



## AMERICA'S LARGEST ISLAMIC CIVIL LIBERTIES AND ADVOCACY GROUP

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To Whom It May Concern:

American Muslim adults make up 3 percent of New Jersey's population, according to a [Pew Research Center Religious Landscape study](#). The state also leads the nation with the largest number of Muslim elected officials, with over 40 Muslims sworn in.

**As such, the New Jersey chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations joins Muslim students, parents, and educators throughout the state in calling upon local municipalities to adopt Eid as a day off in the academic calendar.** This is a necessary accommodation that will help ensure that Muslim students and staff do not face academic and professional disadvantages for missing school days to meet their religious obligations.

Approximately [30 school districts](#) throughout New Jersey closed for Eid ul-Fitr in the 2022-2023 academic year. In December 2022, [Warren Township](#) decided to close schools for Eid ul-Fitr beginning in 2023-24. A few towns over, the [Watchung Borough Board of Education](#) moved to designate Eid ul-Fitr as a Staff Professional Development Day in 2024, closing schools for students. Hillside, Mount Olive, West Windsor, and Plainsboro public schools also give students time off to observe Eid.

Other districts, however, only offer an excused absence, leaving students in a quagmire: Should they prioritize their academic obligations over their religious duties, or vice versa?

The New Jersey Department of Education is [committed](#) to ensuring that schools provide inclusive and welcoming learning environments for all students, and closing schools for Eid observances will help foster such environments. Students have expressed that a general lack of inclusivity and misunderstanding of Islam and Muslims among students and staff contribute to incidents of anti-Muslim bullying and discrimination. **In 2022 alone, CAIR-NJ has documented 26 reports of anti-Muslim discrimination and/or bias within New Jersey public schools. By recognizing and including Eid on district calendars as a day off, schools can inspire conversations among students and staff that play a crucial role in dispelling anti-Muslim bigotry.**

Signed,  
CAIR-New Jersey

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