

Resolution to ~~Authorize School Holiday on include the observance of~~ Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha in the SFUSD Academic and Instructional Calendars

Commissioner Alexander

WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco has a sizeable and growing Muslim population. Islam is the world's second-largest religion with 1.9 billion followers, or 24.9% of the world's population, known as Muslims; and

WHEREAS, A large portion of the City's Muslim population includes school-age children and young adults enrolled in schools that are part of the San Francisco Unified School District; and

WHEREAS, Eid al-Fitr, or "Feast of Breaking the Fast," is the most important holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide, to mark the end of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Eid al-Fitr is a holiday ~~of gratitude~~ that involves special services, ceremonies, and traditions celebrated with family and the community; and

WHEREAS, Eid al-Adha, also known as the "Festival of Sacrifice," is the second most important holiday on the Islamic calendar, ~~and is a day of remembrance~~. Eid al-Adha is celebrated with ~~activities~~prayer and traditions involving food, family, and charitable giving; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco public schools are in recess during the Christian holiday of Christmas and schools are closed on days, such as Lunar New Year, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and Cesar Chavez Day, that are culturally significant to populations in San Francisco and traditionally involve community events and gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Unlike these other days of cultural significance and community celebration, San Francisco public schools remain open and in session on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha when they are observed during the school year. Therefore; Muslim public school students in San Francisco must make a difficult choice between attending school and not fully ~~participating in honoring or observing~~ their cultural ~~so important~~ traditions, or missing school entirely so that they may join family and community members in participating in holiday celebrations and activities; and

WHEREAS, Under California law and San Francisco Unified School District Policy, a student may be excused from school when the absence is in observance of a religious holiday or ceremony. But even when Muslim students' absences are excused when observing Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, such students are still disadvantaged by losing a day of in-class instruction, which can cause them to fall behind their peers; and

WHEREAS, Sara Ouchene, a 17 year old SFUSD high school student organized a petition that quickly gathered nearly 600 signatures from students, parents and educators across SFUSD, that called for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to be recognized ~~and observed~~ on the SFUSD calendar;

WHEREAS, Incorporating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha into the San Francisco Unified School District Calendar as days when schools are closed in recognition of the holidays would allow Muslim students to fully ~~participate in observe~~ these ~~sacred~~ holidays and maintain equal access to their educational opportunities; without potentially negative educational and social repercussions; and

WHEREAS, Other cities and counties with sizeable Muslim populations, including New York City; Detroit and Dearborn, Michigan; Trenton, Atlantic City, Paterson, and Montclair, New Jersey; Iowa City, Iowa, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Broward County, Florida, have either incorporated Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as ~~observed~~ school holidays or have otherwise closed schools on these holidays; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco is a diverse and multicultural city where tolerance, inclusiveness, and respect for all people, cultures, and religious and spiritual beliefs are fundamental values championed by the City at all levels; and

WHEREAS, Incorporating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha on the District-wide calendar as days when San Francisco public schools would be closed ~~to allow students to observe these important Muslim holidays, would be~~ is consistent with and in furtherance of those core values; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that Islamophobia has risen nationally and in the City of San Francisco in recent years. According to [AROC's TURATH report](#), a local study of Arabs and Muslims in SFUSD, virtually all Muslim students have felt discrimination at some point of their school lives by other students and/or faculty; and

WHEREAS, passing this resolution would not only enrich Muslim students, but would foster an environment of diversity and tolerance that would allow ~~students them~~ to learn from ~~the~~ their Muslim peers. Especially as Islamophobia rises, recognition of Muslim holidays would bring the Muslim community closer to feeling belonging in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District has authority over the District-wide school calendar and the power to designate Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as days when schools are closed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: In recognition of the significance of these days for the students and families of San Francisco's Muslim communities, schools and offices in SFUSD will ~~be closed not be in session on the~~ Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha ~~holidays. and if the~~ holiday's ~~day~~ were to fall on the weekend, schools and offices will ~~be closed not be in session~~ on the day before or the day after the weekend depending on which day is closest to the last day of Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha. ~~T and that~~ the Board of Education directs staff to take appropriate steps to modify the SFUSD instructional and classified calendar to include these holidays fully implement this observance as official holidays every year, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education, as a transition to full implementation, ~~will direct~~ staff to ~~start by recognizing Eid on the 2022-2023 school calendar with the explicit responsibility of~~ informing educators, schools and Muslim students and families of their options for obtaining excused absences for these Holidays during the 2022-2023 school year; and providetaking Eid off, guidance for schools and educators in supporting students and families during Ramadan and working with Arab American educators to recommend curriculum for schools and educators to use in celebrating Arab-American Heritage Month, as well as intentionally acknowledging uplifting Eid and Arab American Heritage Month in official SFUSD communications.