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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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() Action Required
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 066-23 OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
State Tribal Education Compact School Administrators
School Principals
Charter School Administrators

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Common Religious and Public Holidays

CONTACT: Sarah Albertson, Managing Attorney, Equity and Civil Rights Office
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Jennifer Stevens, Executive Assistant, Office of Legal Affairs
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PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

In addition to school holidays included in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [28A.150.050](#), as they plan future academic calendars, local education agencies (LEA) must be aware of religious and other public holidays that will affect student attendance and availability. Many students miss school and school events to honor their religious practices. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) asks districts to avoid scheduling significant school events on major religious and public holidays.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Avoiding scheduling significant school events on major religious and public holidays conveys to all students that they are a meaningful part of their school communities and that their religious traditions matter. Additionally, OSPI encourages each LEA to educate themselves on the religious traditions of the students and communities they serve, strive to honor all religious communities, and work to be inclusive of all students and their families.

A list of common religious and public holidays can be found on the [OSPI website](#). The page displays holidays and observances for the current school year, while a [spreadsheet inclusive of](#)

[future years](#) is also available. School personnel can use this calendar when responding to student/family requests for excused absences for religious purposes or when planning events such as curriculum nights, field trips, state testing, school or team pictures, dances, hearing and vision tests, and other school events. The [state testing timelines](#) are posted online as well, which may help with planning.

Finally, LEAs are reminded to proactively plan for make-up days in the event of severe weather or other emergency conditions in accordance with chapter [392-129](#) Washington Administrative Code (WAC). LEAs should review the current rules and historical weather trends in their region to ensure that their school calendars take reasonable efforts, as defined in [WAC 392-129-105](#), to prepare for district-wide closures due to severe weather and other unforeseeable events. If districts do not build make-up days into their calendar, it may result in a waiver request that does not meet the definition of reasonable effort – which could cause disruptions to school communities due to changes to last days of school and graduation dates.

OSPI is analyzing the current rules regarding emergency waivers due to unforeseen conditions and may determine to initiate rulemaking to clarify requirements and circumstances for waivers in the future.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Sarah Albertson, Managing Attorney, Equity and Civil Rights Office, at 360-725-6162 or email sarah.albertson@k12.wa.us, or Jennifer Stevens, Executive Assistant, Office of Legal Affairs, at 360-764-3603 or email jennifer.stevens@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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Chief of Staff

Matt Schultz
Chief Legal and Civil Rights Officer
Office of Legal Affairs

Sarah Albertson
Managing Attorney
Equity and Civil Rights Office

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