The New York City Council

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 1281-2008	**Version:** A	**Name:**	Department of Education to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed school holidays.
Type:	Resolution		**Status:**	Adopted
			In control:	Committee on Education
On agenda:	2/27/2008			
Enactment date:		**Enactment #:**		

Title: Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed school holidays in the school calendar for the city school district of the city of New York, and calling upon the State legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign into law, A.8108/S.5837, an Act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring that Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha be school holidays in the city school district of the city of New York.

Sponsors: Robert Jackson, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Helen D. Foster, Sara M. Gonzalez, Maria Del Carmen Arroyo, Annabel Palma, Letitia James, Leroy G. Comrie, Jr., Inez E. Dickens, Rosie Mendez, Kendall Stewart, Albert Vann, Thomas White, Jr., Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., Joel Rivera, Charles Barron, Vincent J. Gentile, Larry B. Seabrook, David Yassky, Darlene Mealy, John C. Liu, David I. Weprin, Maria Baez, James Vacca, Tony Avella, Miguel Martinez, Mathieu Eugene, Helen Sears, Michael C. Nelson, James F. Gennaro, Peter F. Vallone, Jr., Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Bill De Blasio, Elizabeth S. Crowley, Kenneth C. Mitchell

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Attachments: 1. Res. No. 1281 - 2/27/09, 2. Committee Report 9/26/08, 3. Hearing Testimony 9/26/08, 4. Hearing Transcript 9/26/08, 5. Committee Report 6/18/09, 6. Hearing Testimony 6/18/09, 7. Hearing Transcript 6/18/09, 8. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 6/30/09

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/27/2008	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
2/27/2008	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
9/26/2008	*	Committee on Education	Hearing Held by Committee	
9/26/2008	*	Committee on Education	Laid Over by Committee	
6/18/2009	*	Committee on Education	Hearing Held by Committee	
6/18/2009	*	Committee on Education	Amendment Proposed by Comm	
6/18/2009	*	Committee on Education	Amended by Committee	
6/18/2009	A	Committee on Education	Approved by Committee	Pass
6/30/2009	A	City Council	Approved, by Council	Pass

Res. No. 1281-A

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed school holidays in the school calendar for the city school district of the city of New York, and calling upon the State legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign into law, A.8108/S.5837, an Act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring that Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha be school holidays in the city school district of the city of New York.

By Council Members Jackson, Mark-Viverito, Foster, Gonzalez, Arroyo, Palma, James, Comrie, Dickens,

Mendez, Stewart, Vann, White Jr., Recchia Jr., Rivera, Barron, Gentile, Seabrook, Yassky, Mealy, Liu, Weprin, Baez, Vacca, Avella, Martinez, Eugene, Sears, Nelson, Gennaro, Vallone Jr., Ferreras, de Blasio, Crowley and Mitchell

Whereas, The "Muslims in New York City Project," an initiative through Columbia University's Middle East Institute, estimates that approximately 600,000 Muslims live in New York City, and represent one of the fastest growing religious communities in the City; and

Whereas, According to the Coalition for Muslim School Holidays ("the Coalition"), approximately 12% of New York City public school students are Muslim; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the Coalition reported that 95% of Muslim school-age children residing in New York City attend public schools; and

Whereas, Despite this growing population, two important Muslim holidays, Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha, are not recognized as school holidays in the New York City public school system; and

Whereas, Eid Ul-Fitr is a time of joy and thanksgiving that is celebrated at the completion of Ramadan and involves various celebrations and special services; and

Whereas, Eid Ul-Adha, or the "Feast of Sacrifice," is the second most important festival on the Muslim calendar, and is a day of remembrance; and

Whereas, Currently, New York City public schools are closed on several religious holidays, including Christmas, Good Friday, Rosh Hashanah and Passover; and

Whereas, It should be noted that Chancellor's Regulation A-630 puts forth guidelines regarding the provision of reasonable accommodations for religious observance and practices for public school students; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the Regulation, reasonable accommodations include excused absences for religious observance outside of school grounds, as well as in-school provisions such as time for praying or sitting separately in the cafeteria during periods in which a student may fast; and

Whereas, Despite the intentions behind this Regulation, many parents, students and advocates have expressed concern that Muslim students are still left at a disadvantage, having to choose between missing

school, which can result in falling behind their peers and affecting their attendance record, or participating in an important holiday; and

Whereas, It should be noted that according to the Coalition, other localities with growing Muslim populations have incorporated Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha into their school holiday calendar; and

Whereas, Such localities include Dearborn, Michigan and several New Jersey cities and townships including Irvington, Atlantic City, Trenton and Paterson; and

Whereas, New York City is a diverse and dynamic locality in which tolerance and acceptance are central values, and incorporation of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as public school holidays would serve as an important embodiment of this tolerance and acceptance; and

Whereas, Assembly Member Michael Benjamin and Senator Bill Perkins have introduced State legislation (A.8108/S.5837) that would require the New York City school district to close schools on the first day of both Muslim holidays; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education itself has authority over the school calendar for the city school district of the city of New York and, as a matter of policy can incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed holidays in such school district pending the passage of the state legislation (A.8108/S.5837); now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to incorporate the Muslim holidays of Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha as observed school holidays in the school calendar for the city school district of the city of New York, and calling upon the State legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign into law, A.8108/S.5837, an Act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring that Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Ul-Adha be school holidays in the city school district of the city of New York.

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JC/AES
6/16/09. 12:15pm