



Marsha DeGennaro <mdegennaro@woodbridgeps.org>

Fwd: [External Email] FW: Formal Letter for District Calendar 2024/25

1 message

Lynn Piascyk <lpiascyk@woodbridgeps.org>
To: Marsha DeGennaro <mdegennaro@woodbridgeps.org>

Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 9:03 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Samuel Bae** <baesa24@amityregion5.org>

Date: Tue, Nov 7, 2023 at 4:20 PM

Subject: [External Email] FW: Formal Letter for District Calendar 2024/25

To: cpittenger@bethany-ed.org <cpittenger@bethany-ed.org>, lwhite@bethany-ed.org <lwhite@bethany-ed.org>, alestinsky@bethany-ed.org <alestinsky@bethany-ed.org>, jpgarcia@bethany-ed.org <jpgarcia@bethany-ed.org>, sbradford@bethany-ed.org <sbradford@bethany-ed.org>, aamato@bethany-ed.org <aamato@bethany-ed.org>, emaher@bethany-ed.org <emaher@bethany-ed.org>, suscilla@bethany-ed.org <suscilla@bethany-ed.org>, nwijesekera@bethany-ed.org <nwijesekera@bethany-ed.org>, lpiascyk@woodbridgeps.org <lpiascyk@woodbridgeps.org>, mmadonick@woodbridgeps.org <mmadonick@woodbridgeps.org>, sdelprete@woodbridgeps.org <sdelprete@woodbridgeps.org>, jdahya@woodbridgeps.org <jdahya@woodbridgeps.org>, bhopkins@woodbridgeps.org <bhopkins@woodbridgeps.org>, jhughes@woodbridgeps.org <jhughes@woodbridgeps.org>, slawrence@woodbridgeps.org <slawrence@woodbridgeps.org>, mstrambler@woodbridgeps.org <mstrambler@woodbridgeps.org>, ewilliamson@woodbridgeps.org <ewilliamson@woodbridgeps.org>, newporttennis@optonline.com <newporttennis@optonline.com>, JCap@orange-ed.org <JCap@orange-ed.org>, susan.e.riccio@gmail.com <susan.e.riccio@gmail.com>, BHadlock@orange-ed.org <BHadlock@orange-ed.org>, RJames@orange-ed.org <RJames@orange-ed.org>, TMessinaMullen@orange-ed.org <TMessinaMullen@orange-ed.org>, ETremper@orange-ed.org <ETremper@orange-ed.org>, KVitelli@orange-ed.org <KVitelli@orange-ed.org>, KZiman@orange-ed.org <KZiman@orange-ed.org>
CC: Suhail Irshad <mohammedsu24@amityregion5.org>, Jennifer Byars <Jennifer.Byars@amityregion5.org>, Annika Yun <yunan24@amityregion5.org>, Eydan Lavi <Laviey24@amityregion5.org>

Dear Members of the Boards of Education of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge:

Good afternoon. I am writing to forward to our district's towns' Boards of Education our proposal letter for the District Calendar 2024-2025 that will be presented at the Nov 13th Amity Board of Education meeting. The letter has been sent to the District Board Chair and has received a vote of unanimous support from the Amity High School Student Government—an extremely rare occurrence. A pdf version is attached for your review; we dearly hope to see it passed and would be more than happy to discuss it further at each of the towns' Board meetings if requested.

Please reach out to either Suhail (mohammedsu24@amityregion5.org) or me if you have any questions about the information presented.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sam

Sincerely,

Suhail Irshad

(Executive Board Treasurer Amity Student Government)

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 **Religious Holiday Proposal Letter.pdf**
62K

Amity Student Government

Nov 6th, 2023

Amity Regional School District No. 5 Boards of Education

Dear members of the Orange, Woodbridge, and Bethany Boards of Education:

Members of Amity Student Government, elected by and dutifully serving nearly 1400 students, are writing in unanimous support of introducing previously unincorporated religious holidays to the Amity District Calendar.

The Amity Student Government seeks to raise student awareness of and allow time for the celebration of two holidays: **Eid Al-Fitr** (which lies on a weekend in 2025, but would be on Thursday, March 19th in 2026) and **Diwali** (which lies on Monday October 20th, 2025). The Amity District has historically given days off for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Good Friday, which we highly commend as it gives our community's Jewish and Christian students opportunities to celebrate and reflect upon their respective cultural holidays while spreading awareness of their significance to others who may otherwise have been unexposed to them. But the Amity District is also home to several muslim and hindu students as well—students who are not given the similar days off for their own religious holidays.

In the past, muslim students have needed to take school off in order to partake in religious customs for Eid Al-Fitr, an all-day celebration in large gatherings of friends and family following a month of fasting during Ramadan—a time when muslim students regularly go through a whole school day without eating or drinking. Providing a day off for Eid Al-Fitr would not only give muslim students the ability to celebrate without falling behind in school, but it would also be a way of creating awareness for the Islamic holiday, strengthening Amity's identity as a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

This is a similar case for Hindu students, as Diwali is the biggest holiday of the year for them. Diwali celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and entails large gatherings of family and friends, going to the temple to pray, and lighting fireworks. Giving students the day off would allow Hindu students to acknowledge and celebrate their holiday to the fullest without having to worry about playing catch-up in school while raising cultural awareness for the district's Hindu community as well.

Though the Amity District currently gives excused absences and extensions on schoolwork, students who celebrate often fall behind in coursework and learning. This puts students in a difficult situation: to either celebrate their religion and shoulder the burden of catching up in classes that continue to progress even while they are absent, or to make it to class while missing the most important annual celebration of their religion.

In addition to our Christian and Jewish holidays, Eid Al-Fitr and Diwali will serve to strengthen unity, diversity, and inclusion in the multicultural Amity community. For these reasons, we urge the Boards of Education to pass the 2024-2025 calendar and their following calendars with these inclusions.

Best Regards,

The Student Government of Amity Regional High School

