

SHABBAT MESSAGE
JULY 30, 2021



Hi Everyone!

I hope you've had a great week! In my last message I talked to you about our efforts to get the Bristol-Warren School Committee to change the first day of school this year so that it would not fall on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. I am pleased to report that last week, the Bristol Superintendent did just that, moving the start of school back a day. While it is not a perfect solution, this is a victory for many Jewish families and teachers who now won't have to choose between religious observance and the first day of school.

I'm so grateful to all of you who stood up and helped to make this happen. Thank you to those that e-mailed members of the school committee to express your point of view, and to those who testified at the school committee meeting last week on why this was such an issue. Your words were incredibly meaningful. I also appreciate the support from those members of the school committee that were fighting for this change from the very beginning. Their advocacy was lost in this, but it shouldn't be. And thank you to Dr. Jonathan Brice, the superintendent in Bristol-Warren, who finally brought closure to this issue. Finally, I want to thank our staff at the Alliance who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to secure this positive outcome for our community.

While I am certainly happy that we were able to get the start of school moved, this whole episode has forced me to reflect on why this was so hard in the first place. Back in February, when I first wrote to each superintendent to raise the potential conflict, I really thought that would be the end of it. That districts would simply move the date since this is something that happens so infrequently. The fact that it took so much effort and public outcry to get a district to recognize us is deeply sad and deeply troubling.

But it is also bringing me back to my roots as an educator. This was an opportunity to educate the public and elected officials about our rituals and customs. About the minority status of the Jewish community that is sometimes forgotten by those in the majority. I'm going to continue to look for those teachable moments, hopefully under less contentious circumstances. Because while our community always seeks to stand with others so no one stands alone, sometimes we need people to stand with us. The more we help people to learn about who we are, the more we help make sure that situations like the one we just experienced do not happen. I'm committed to making that our reality, and I hope you'll join me in that work.

Until next time, I wish you a safe, peaceful, and joyous Shabbat.

Shabbat Shalom!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam".

Adam Greenman
President & CEO