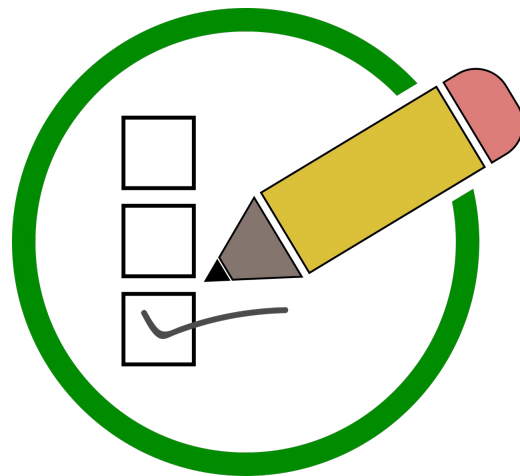


THANK YOU FOR COMING TONIGHT!

Click [here](#) for a 3 question survey

Three ways to reach the committee!

- [SPEAK Up](#), Natick,
- [Emails of the School Committee Members](#)
- Attend the School Committee's Virtual Coffee Hour on Tuesday May, 17th from 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO CONSIDER

Within the current legal framework, schools—their boards, administrators, teachers, parents and students—must make many practical decisions regarding religious holidays. This work can be done only by showing sensitivity to the needs of every student and indicating a willingness to steer between avoidance of all references to religion on the one hand and promotion of religion on the other.

- [from the Religious Freedom Center Pamphlet](#)

[Area District Calendar Summary](#)

[Westboro Policy and explanation of 3 categories of Holidays.](#)

These notes were compiled from the Policy Subcommittee Running Notes document and from the draft minutes wherever available.

10/14 Meeting Notes Holiday Calendar Discussion

Dr. Nolin indicated that there is a wide range of examples of what other committees have done to address the growing diversity in teacher and student populations. For example, Andover and Medford have moved to a model where there are no specific religious days off in their teacher contracts so that teachers can choose the days that are most important to them.

It was asked if the need for a policy like this was about student attendance or more about substitute availability? Dr. Nolin indicated that it was both and also in line with our desired state in our equity goals - belonging is the backdrop to equity. She expressed that currently, some of our students are not seeing their holidays represented in our calendar. They have asked for some grace around attendance in some cases and homework and tests in others. In our teacher contract, we have a phrase that allows someone the day off if they celebrate a religious holiday that we have not acknowledged and we need that for our students as well. Dr. Nolin referenced Mass Gen Law 151C.

The sub-committee suggested we meet with the Interfaith Clergy of Natick at the November 4th meeting. It was asked if we should make an effort to invite the public at large to the meeting to be sure that we had a diverse group of voices. Dr. McKenzie offered to reach out to her colleagues at Babson as well.

The sub-committee had a brief discussion about inclusion, how to include everyone without eventually leaving someone out.

10/28 Meeting Notes Holiday/Homework Policy

Dr. McKenzie suggested future dates for inviting guest speakers to discuss the Holiday Calendar: 11/9 at 12, 11/19 at 1:00, 11/22 at 1:00.

Dr. Nolin indicated that her attempt to make contact with the Interfaith Council in Natick had been unsuccessful as it disbanded during the Pandemic. She reminded the sub-committee that the goal of the policy is to have some grace for kids who are celebrating important religious holidays so that they do not feel that their school work is conflicting.

Dr. McKenzie asked how this policy will impact negotiations? Ms. Collins indicated that it would only impact negotiations if we are talking about days off and not about revising standards around homework and tests. A discussion about how districts determine their days off ensued. Dr. Nolin indicated that our Holidays for staff is determined by low attendance because of the number of substitutes that would be required. Dr. McKenzie asked, if we changed Good Friday, for example, would we have a low day of attendance? Ms. Collins wondered and then confirmed that the School Committee can change the calendar for the following year.

Dr. Nolin suggested that we focus on a homework and test policy first to see if it will lead to other changes in the future.

11/23 Meeting Notes Holidays Calendar Timeline

The Committee discussed the coming meetings with religious leaders in the next two Sub Committee meetings. Dr. McKenzie asked if we could create a list of questions to ask the guests. She also asked Dr. Nolin to send the Westborough calendar to the attendees so that we can understand their perspective on the most weighty Holidays for their tradition.

Ms. Collins referred to a few different approaches to this work and noted that we need to be sure that we do not end up including so many days that all of the work gets crammed into sections of the year.

Dr. McKenzie noted that there are religious holidays, like Ramadan, for example that we are going to want to include if we are going to create an inclusive calendar. She liked how the Westboro policy had four categories that would give teachers a road map. Dr. Nolin indicated that the district does have to argue with the teachers a lot about these kinds of things. They tend not to like having tests on different days because students may be able to get the answers. She referenced that the district has put out notices about Holidays and yet homework still gets assigned on key days. We have no teeth. A policy like this is also aligned with our emerging diversity goals. It would be good to get out ahead of this before it turns into a civil rights issue like it has in other districts.

If we have policies and calendars about anti bias and cultural celebrations, it's no longer like we have cancelled whatever else happened. It's just, this is what we do here. This is what our district needs to attend to and not in a one off way that teachers have to do now. Ms. Collins affirmed that a policy gives the district some teeth.

