



Jewish Federation®  
OF GREATER PORTLAND



Dear Educator:

As we begin planning the 2021-2022 school year, we recognize that these are uncertain (or unprecedented) times with great challenges. Challenges that include addressing issues such as equity and inclusivity. Each year, the ability to observe religious holidays has brought forth a real struggle for our Jewish community. Forced to decide between religious and cultural observances and educational requirements creates scenarios where minority students of faith and their families have to choose between their identities.

Attached is a calendar of Jewish Holidays as a resource for your faculty and administrators. Addressing and incorporating religious and cultural observances when planning annual school calendars and schedules for major events such as school start dates, exams and other important educational occasions sends an inclusive message to staff, faculty, parents and their children. Additionally, non-academic activities such as back-to-school nights, concerts, photo days, school dances, etc. are also important to students, parents, and teachers.

Jewish holy days fall on different dates from year to year within the Gregorian calendar. Traditional celebration of Jewish holy days calls for abstaining from work, school and other everyday activities while participating in religious observances. Jewish holidays begin at sunset on the evening preceding the holiday. As you know, the law requires schools to provide make-up opportunities for students who are absent due to religious observance.

We know that this is a unique year, with academics being virtual to start with but feel that it is still important to know when these dates are.)

At this [link](#) you will find a descriptive list of the Jewish holidays. *The holidays and dates of greatest concern during the 2021-22 school year are: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), beginning at sundown on Monday, September 6, running through Wednesday evening, September 8; Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), beginning Wednesday evening, September 15, ending Thursday evening, September 16; and Passover, beginning Friday evening April 15<sup>th</sup> with the 2<sup>nd</sup> seder on Saturday evening April 16<sup>th</sup>. The holiday ends on Sunday evening April 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

This has been a year of challenge for all and we anticipate that for many of our older kids, the first time they will be physically back in the classroom will be this fall. To that end, we hope that all our students can come back safely together.

A common start date in Oregon is often the Tuesday after Labor Day. Please note that this day is also one of the holiest days in Judaism, Rosh Hashanah.

In addition, we would like to share with you a [list](#) of resources for folks who can come to your classrooms (in person and virtually) to share about Jewish life, Israel and a whole range of other topics. It also includes resources for families and parents and schools who feel that there have been instances of antisemitism.

If you have any questions about scheduling or would like additional information about Jewish holidays and/or celebrations, please contact Rachel Nelson, Director of Educational Initiatives &

Intergroup Outreach at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, at 503-892-7115, or at [rachel@jewishportland.org](mailto:rachel@jewishportland.org).

Please let us know if we can assist in any way.

Best wishes, and thank you for your consideration,

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