



# DIVERSITY

## GUIDEBOOK

*The District Diversity Calendar Guidebook serves as a reference tool and guide for students, staff and the community. Please note: This guidebook is not considered a formal District Standard Operating Procedure Handbook. FBISD Policy [BQ Local] should be referenced for specific policy related to cultural competency.*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Philosophy

Fort Bend Independent School District (ISD) Board of Trustees believes that diversity, equity and inclusion are key attributes of the District, our students and the extended community. The highest levels of student success are best attained in a well-functioning, high-performing collaborative community of learners who share diverse perspectives, backgrounds and cultural experiences to help shape innovation across the District. As of one the most diverse school districts in the Nation, we strive to foster pride for oneself, respect for one another, and an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

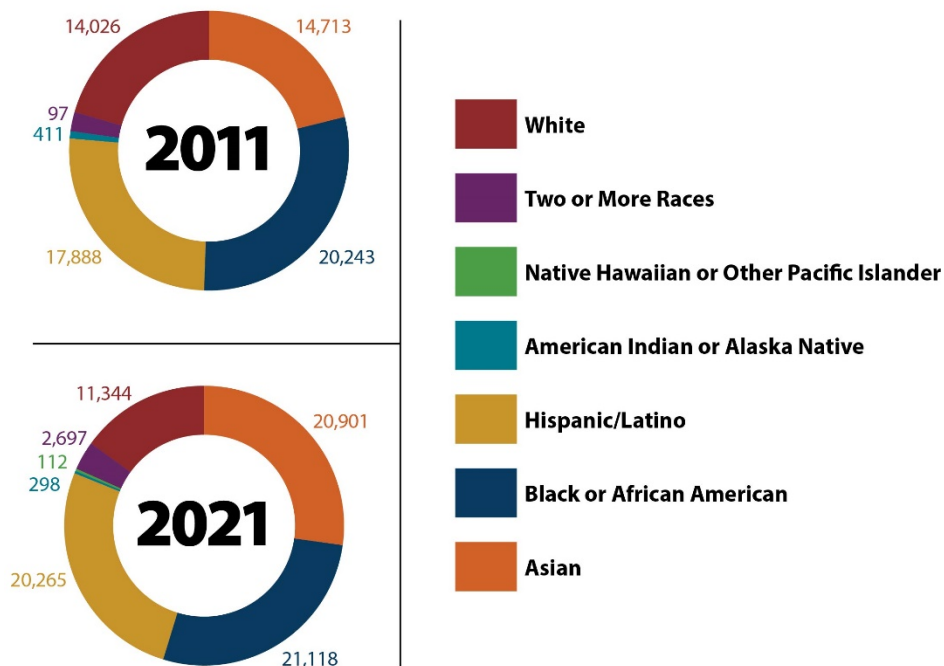
## Background

Over the course of the past decade, Fort Bend ISD has experienced rapid population growth and development. As a result, the District is now home to students from all around the world allowing for a pluralistic community full of diverse cultures. Fort Bend ISD aims to serve as a model school district to embrace the culture and diversity of students and staff and ensure an inclusive community is created for all.

## District Demographics [2021]

There are approximately 76,000 students enrolled in the District. Over the past decade, District demographics have changed to reflect the growing diversity that exists within our community.

### Fall Enrollment by Ethnicity Race Report Category



# DISTRICT DIVERSITY CALENDAR

## Calendar Rationales

In efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the rich cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds within the community, the District created a Diversity Calendar to help serve as a resource and educational tool for students, staff and the community. The calendar will help promote respect and understanding of the diversity that currently exists across our District.

The calendar includes events that reflect religious holidays, as well as many state, national, and international days of recognition or observance. Religious observances of the major faiths represented in the greater Fort Bend area are also included. Some calendar events are significant to the cultural characteristics of our local community. The calendar also includes state and national holidays that are either universally celebrated across the Nation or are considered legal holidays.