Dr. McKenzie noted that, using her own tradition as an example, that in order to make room for a more inclusive calendar, a holiday like Good Friday might need to come off the calendar. Dr. Nolin shared that it is difficult to say because that may be a holiday that would be a day of low attendance and so it could not be changed. Ms. Collins suggested that we look at rates of attendance for the holidays that we do not have off currently as another piece of data to consider. Ms. Brunell concurred with this thought because it would make it more personal to Natick instead of using another district's policy.

Dr. McKenzie informed the Sub Committee that Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day is going to be at the next full Committee meeting with the move to keep it as is this coming year but to encourage the Select Board and town to move on this together in the future. There is also a bill at the state level that we are going to track.

Dr. Nolin offered a quick summary of tasks from the meeting: Ms. Brunell will come with an aggregate of Anti Bias and Hate resources to consider. Dr. Nolin will come with a potential of

dates for focus groups - kids, parents, community at large. We'll have a couple of each and assign them to members of the committee. In the first of January, Dr. Nolin will shoot for bringing the SEL and Race and Culture surveys to the Committee. Dr. McKenzie will draft something with the Westboro Holiday policy to send to the guests and ask them to present the weightiness of any Holidays in their respective traditions.

Ms. Brunell asked if this Holiday Homework/Test Calendar would have any impact on bargaining? Ms. Collins stated that changing days off would. Policies around things like homework, tests and quizzes would not. She offered that we should keep the teachers in the loop that we are working on this calendar because it is good practice.

12/2 Meeting Notes Holidays Calendar Timeline

The Committee discussed the coming meetings with religious leaders in the next two Sub Committee meetings. Dr. McKenzie asked if we could create a list of questions to ask the guests. She also asked Dr. Nolin to send the Westborough calendar to the attendees so that we can understand their perspective on the most weighty Holidays for their tradition.

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12/29 Meeting Notes

Homework/Calendar Policy

At 1:14 Dencia Ratley, the Director of Religious and Spiritual Life from Babson College and Bilal Miraz, Muslim Chaplin joined the meeting virtually.

Dr. McKenzie welcomed our guest speakers and introduced the members. Next, Dr. Nolin thanked them for coming and provided a brief background of the task at hand. She indicated that Natick has been focusing on creating a more welcoming and belonging culture for our emerging diversity in our student body and their families. She referenced her own experience in Westboro, an extremely diverse suburb of Worcester, and how the school district created a really smart sensitive, cultural, religious homework and school event calendar that allowed families some flexibility. She indicated we were working on the same thing in Natick and were appreciative of their help in advising us.

Dr. McKenzie acknowledged that historically our calendar has been biased towards Judeo-Christian traditions and she welcomed their help in understanding some of the significance behind Holidays in other traditions represented in our student body. She invited them to speak to us from their experience in working with students at Babson around the sensitivity Dr. Nolin described.

Ms. Ratley first thanked us for doing this type of work. She explained her experience of creating an inclusive calendar at Babson came with some difficulty because Holidays are listed as different days on different websites. She encouraged us to be as inclusive as possible with the caveat that there will always be mistakes and needed adjustments. Her approach to that is to always welcome feedback and involve the people who know more about her than she does at times. She shared a story about a student who was Jade and who needed to return to her temple

for a family celebration. It meant that she needed an exemption to take an exam on another day and the student worked through Ms. Ratley's office to achieve that permission. The question that stood out to Ms. Ratley during the process was, "Can we accommodate this student?"

Mr. Miraz shared his personal experience being Muslim in the Framingham Public Schools. At that time, he would have to take the days off of school and they would not be excused absences. That bothered him because as a young student, things like perfect attendance was something to celebrate. He also shared on some Holidays, he would spend 1.5-2 hours a night accompanying their family at the Mosque. Students often have to decide if they are going to engage in their religious practice or their studies.

From a Muslim perspective, he would encourage us to think about two holiday - the ending of Ramadan and the beginning of the Hijjah period. He acknowledged that since it is a lunar calendar, the dates can be complicated to follow.

Mr. Miraz affirmed that the Westboro policy made a lot of sense to him especially because it allows you to put different Holidays into categories around who would be impacted. This allows for students to still be recognized in their traditions while allowing for some simplicity in the implementation.

He referenced how even within religions there is diversity of practice and traditions where there still might be gaps that are missed. He encouraged the committee to view him as a resource in the future around these more nuanced topics.

Dr. Nolin expressed a hope in creating a flexible manner of attending to students so they can advocate if they are observant of something that is not happening.

Mr. Miraz shared that districts are attending to this in different ways, for example, Cambridge Public Schools has now recognized both Eids for Muslims as days off.

Ms. Brunell asked if something like that is important because they have a majority of Muslim students or if it is something he thinks a district, with a smaller population, should consider as well. Mr. Miraz thought the categories again in the Westboro calendar were a great way to approach days how a Holiday is recognized. He referenced his experience with teachers who were accommodating around major holidays. He didn't need the day off, necessarily, he needed to know he would have the time and the ability to make the work up.

Dr. McKenzie asked him to speak about fasting and if there were things that we could provide as a district for students who were engaging in that practice. He suggested educating the staff to understand how student may feel excited to participate in something like this and if possible, to offer an alternative space so students could have the option to read or rest during the lunch period.

