This calendar has been prepared to advise you in advance of the Jewish observances that will take place over the next five years. It is intended to assist schools in scheduling events such as major school assignments, examinations, sporting events, team and play tryouts, school photos, assemblies, field trips, graduations and other special programs. Cultural, legislative, municipal, business and other organizations may also find the calendar helpful in avoiding scheduling conflicts.

In order to allow Jewish students, employees and community members to observe their traditions we ask that the scheduling of events on Jewish holy days, the Jewish Sabbath and the evenings preceeding these occasions be avoided.

* DENOTES THE JEWISH HIGH HOLY DAYS AND MAJOR BIBLICAL FESTIVALS IN OBSERVANCE OF WHICH LABOR IS TRADITIONALLY PROHIBITED. AS A RESULT, MANY JEWISH INDIVIDUALS ARE ABSENT FROM BOTH SCHOOL AND WORK.
The most important holiday

SHABBAT
The Sabbath commemorates God’s day of rest on the 7th day of Creation. Shabbat begins every Friday evening at sundown. No work is done in traditional Jewish homes. It is to be a day of rest and peace.

The “head of the year”

ROSH HASHANAH
These holy days begin a 10-day period of repentance and prayer which ends on Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah marks the anniversary of the birthday of the world. It is the day people are judged for their actions during the past year.

KOL NIDRE
Marks the beginning of Yom Kippur.

The Day of Atonement

YOM KIPPUR
This is considered the holiest day in the Jewish calendar and it ends the Ten Days of Repentance. It is spent in prayer, meditation and fasting in order to start the new year with a fresh beginning.

The Feast of Tabernacles (booths)

SUSSKOT
The harvest festival – it is named for huts (sukkot) hung with fruits and vegetables set up to recall the temporary field dwelling which farmers traditionally used during harvest time. It is observed for 7 or 8 days, followed by Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. Labor is traditionally prohibited on the first two days of Sukkot, and on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. Shemini Atzeret is the conclusion of Sukkot. Simchat Torah celebrates the conclusion of the year-long cycle of reading the Torah (first five books of the Bible) and renewing the cycle.

The Festival of Lights

HANUKKAH (also Chanukah)
An 8-day celebration of the Jews’ victory over the Syrians in ancient times and their regaining political and religious freedom. Hanukkah is called the Festival of Lights because, at the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, the sacred lamp burned for 8 days on 1 day’s supply of oil. No work restrictions.

New Year of the Trees

TU B’SHEVAT
This holy day, a minor festival, celebrates spring in Israel. No work restrictions.

The Feast of Lots

PURIM
A holy day which celebrates the rescue of the Jews in Ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them. The king’s advisor, Haman, cast lots and chose this day for carrying out his plans. Esther, the Jewish queen, discovered the plot and persuaded her husband to spare the Jews. No work restrictions.

The Feast of Passover

PESACH
Passover commemorates the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the beginning of Jewish independence. It may be observed for 7 or 8 days, but labor is traditionally prohibited on only the first two and last two days. The name Pesach refers to God’s “passing over” the homes of the Jews when he sent plagues to convince the Egyptian pharaoh to let them go.

The Feast of Harvest

SHAVUOT
This holy day marks the end of the early grain harvest and also commemorates Moses receiving the Torah (first five books of the Bible), with its Ten Commandments, from God on Mount Sinai.