## Monthly Calendar

The calendar is divided up by monthly key celebrations of heritage and/or topics related to the diverse nature of the community. Monthly topics were determined by utilizing a variety of [resources](#) to ensure that a comprehensive list of monthly observances were included. The calendar provides designated themes for communications and messaging, classroom material, meeting agendas, and display boards.

## Daily Calendar Considerations

The daily calendar was developed based upon the Gregorian calendar, a globally utilized standard for civil dating and reporting purposes. It is realized that many cultures and religions follow various other calendars or systems of dating, including lunar phases and solar cycles. Due to this consideration, the Gregorian dates for many observances will differ from year to year, and specific dates may vary based on different sects and geographical locations.

**\*Note: There are some holidays of the Baha'i, Jewish, and Islamic faiths that begin at sundown the previous day and end at sunset on the date listed on the calendar.**

Each entry on the diversity calendar will provide viewers with the following information:

- Date or date range
- Culture or religious group
- Description: [A short description of the holiday or observance]

# DISTRICT-WIDE DIVERSITY CELEBRATIONS

## Suggested District-Wide Diversity Celebrations

The District would like to create a more cohesive and unified approach in promoting diversity as a critical feature of our community. The following events will be announced as opportunities for District-wide celebrations. We encourage departments and campuses across the District to observe these dates in part of their campus or office programming, calendars, and communications.

- **April: Celebrate Diversity Month (Local):** This month is a dedicated time to recognize and celebrate the beautiful makeup of the local community, including the unique cultures, backgrounds, and rich traditions that make us "One District...Many faces."
- **May: World Diversity Day for Dialogue and Development:** Sanctioned by the United Nations, this day is dedicated as an international holiday to promote culture and diversity as a social agent for inclusion and positive change around the world. This day is ideal for the discussion of issues related to diversity including achieving prosperity, developing sustainable communities, and peacefully coexisting as a global community. \*Exact date adjusts each year
- **October: Global Diversity Awareness Month:** The United Nations dedicated this month as Global Diversity Awareness Month following WWII. The month is a time to reflect on the rights to which all humans are inherently entitled to by birth, and to understand the value of all human beings regardless of race, color, sex, gender, country of origin, language, etc. The focus of this month is to highlight the interconnectedness of communities and cultures across the globe. It is a perfect time to learn about a new culture or unfamiliar places around the world.
- **October(First full week of October): National Diversity Week:** Founded in 1998, National Diversity Week was established as a time to raise awareness about diversity and how it has shaped the United States of America.

## Other Calendars of Observances

The Diversity Calendar does not substitute curriculum-pacing calendars, or other District-approved calendars, or the official school year calendar.

There may be other calendars of observance to consult for campus planning and curricular purposes. Additionally, there are dates determined by the Texas Education Agency as state testing days. The District is aware that state testing days may occur on significant religious or cultural days of observance in some case. In these instances, FBISD will make an effort to accommodate our students and staff to the best of our ability, in accordance with state and local policies.

In addition to the events outlined on the Diversity Calendar, there are other days/events worthy of celebrating that align to specific work areas or curriculum topics such as Teacher Appreciation Week and Pi Day in Mathematics.

# DIVERSITY “AT-A-GLANCE” CALENDARS

## Days of Highest Impact - Attendance

Leaders can expect increased student and staff absences on days observed as “holy days” when they occur during a school day. When creating District/campus calendars, please avoid scheduling events or activities on the dates in bold and the evening prior to the events outlined below.

Per Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines, the District has determined a list of days that are deemed “holy days” for absence coding purposes. Days coded as Religious [REL] will be considered a funded absence. [FBISD Interfaith Calendar Absence Coding Guide.](#)