Mr. Miraz also offered that there is usually one or two prayer times that fall within a school day. As far as he has heard, it is usually up to the student to request a quiet space to pray for 5

minutes. Also, on Fridays, all post-pubescent males are required to listen to a sermon and participate in congregational prayer. He shared that he had a friend who left school, with his mother's permission every Friday at 12:30. If there is a group of students who would like to do this, you could think about offering a space. Dr. Nolin referenced that she's had two students request this over her 18 years in the district and we made a conference space available to them.

Dr. McKenzie noted that we were coming to the end of the time of the meeting. She wondered if there were other religions or resources that Ms. Ratley could advise us on. Ms. Ratley suggested we contact the Hindu chaplain at Tufts. She also noted that Diwali is celebrated at different times so in naming that on the calendar, they find a compromise. Ms. Ratley indicated that she works with the President's office on what Holidays are announced to the community. For example, any religious Holiday where a student is fasting or there is an obligation of participation, her office sends out a message indicating that there are members of our community observing this Holiday and encourages them to be respectful of it. She has found that to distinguish which ones to highlight to the entire community. In the future, she is hoping to send out a summary email once a month to remind people of the calendar that was sent at the beginning of the year. She emphasized that she always encourages people to contact the office if they have missed something or made a mistake. The sub-committee thanked the speakers for coming and Dr. McKenzie for arranging the meeting.

Ms. Ratley and Mr. Miraz left the meeting at 2:01

Ms. Brunell offered to speak to the Hindu Chaplain at Tufts if Dr. McKenzie could make the introduction.

Dr. McKenzie offered that the conversation affirmed the direction that we are going and the Westboro policy that Dr. Nolin had highlighted for us.

Dr. Nolin indicated that it may be time to poll the student and family population about what practices we have in our district and that she would follow up with our attorney to see if she can do that. She suggested we may be able to get the data from the census as well.

Dr. Nolin wondered if any of our early release days could be lined up with some of these Holidays where we won't be able to take a day off entirely but where families could be freed up to go to the evening services. The committee agreed that was a good idea if possible.

1/20 Meeting Notes

School Calendar/Homework and Homework Policy Update

Dr. McKenzie introduced two guests, Dr. Preeta Banerjee, Hindu Advisor at Tufts University and Ms. Swati Dave, resident of Natick. Dr. Banerjee shared that she was speaking as a mother with children attending public schools in another district, a practicing Hindu and a Hindu advisor to a University. Ms. Dave introduced herself as a resident of Natick for the past 16 year, a practicing

Hindu and a member of the boards of SPARK Kindness, Natick is United and The Natick Cultural District.

Dr. Banerjee shared a slide presentation entitled, Considering Hindu Celebrations within the Natick Public School Policy Equality and Cultural Observances Framework with the committee. Her presentation worked to give a foundation of Hindu celebrations as those taking place in the 4th largest after Christianity, Islam and unaffiliated and the consideration as such central to any conversations being had within diversity, equity and inclusion models. She noted that because of regional differences, at times Hindus are celebrating the same Holiday but call it different things and celebrated in different ways. She also noted that Jains and Sikhs also celebrate Diwali. She advised that Diwali be made a category 1 holiday, Navratri/Durga be made category 2 and Holi, category 3.

Ms. Davis concurred and asked the committee consider this because of the amount of Indian families moving to Natick and because some of the neighboring towns have this as well (Holliston, Hopkinton Ashland, Westborough). She is hearing from Natick residents asking, “How can we make this happen in Natick?”

The committee spoke about the strategic plan and efforts to make belonging a reality for the students. We also acknowledged that we do not know the % of Hindu students within Natick Public Schools. The speakers were asked questions about how the Holiday is celebrated, when the celebrations begin and if a ½ day for Diwali would be a step in the right direction. Dr. Banerjee responded that anything that acknowledges these holidays in a deeper way will benefit everyone in the community. She expressed that when it becomes part of the calendar, it becomes a teachable moment that can happen within schools and the community.

Dr. Nolin shared that we can poll our families but that it would need to be a voluntary response - a survey for example in the blast instead of an email in their inbox. Dr. Banerjee suggested to be careful to be sure that any poll is not worded in a way that makes the question comparative and that this is not about taking away another group’s holiday.

Ms. Brunell shared a document that compiled the decisions around religious holidays that some of the surrounding towns and members within Natick’s DART (our “like school” co-hort identified by the Department of Education) have done. She noted that there are districts moving to include Jewish, Hindu, Islamic and Christian traditions, there are some that are doing a mix and acknowledging those that are not days off by name on their calendars and there are some that have moved to a secular calendar - removing all religious holidays from the calendar and only take off Federal Holidays.

Dr. Banerjee responded by referencing two studies. One was about how meaning making, even when done without specific religious rituals, is a stress relieving experience essential for people today. The other was about if employees take time paid time off when the calendar is made more secular - Deloitte and McKinsey have reported on this - and the answer is no. For students that is translated into, I can’t go to temple because I have to do my homework. She encouraged the committee to think about who will galvanize behind celebration and meaning making in a culture that is already dominated by a Protestant based work ethic.

