

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

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Karen Clopton  
Commission Chair



London N. Breed  
Mayor

### **Resolution urging the Mayor to call upon the San Francisco Unified School District to close schools in recognition of the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.**

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 Muslim calendar during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Eid al-Fitr is a holiday of thanksgiving 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 Muslim calendar, and is a day of remembrance. Eid al-Adha is celebrated with 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

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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. Therefore; Muslim public school students in San Francisco must make a difficult choice between attending school and not fully honoring or observing these important Muslim holidays, or missing school 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, 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 observe these sacred holidays without potentially negative educational and social repercussions; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that Muslims are the religious group most likely to face religious prejudice and discrimination. According to a [study](#) published in JAMA Psychiatry in July 2021, U.S. Muslims are two times more likely to have attempted suicide compared with other religious groups. Further, there has been a documented increase in recent years in anti-Muslim bullying among school-aged children; and

WHEREAS, Situations where Muslim students are seen as different from their peers because of their religious practices and beliefs, such as when they choose to miss a day of school to observe Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, have the potential to add to that negative

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environment, thereby impacting Muslim students' learning experience and sense of safety and belonging; and

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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 consistent with and in furtherance of those core values; 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Human Rights Commission urges the Mayor to call upon the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha on its calendar as days when schools are closed to allow students to observe these holidays with their families and community.