FBISD Religious Holy Days for 2021-2022		
Date	Observance	Absence Code
August 18 – 19, 2021	Ashura – Islamic	Excused/Unexcused
September 6 – 8, 2021	Rosh Hashanah – Jewish	Excused/Unexcused
September 15 –16, 2021	Yom Kippur – Jewish	Religious [REL]
September 20 – 27, 2021	Sukkot – Jewish	Excused/Unexcused
September 27 – 29, 2021	Shemini Atzeret – Jewish	Religious [REL]
October 7 – 15, 2021	Navaratri - Hindu	Excused/Unexcused
October 19, 2021	Mawlid Al-Nabi (Also Known As Milad Al-Nabi) – Islamic (Shi’a)	Religious [REL]
November 7, 2022	Birth Of Bahá’u’lláh – Baha’i	Religious [REL]
November 19, 2022	Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s Birthday - Sikh	Religious [REL]
March 2, 2022	Ash Wednesday – Christian	Excused/Unexcused
April 15 – 23, 2022	Passover/Pesach – Jewish	Excused/Unexcused
April 2 – May 1 , 2022	Ramadan – Islamic	Excused/Unexcused
April 14, 2022	VAISAKHI (Also Spelled Baisakhi) – Sikh – Sikh	Religious [REL]
April 10, 2022	Rama Navami - Hindu	Religious [REL]
April 21, 2022 April 29, 2022 May 2, 2022	Festival Of Ridván – Baha’i	Religious [REL] * Any other days associated with this observance are coded Excused/Unexcused
May 6, 2022	Visakha Puja – Buddhist	Religious [REL]
May 3, 2022	Eid Al-Fitr	Religious [REL]
May 29, 2022	Ascension Of Bahá’u’lláh – Baha’i	Religious [REL]

### Days of Fasting

The following chart includes several observances in which individuals may be fasting – abstaining from food and drink, and in some cases limited exposure to entertainment or technology. Fasting practices often have periods of prayer and meditation that usually occur on the evenings before the date listed. Please be sensitive and accommodate students and staff observers who express that they are fasting on any of the dates or the evenings preceding the date listed. Also, this list is not exhaustive and there may be other days that students or staff indicate that they may be fasting.

*Note : “SD” indicates observances that start at sun down the night before the date listed and ends at sun down on the date listed*

Days of Fasting 2021 – 2022		
Date	Observance	Notes
August 18 –19, 2021	Ashura – Islamic	SD
August 29 – 30, 2021	Janmashtami – Hindu	SD
September 10, 2021	Ganesh Chaturthi – Hindu	SD
September 15 – 16, 2021	Yom Kippur – Jewish	SD
March 2 – April 14, 2022	Lent – Christian	
March 1, 2022	Maha Shivaratri – Hindu	
March 2 – 20, 2022	The Baha’i Fast – Baha’i	SD
March 21, 2022	Bahai New Year – Baha’i	SD
April 2 – May 2, 2022	Ramadan – Islamic	*Dates fluctuate within 12 days of dates listed.
April 22, 2022	Orthodox Good Friday – Orthodox Christian	