The committee considered the question about the impact adding more days off to the calendar for families and especially those who do not have many options for childcare or flexible work schedules. How do we weigh the pull towards diversity, equity and inclusion work that encourages acknowledging more of the religions in our district among the reality that taking more days in the midst of the year will create more of a hardship for some of our families?

The committee thanked the speakers for coming. Dr. Banjeree and Ms. Davis offered to be a resource as we continue to discuss. Both left the meeting at 1:35.

Dr. Nolin reminded the committee that for the students it is always about belonging. She said, it's not really about a day off but it's about being seen and for allowing their culture to be graded into something as they way the calendar is perceived. She referenced this is like celebrating Pride Month - at some point are we messaging in the Natick Public Schools that we value the diversity of our students. She indicated that with Ms. Collins, the work of Influence 100 group has taught them that when looking to build a diverse culture within staff, the district needs to have or create the diverse hallmarks that will help you attract the very people who value those hallmarks.

The committee asked if Diwali was moved to a ½ day, if that would have implications for staff members who celebrate but would have professional development. If some religions have full days off and others have ½ day does that signal something unintentional about the value of each faith? The committee acknowledged that it also wanted to reach out to the Coptic community in Natick. Also, that it had not discussed the Lunar New year.

The committee discussed some of the practical implications of including all of the days vs. moving to a secular model.

Dr. Nolin suggested that a question on the thought exchange could be “When you think about religious and cultural observances, what is important for the Natick School Committee to know about how your family experiences those days.” She reminded us that reshaping time for professional development takes place within the negotiations. For example, taking one full professional development day is the equivalent of 4 half days. We could get survey data, work through the negotiations with staff and know more about a few things by the 2023-2024 school year.

It was asked if it was too late to change anything for the next school year, 2022-2023. Dr. Nolin acknowledged that it is not operationally but that we need to bring this to the full committee and gather more information from the public.

Dr. Nolin summarized that she hears that the subcommittee is aligned in a philosophical way to honor more parts of our community while acknowledging their religious and cultural traditions and that we are stuck only by the DESE parameters and not wanting to elongate the school year beyond what is tolerable.

She suggested the subcommittee have a listening session where a presentation is made by this subcommittee to show what we have been working on to hear from interested constituents and to

share with our committee. The final vote of the calendar usually happens in April so consensus was reached to set a date at the end of March before Town Meeting starts. We will have a working meeting in the coming weeks to create that presentation.

The committee briefly spoke of the name on the NPS calendar for the Federal Holiday Columbus Day. Dr. Nolin suggested we keep it as is until we know more about the move the town is making. It was also pointed out that another community does not list the names at all but simply indicates the day is off because of a Federal Holiday. We will continue the conversation but at this point, we will share with the Chair of the full committee that we are not ready to make a recommendation.

Ms. Brunell left the meeting at 2:06 and rejoined on the phone at 2:08.

Dr. Nolin updated the committee on our Public Speak policy. Our attorney agreed that we needed to make public speak accessible to anyone with a disability, that the disability need not be proven but simply shared with the Chair. At that point, accommodations should be made for Public Speak. It was asked if we could revise our Public Speak to allow for members of the public to speak for items that are ON the agenda. Dr. Nolin advised that our attorney's opinion is that yes, we can revise our public speak to look like another district policy as long as that policy has been vetted legally.

3/24 Meeting Notes

School Calendar/Homework and Homework Policy Update

Dr. McKenzie introduced the Holiday calendar for Natick Public Schools and the decision before us.

Fr. Himes asked if the decision was bound by union contracts. Dr. Nolin indicated that we have to be in session 180 days and by law we have to be finished by June 30th.

Fr. Himes spoke about the Triduum celebration from the evening to Holy Thursday - Easter. He explained that the three days are one complete celebration. Even without a sanctioned service in the morning, Good Friday is a day of prayer, fasting and waiting for the Resurrection. Christmas, Easter, Holy Thursday and Good Friday are all considered high holidays in the church.

Fr. Himes acknowledged that we are a country that wants to celebrate religious diversity. He asked if it would be possible to add a day at the beginning or the end of the year. He asked this as an alternative to swapping Good Friday with another Holiday for example. Dr. Nolin acknowledged that as an option.

Dr. McKenzie spoke of districts like Andover and Maynard who have taken Good Friday and/or all of the Holidays off the calendar. She asked for his response to making Good Friday a ½ day.

He said he can conceive of that, but he wonders if it would be a slippery slope.

He encouraged us to think about the benefit having a day off allows for a person's consciousness. He spoke of religious freedom as a central tenet of our democracy and hopes that the district that would consider that as an aspect in this policy when considering any religion.

Ms. Brunell summarized the range of options the sub committee has researched from other districts.

Dr. McKenzie suggested that the benefit of the Westboro Policy puts some of the ownership on the parents to name what Holidays are important to their family.

Dr. Nolin asked how many families the church serves. He estimates about 6,000 families and even those that consider themselves culturally Catholic are most likely to attend on Good Friday and Easter. His guess is that Catholics may be the largest population of religions in Natick.

Fr. Himes thanked us and ended by saying that "as an American, I think there is room in the public square for religion." He remembered in Andover, years back they didn't schedule Good Friday and ended up with a low day of attendance for the district.

We thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Fr. Himes left at 1:37

We worked on the slides for the April 5th listening session.

Dr. Nolin gave a preview of her edits in the policy manual for next week's meeting.

6/14 Meeting Notes Holiday Calendar

We discussed input that we've received from members of the public after the listening sessions.

Strongest policy - Westboro policy

Categories

Make ups

Receive time off from school assignments

Last day of school before category - 2nd class meeting

Category 2 no homework on the last day of school before the holiday

Rosh Hanna

Yom Kipur

Thanksgiving

Diwali

Good Friday

Eid

Lunar New Year

Education component from the teachers

Catherine suggested that Dr. Nolin meet with teachers and bring that back to the committee, the other members disagreed.

Anna will bring dates back.

Nothing we can do for 2022

High frequency holidays -

Homework - Category 3

- Night before, the day of the holiday and the day after.

It's going to be School committee policy

Staff manual -

Catherine made a motion that the administration write a category 3 - homework policy to ensure that students do not receive homework/tests in the 2022-2023 school year on major holidays - not seconded.

Motion amend that the policy subcommittee writes category 3 policy - 2-1-0

emotional response, we're not doing the leadership work, stakeholder engagement.

7/7 Meeting Notes

Summary of what we have done this year:

- Vaccination Policy for staff

- Extracurricular Vaccination Policy for students
- Goal planning meetings (September and October)
- Bus Policy, photo release, discussion of One Wilson
- Microaggression Policy including Northampton policies - Anti Hate/Bias policies, restorative justice
- Organized Listening Groups with religious Groups:

Temple Shir Tikva guests and Rev. Ian Natick Common Street Spiritual Center

Denicia Ratley, Director of Rel&Spiritual Life at Babson College Bilal Miraz, Muslim Chaplin

Fr. Hines from St. Patricks, Natick

Dr. Preeti Banerjee, Hindu Advisor at Tufts University and Ms. Swati Dave

St. Mark's Coptic Church, Natick

- Created a powerpoint and held listening sessions on the Homework/Holiday Calendar with:
 - students at NHS, KMS
 - teachers at NHS, KMS
 - community members and families
- Initiated discussion on Columbus/Indigeneous Peoples' Day
- Revisited the Mask Policy in January
- Planned communication strategy with Cassie on the homework/Holiday Calendar
- Heard Andy's recommendations AC-AC/R
- Non Public Schools Policy
- Revisited the vaccination policy for students and staff - sent to full committee for approval
- Homework Calendar and Equity Policy end of year review

Will the committee have a new member in the coming year?

Acknowledged this an enjoyable committee - we can have a more organic and open discussion

It's a great place to learn about the policies of the district



Natick Public Schools

Holiday and Cultural Observances

DRAFT



Purpose

Natick Public Schools encourages all students and staff to appreciate our vast heritage and cultural diversity. This Standard Operating Procedure provides information regarding how we manage not only the legal and secular holidays on which schools and Central Office are closed, but also major festivals and holy days for many of the religious traditions represented in the Natick community.

We expect faculty to make appropriate accommodations for students affected by these and other special observance days. The goal is to ensure students from all religious and cultural faiths receive the appropriate accommodations for school assignments so they may celebrate and observe without worry.

This is important because the assignment of homework or large projects during religious and cultural holidays prevents students from fully engaging in their families' religious and cultural practices.

Our process for making this system work is described below and broken into three categories based on an accompanying explanation.

Our [list of holidays, appreciation days, and celebrations](#) is by no means exhaustive, but ensures we also recognize days relevant to elementary and secondary education and the community at large.

Category 1 – Schools Closed

Schools Are Closed; Observance Impacts Students and Staff (Large Population)

Holiday	2022–23 School Year Date	23–24 SY	25–26 SY
Labor Day	Monday, September 5, 2022	Monday September 4, 2023	Monday, September 2, 2024
Rosh Hashanah (Day 1)	Monday, September 26, 2022	Saturday, September 16, 2023	Thursday, October 3, 2024
Yom Kippur	Wednesday, October 5, 2022	Monday, September 25, 2023	Saturday, October 12, 2024
Indigenous People's Day/ Columbus Day	Monday, October 10, 2022	Monday, October 9, 2023	Monday, October 14, 2024
Diwali	Monday October 24, 2022+	Sunday November 12, 2023	Friday November 1, 2024+
Veterans Day	Friday, November 11, 2022	Saturday, November 11, 2023	Monday, November 11, 2024
Thanksgiving	Thursday & Friday, November 24–25, 2022	Thursday and Friday, November 23–24, 2023	Thursday and Friday, November 28–29, 2024
Christmas Schools Closed for December Break, December 26–30	Monday, December 26, 2022	Monday, December 25, 2023	Wednesday, December 25, 2024
New Year's Day	Monday, January 2, 2023	Monday, January 1, 2024	Wednesday, January 1, 2025
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 16, 2023	Monday, January 15, 2024	Monday January 20, 2025
President's Day Schools	Monday, February 20, 2023 Closed for February Break, February 20–24	Monday, February 19, 2024 Closed 19–22	Monday February 17, 2025 Closed 17–20
Good Friday	Friday, April 7, 2023	Friday, March 29, 2024	Friday April 18, 2025
Patriots' Day	Monday, April 17, 2023	April 15, 2024	April 21, 2025

