



# REACH FOR INDEPENDENCE

MEMO

January 8, 2021

RE: HMEA Holiday Changes

At HMEA, we envision a world where individual differences are appreciated and celebrated. During this past year, the racial injustices have pushed us to think even harder on how we will reflect, listen, and seek to understand one another and do more to combat racism.

We continue listening, learning and remain committed to taking steps forward each day. One area that HMEA has explored, is updating the HMEA holidays to reflect and acknowledge the injustices of history and to better represent the history, traditions, and cultural practices that exist among our workforce.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has proposed, voted, and finalized some upcoming changes to HMEA's 2021 holiday schedule.

The two changes for 2021 are the following.

**1. Change Columbus Day Holiday to Indigenous Peoples' Day**

(the holiday date is the same **Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021**)

\* Indigenous Peoples' Day recognizes the native populations that were displaced and decimated after Christopher Columbus and other European explorers reached the continent.

**2. Celebrate and Recognize Juneteenth Holiday (Friday, June 18th, 2021)**

(HMEA would replace the Patriot's Day holiday to celebrate Juneteenth, keeping a total 11 holidays on the HMEA schedule)

\* Juneteenth commemorates the day in 1865 when the last enslaved people learned they were free as word of the end of the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation reached Texas

\* On July 24, Gov. Baker signed a bill designating Juneteenth (June 19th) as an annual state holiday in Massachusetts

\* Does not apply to Darnell School Staff this fiscal year – (*Darnell Employees will follow current school schedule for remainder of FY2021*) Darnell School will follow the new holiday list when setting up their calendar for FY22 school year

\*Does not apply to TechAccess staff

HMEA and the Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee feel these changes are an opportunity for HMEA to continue to learn, connect with each other, and reflect on how to move forward while honoring what has occurred in the past. If you have any questions, please contact a member of our Diversity Committee or Human Resources.

Thank you,  
Michelle Donohue  
Senior VP of Human Resources and Administrative Operations