# DIVERSITY CALENDAR IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

Implementation Ideas by Stakeholder Group	
<b>District and Central Administration Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult all District calendars ahead of scheduling meetings, events, or special events to take into consideration “holy days” and days of fasting that may impact staff observances</li> <li>• Host team-building activities or social gatherings for colleagues to showcase and share their diversity</li> <li>• Create departmental bulletin boards or displays for specific holidays that incorporate staff who observe the event</li> </ul>
<b>Campus Leaders and Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult all District calendars ahead of scheduling meetings, events, or special events to take into consideration “holy days” and days of fasting that may impact staff observances</li> <li>• Incorporate religious and cultural days into campus calendars and newsletters</li> <li>• Promote diversity at campus events by encouraging students to wear traditional attire or by incorporating elements that allow students to display their culture</li> <li>• Promote linguistic diversity by creating messaging for events and celebrations in the languages spoken by staff and students on your campus</li> <li>• Host campus staff and student team building activities to share their diversity</li> <li>• Engage students in creating bulletin boards and/or displays for specific holidays or cultural events</li> <li>• Include holidays and observances in daily announcements, presenting some key concepts in corresponding languages spoken by native speakers</li> <li>• Consider resources that promote cultural competency and diversity such as library books, posters, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers and Instructional Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult all District calendars ahead of scheduling meetings, events, or special events to take into consideration “holy days” and days of fasting that may impact staff observances               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: Students observing Ramadan may have difficulty engaging in strenuous physical activity due to fasting windows</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Facilitate opportunities for students to learn about various holidays, cultures, and events such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Daily warm-ups or class openers to engage students</li> <li>○ Readings or short stories about various holidays or observances</li> <li>○ Opportunities that allow student observers to share</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>experiences, customs, and language with peers who may not celebrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reflective writing about the importance of diversity, respecting other cultures, pride in one’s own culture</li> <li>○ Student friendly books that showcase different ethnic or cultural groups</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Display culturally relevant images or allow students to create art or displays for specific holidays or cultural events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Door decorating or bulletin boards</li> <li>○ Hang flags or decorations of cultural significance</li> <li>○ Make welcome signage that include the various languages spoken at the campus</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Seek opportunities to make curricular content or instructional connections to days on the Diversity Calendar</li> <li>● Utilize native languages connected to specific observances and celebrations in school and classroom displays and activities</li> </ul>
<b>Parents &amp; Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consult the District calendars to stay up to date about events and cultural observances. Consider volunteering or joining a planning committee for campus events or celebrations</li> <li>● Facilitate opportunities for students to learn about various holidays and events at home by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initiating dinner time conversations about events celebrating the students culture</li> <li>○ Reading books, articles, or short stories about various holidays or observances on the calendar</li> <li>○ Allowing students to share experiences, customs, and languages that they have been learning about from their peers</li> <li>○ Promoting reflective writing or discussion about the importance of diversity, respecting other cultures, pride in one’s own culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Consider creating a diversity group in your neighborhood or join a diversity club at your school to plan events and promote diversity. Engage in conversations with friends and neighbors about cultural traditions they may observe and encourage them to ask you questions as well</li> <li>● Donate cultural materials to the campus or school library such as books, films, posters, magazine, and other materials related to various cultures</li> </ul>

# BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING DIVERSITY

## Tips and Techniques

The District seeks to consider all major holidays of various cultures prior to the planning or program implementation of scheduled events. The District Diversity Calendar is an important tool that should be referenced and implemented with culturally responsive practices in mind. The list below, includes a few tips and techniques that leaders can consider when planning to promote diversity.

### **Consult the experts:**

- Research and consult organizations and/or individuals with proven expertise in the area of diversity you seek to highlight (religious, ethnic/cultural, linguistic) ahead of planning any programs and events. Local interfaith groups, clergy or religious leaders, scholars or professors, and professional organizations are a great place to start.

### **Pronunciation counts:**

- Practice pronouncing the names of events and holidays correctly. This also applies to names of significant individuals.
- Additionally, student names should not be shortened (unless requested) nor should they be encouraged to change their names to make it easier for others to pronounce.

### **Review campus resources:**

- Make sure that students have access to resources such as books, posters, images, etc. that reflect their cultural identities as well as those of others.
- Examine teaching materials to ensure that they promote equity and diversity by including people of different backgrounds and experiences.

### **Promote workplace or school spirit:**

- Embed diversity into the culture of the school, office, or educational setting. Highlight the backgrounds of campus/district staff at various times of the year to increase visibility of diversity and foster feelings of representation.
- Work towards building pride and self-esteem amongst student and staff and allow for individuality to be embraced in various facets of the office or school.

# RESOURCES

## Attribution Statement

The District Diversity Calendar Guidebook was developed through consulting a variety of sources including the Anti-Defamation League, National PTA Multicultural Calendar, and scholarly groups such as the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education.

1. Anti-Defamation League, Calendar of Observances  
<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-of-observances>
2. Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education [CSEE], Religious Calendar  
<https://www.csee.org/page/ReligiousCalendar>
3. National PTA, 2021 Multicultural Calendar  
<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/runyourpta/2020/diversity/multicultural-calendar-2021.pdf>
4. Diversity Resources, Diversity Calendar  
<https://www.diversityresources.com/2021-diversity-calendar/>
5. Diversity Best Practices, 2021 Diversity Holiday Calendar  
<https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/2021-diversity-holidays>
6. Celebrating Your School's Cultural Diversity  
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/celebrating-your-schools-cultural-diversity-clare-roach>