	Schools Closed for April Break, April 17-21	Schools Closed for April Break, April 15-19	Schools Closed for April Break, April 21-25, 2025
Eid al-Fitr**	Friday, April 21, 2023	Wednesday, April 10, 2024+	Sunday, March 30, 2025
Memorial Day	Monday, May 29, 2023	Monday, May 27, 2024	Monday, May 26, 2025
Juneteenth	Monday, June 19, 2023	Wednesday, June 19, 2024	Thursday, June 19, 2025
Independence Day	Tuesday, July 4, 2023	Thursday, July 4, 2024	Friday, July 4, 2025

What This Means

Absences by staff and students impact the ability to conduct classes on this date or during this time. Designated as days of low attendance, these are days when teacher or student attendance would be so low that it is better to close school.

Instructions

No homework is assigned in any class for all students on the last day of school before a category 1 holiday. Homework assignments, projects, presentations, or other assignments cannot be due until at least the second class meeting after the holiday, even for longer school vacations. The same policy applies to the administration of tests.

Category 2 – Smaller Impact

Observance May Impact Student and Staff (Smaller Population)

Holiday	Date 2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Rosh Hashana (Day 2)	Tuesday, September 27, 2022	Sunday, September 17, 2023	Friday, October 4, 2024
Lunar New Year	Sunday, January 22, 2023 and February 5th, 2023	Saturday, February 10, 2024	Wednesday, January 29, 2025
Orthodox Easter	Sunday, April 16, 2023	Sunday, May 5, 2024	Sunday, April 20, 2025
Orthodox Good Friday	Friday, April 14, 2023	Friday, May 3, 2024	Friday, April 18, 2025

What This Means

School remains in session because these holidays are not low attendance days. However, a significant portion of our school population celebrates these days.

Instructions

No homework is assigned in any class for all students on the last day of school before a category 2 holiday. Homework assignments, projects, presentations, or other assignments cannot be due until at least the second class meeting after the holiday, even for longer school vacations. The same policy applies to the administration of tests.

Athletics and Fine Arts

Our athletic and fine arts programs are also sensitive to these issues. Regardless of the category, coaches and fine arts instructors are advised of and sensitive to the religious and cultural needs of their students and families. There will be no athletic or fine arts consequence for missing games/performances and/or practices due to religious observances.

Category 3 – Niche

Observance May Impact Student and Staff (Niche Population)

Holiday	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Sukkot	October 9-16, 2022	September 29, -Oct 6, 2023	October 16-23, 2024
Purim	Monday & Tuesday, March 6-7, 2023	March 21 and 24-25, 2024	March 13-15, 2025
Eid al-Adha	Wednesday, June 28, 2023	June 16, 2024	June 6, 2025
Holi	Wednesday, March 7, 2023	March 25, 2024	March 14, 2025
Ramadan Starting of Month of Observance	Wednesday, March 23, 2023	March 11, 2024	March 1, 2025

What This Means

School remains in session because these holidays impact a smaller number of our students than in the prior two categories.

Instructions

Students who are unable to complete a homework assignment due to this type of holiday should inform their teacher, who will arrange with the student an alternative time for completion of work, without loss of credit. Parents are also encouraged to contact teachers if a category 3 holiday impacts a student's ability to complete an assignment.

Athletics and Fine Arts

Our athletic and fine arts programs are also sensitive to these issues. Regardless of the category, coaches and fine arts instructors are advised of and sensitive to the religious and cultural needs of their students and families. There will be no athletic or fine arts consequence for missing games/performances and/or practices due to religious observances.

Reference Listing

Listed in alphabetical order

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Wednesday • Chanukah (Hanukkah) • Christmas • Columbus Day • Diwali • Easter Sunday • Eid al-Adha • Eid al-Fitr • Good Friday • Holi • Independence Day • Indigenous Peoples' Day • Islamic New Year • Japanese New Year • Juneteenth • Kwanzaa • Labor Day • Lunar New Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, Jr. Day • Memorial Day • New Year's Day • Orthodox Easter • Orthodox Good Friday • Palm Sunday • Passover • Patriots' Day • Presidents Day • Purim • Ramadan • Rosh Hashanah • Shavuot • Spring Equinox • Sukkot • Thanksgiving • Veteran's Day • Yom Kippur |
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Notes

*All Jewish observances begin at sundown, in the evening, prior to the day of the observance. In addition to the dates noted, observant Jews celebrate the second, seventh and eighth days of Passover; the second, eighth and ninth days of Sukkot; and two days of Shavuot (Mass. Lawyers Diary and Manual).

