

Dear Educator:

As we begin planning the 2024-2025 school year, we want to provide you with the resources to help with planning the calendar in a way that promotes equity and inclusion for all our students. 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.

Below 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 date indicated on Gregorian calendars. As you know, the law requires schools to provide make-up opportunities for students who are absent due to religious observance.

At this [link](#) you will find a descriptive list of the Jewish holidays. *The holidays and dates of greatest concern during the 2024-25 school year are: **Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)**, beginning at sundown on Wednesday, October 2nd, running through Friday evening, October 4th; **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)**, beginning Friday evening, October 11th, ending Saturday evening, October 12th; and **Passover**, beginning Saturday evening, April 12th with the second Seder on Sunday evening, April 13th. The holiday ends on Sunday evening, April 20th.*

In addition, we recognize that this has been a challenging year in our community and 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 your school would be interested in a workshop that explains what antisemitism is and how it is being normalized, please contact us).

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 & Associate Director of Community Relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, at 503-892-7115, or at rachel@jewishportland.org.

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

Best wishes, and thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Nelson
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