**Due to the lunar calendar, these are only approximate dates

***Previous legal holiday in Suffolk County

Policy Subcommittee Meetings where Homework Holiday Calendar was discussed

Date	Topic	Minutes assigned?
5/26	BDA/BDB/ BDC/BDD Policy, Westborough Calendar	
9/9	Vax Policy, Holiday calendar (both listed as possible vote)	unassigned
11/23	Microaggression, DEI, Organize listening sessions with religious groups	X - in folder
12/2	Temple Shir Tikva guests and Rev. Ian Natick Common Street Spiritual Center	X - in folder
12/9	Denicia Ratley, Director of Rel&Spiritual Life at Babson College Bilal Miraz, Muslim Chaplin	X - in folder
1/13	Holiday Homework, Columbus Indigeneous Peoples' Day, Antihate, Public Speak	unassigned
1/20	Dr. Preeta Banerjee, Hindu Advisor at Tufts University and Ms. Swati Dave	X - in folder
2/3	St. Mark's Coptic Church, Natick	unassigned
3/24	Fr. Hines from St. Patricks, Natick Prep slides for Listening	X - in folder
3/10	Planned communication with Cassie, Anti Hate/Bias	catherine
4/7	Policy change Recommendations from Dr. Nolin, review of listening Session	catherine
4/5	Parent Community Session	n/a
5/10	Optional Discussion at NHS with Staff	n/a
5/10	Discussion at NHS with Students during the Lunch Periods	n/a
5/16	Staff Discussion at Kennedy	n/a
5/23	Student Discussion at Kennedy	n/a
6/2	Homework Holidays and Equity Review - Homework proposal (not accepted)	Cathi
6/16	Homework Holidays and Equity Review and plan for the summer	Cathi
12/23	Homework Holiday Proposal	Catherine
1/3	Discussion for Recommendation/Vote	Catherine

1/9	Discussion for Recommendation/Vote	Catherine
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Options for NPS Calendar Decision:

- 1) Stay the same
- 2) Day off for all Major holidays for the World Religions of the students and staff
- 3) Add Diwali and Eid for now, acknowledging that there may be future additions for example, Lunar New Year and Orthodox holidays
- 4) ½ day for all major religious holidays
 - a) - (4.5) ½ day for students - professional development for teachers
- 5) Federal off and WIN day for all major religious holidays - emphasize students need different things, no new content delivered 6th grade and up, study catch up day, no tests or homework due on that day or the day after.
 - a) (5.5) WIN ½ day for all major religious holidays
- 6) Federal Holidays off only

Key things to consider/competing ideas/values:

- Signals of diversity will build a diverse community in the future
- Christian students shared with us they couldn't imagine not having Christmas off
- Keeping the School environment as neutral as possible (flag policy argument)
- Where do we already teach and should we bring culture and world religions into the curriculum more? Sense of belonging.
- Does listing the days on the district calendar yet not taking them off signal belonging - "we see you"
- Honoring diversity of culture with the day off - we see you - belonging
- Ensuring we have enough time on learning before June - benchmarks, MCAS, students stamina
- Child care and the difficulty taking more days off presents to our most vulnerable families. This is also an equity issue.
- Establishing Routines for all students, families and especially for students with special needs.
- ½ days are already seen and felt as a low curriculum day. If we did a ½ day/WIN option How do we ensure the WIN/half days are a good (and maybe even innovative) use of instructional time, not a 'movie' day, while not creating FOMO for students out that day?
- real issue is the continuous microaggressions and lack of training on DEI. We heard that "being seen" ultimately means a better understanding of culturally adaptative practices and ways to deal with injustice - getting a day off for a holiday may be part of a solution or not. This is multi layered.

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

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.

Significant Religious and Cultural Holidays recognized by Natick Public Schools*

- NPS observes these holidays with a day off
- No Homework or Tests can be scheduled for the day after each of these

Rosh Hasanah (Day 1)

Yom Kippur

Diwali

Christmas

Kwanzaa

Good Friday (Roman Catholic)

Eid-Al-Fitr

Additional Religious and Cultural Holidays *

- Where school will be open and where accommodations will be made upon request.
- The administration will develop and publish a list of holidays which require cultural sensitivity.

For Example - but not limited to:

Ash Wednesday

Lunar New Year

Orthodox Christmas

Holi

Purim

Easter

Passover (First and Last day)

Shavuot (First and Last)

Sukkot

Navratri and Durga Puja

*We recognize that this list may never be complete. If there are additional religious and cultural observances that need to be included, please contact the district.

Link	School District	Columbus Day	Diwali	Eid el Fitr	Good Friday	Rosh Hashanah	Yom Kippur	Start	End	Notes
	Acton-Boxborough	Indigenous Peoples' Day		x	x		x	9/9	6/22	"noted the Columbus Day change with an" Lists Major Religious and Cultural Holidays on page 2 with a link to policies . "publishes a comprehensive list of observances that members in the community might be celebrating Early Release Elementary 1x a week, 1x a month Middle and High."
	Andover	Listed only as federal holiday - not named						9/6	6/21 (no snow)	
	Arlington			x (noted as observed on a Saturday)						
	Arlington Heights	Columbus Day	x		x	x	x	9/6	6/21 (no snow)	Has a "family reconnect weekend" once a month listed on the calendar - no homework.
	Bedford	Indigenous People's Day						8/31	6/16 (no snow)	Only Federal (also have 5 day weekend for Labor Day) Use the AIA Calendar of Observances to acknowledge days students only be excused (only takes federal holidays off) Has last day that includes 5 snow days
	Belmont	Indigenous People's Day						8/30	6/16 (no snow)	
	Boston	Indigenous Peoples' Day		x				9/1	6/21 (181)	
	Brookline	Indigenous Peoples' Day			x	x	x	9/1	6/17 (no snow)	name lunar new year (but falls on a Sunday) Lists Religious Holidays as Low Day of Attendance: name of Holiday CC does not have religious days off - only federal. Links their policy on 3rd page." in keeping with the districts' core value of a "caring and empathic community," it is the intent of the school districts to be aware of and to respect the religious and cultural observances of its students, families and staff."
	Concord-Carlisle	Indigenous/Columbus Day						8/31	6/14 (no snow)	
	Danvers	Listed as Vacation Day								takes only federal holidays
	Dover-Sherborn	Columbus		x	x		x	8/31	6/16 (no snow)	Do not list 1/2 days
	Dorchester	Columbus/Indigenous								Lists Religious Holidays, even those they don't take off
	Framingham	People's Day		x	x		x	8/31	6/20 (no snow)	
	Franklin	Columbus Day		x	x		x	8/30	6/16(no snow)	
	Grafton	Indigenous People's Day						8/31	5/14 (w/o snow)	only federal
	Holliston	Indigenous	x		x	x	x	8/30	6/13 (no snow)	Worked with Cultural Council for Diwali
	Horsingorton	Columbus/Indigenous	x 9/24		x	x	x	9/1	6/20 (no snow)	/half days are on a Friday All Fridays are 1/2 day for Elementary Only have Federal Holidays off (see this link on how they communicate about Religious Holidays.
	Lexington	Listed as "Government Observance"						8/31	6/14 (no snow)	
	Lincoln-Sudbury			x	x		x	8/31	6/14 (no snow)	
	Needham	Indigenous People's Day			x	x	x	8/31	6/15(no snow)	PD 11/23 (before T-giving)
	Northborough-Southborough Regional	Columbus		x	x		x	8/31	6/20 (no snow)	also have 9/6 election day off
	Sharon	Indigenous Peoples' Day				2 days	x	9/7	6/15 (no snow)	
	Shrewsbury	Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day						8/30	6/15 (no snow)	Only Federal Holidays Calendar Committee Report (2016)
	Sudbury-K&L	Indigenous People's Day		x	x		x	8/31	6/15 (no snow)	Diwali, Eid el Fitr, Ramadan, Passover, Kwanza, Hanukkah all listed on calendar
	Waltham	Columbus Day			x	x	x	8/31	6/15 (no snow)	Only celebrate Federal Holidays List Religious Holidays on page 2
	Watertown	"No School"						9/6	6/16 (no snow)	Only Federal
	Wayland	Indigenous People's Day		x	x		x	8/31	6/16 (no snow)	1/2 Day about every first Wednesday Oct -
	Westley	Indigenous People's Day			x	x	x	8/31	6/23 (builds in s May)	
	Westborough	Indigenous Peoples' Day	x (pd for staff)		x	x	x	8/31	6/16 (no snow)	
	Weymouth	Columbus Day/Indigenous		x	x		x	8/30	6/16 (no snow)	
	Winchester	only listed as No School						9/1	6/14 (no snow)	They avoid naming anything by using codes. See calendar here ; refer people to their religious policy - ACFA
	Summary	Districts	Diwali	Eid el Fitr	Good Friday	Rosh Hashanah	Yom Kippur	Federal Holidays Only		
	Totals	29	4	1	19	18	16	10		

Holiday/Homework Calendar Summary Document

Recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee:

Starting with the 2023-24 School Year:

- Add Diwali and Eid el Fitr as Religious Holidays that are observed in the NPS Calendar as a day off of school.
- Identify additional Cultural and Religious Holidays where school will be open and where accommodations will be made upon request:
 - Consider for future action making Good Friday (Roman) a ½ day and adding a second ½ day for Orthodox Good Friday.
 - Examine how the school calendar could be adjusted rather than adding days to June - For example look at the beginning of the School Year, NILs or other professional development days.
- Make a plan to limit the socio-economic impact to families on all Religious Holidays - for example explore ASAP open on these days, community service days, PTO partnership with the district, Recreation and Parks Partnership etc.
- Evaluate how cultural observances are currently included or not in the curriculum and whether/how an expansion of the cultural knowledge of our students and staff is necessary. With Administration, design a process that will be conducive for such an evaluation.
- Recommend the School Committee revisit the calendar decision in five years while periodically reviewing the impact of this policy.

Value Statement

An essential value of our district is the continued desire to honor belonging. As such, our recommendation is founded on the importance of recognizing the cultural diversity within our district. When our students are seen, known and valued, each is more likely to be successful. While the integrity of the curriculum is vital, our recommendation and its nuances seek to balance the impact of these changes on the schedule of the school year.

Documents and findings throughout the process:

[Timeline](#) of work by the Subcommittee

Link to the Administration's most recent [proposal on Holidays and Cultural Observances](#)

[Other Districts Calendar Summary](#)

[Link to Notes from Meetings Oct 2021 - Dec 2022](#)

[Link to a List of Significant Religious and Cultural Holidays](#)

[Alternative Scenarios Considered](#)

[Advantages and Disadvantages considering Federal/State Only vs. Inclusion](#)

[Listening Session Slide Show](#)

[Notes from the Slide Show](#)