



SCHOOL CALENDAR & SCHOOL HOURS

School Board Meeting
September, 12, 2018

SCHOOL CALENDAR
FAQ

FAQ: HOW DID THE DISTRICT DECIDE TO RECOMMEND THE CURRENT CALENDAR FORMAT?

- Many school districts around the country began adopting what has been referred to as a “balanced calendar” during the time of our calendar adoption. In a balanced calendar, schools typically take two consecutive weeks of vacation in the fall, winter, and spring. Schools that enjoy this calendar have found students more engaged and ready for school when there is a longer break built in to the calendar year. Some schools also use part of their two week breaks to offer academic assistance for students or to create enrichment opportunities.
- Prior to the 2012-2013 school year, we surveyed our stakeholders to determine if a balanced calendar, traditional calendar, or a calendar somewhat in between the two concepts was preferred. The feedback indicated that our stakeholders were not comfortable with extended two week breaks in the fall but felt that periodic one week breaks would benefit students and faculty.
- Additionally, our principals indicated that attendance would often drop on the days prior to vacations that started midweek (such as breaks beginning on a Wednesday or Thursday). There was a hope, in changing to one week breaks, families would be less inclined to remove students from school on the days prior to breaks.

FAQ: HAS ATTENDANCE IMPROVED WITH THE CURRENT FORMAT?

- Yes. We tracked student attendance for the days prior to fall break and Thanksgiving break for three years. Compared to breaks beginning midweek our attendance improved, on average, 3.5%. With over 11,000 students in the District, this percentage means that several hundred student days were recovered when changing to a calendar that begins breaks following a full week of school.

FAQ: WHY IS IT NOT POSSIBLE TO START THE SCHOOL YEAR CLOSER TO LABOR DAY?

- Technically speaking, the school year could start at any point. Issues arise when attempting to address many academic requirements and stakeholder priorities.
- Starting later in the summer, (mid-August or near Labor Day) while incorporating week long breaks, would push the end of first semester past winter break and into the new calendar year. Our high school administration, faculty, and many parents have expressed a desire to end the first semester prior to winter break. Parents were very vocal in stating opposition to their students being required to study, complete projects, and prepare for final exams during winter break.
- Pushing the end of school into mid-June would result in high school students in Advanced Placement and IB courses to sit for the exam (determining eligibility for college credit) more than a month prior to the end of school as the exam dates fall in early May. The dates of these exams are set by outside entities and cannot be altered by schools. The faculty and many parents prefer that the students be afforded more days to learn and prepare for these exams.
- The third grade IREAD exam is administered in late March (a date that is set by the Indiana Department of Education). Students who fail to meet the IREAD benchmark are required (by Indiana law) to repeat third grade. Students need as many days as possible prior to this exam during their third-grade year to prepare. If school starts later in the calendar, the students will be in school less days prior to the test.
- iLearn (the replacement for ISTEP) will be administered in the spring. Students need as many days as possible prior to this exam to prepare.

FAQ: WHY NOT SCHEDULE MORE BREAKS DURING SECOND SEMESTER?

- Many state required exams and exams with college credit implications are administered in the spring. Schools need the entire state required testing windows to administer the tests. Schools are required to administer make-up tests to students who may be absent when their classroom tests at the scheduled time. Therefore, we want to be available to support all students during the entire testing window. Testing windows overlap, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to schedule a period of time for vacation during this time.

SCHOOL CALENDAR DRAFTS

2019-20 & 2020-21 School Years

SCHOOL HOURS

Continued Review for Aug. 2019 Implementation

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL HOURS REVIEW TO DATE:

- **School Board Meetings:**
 - 2016: Aug. 8, Nov. 16
 - 2017: Sept. 27
 - 2018: June 15, July 25, Aug 8, Aug 22
- **Routing Consultant Engagement** (June 2018 to Present)
- **Stakeholder Feedback Opportunities** and Presentations on School Hours:
 - Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2018
 - Student Feedback, Parent Council Network, PTO, Teacher Feedback and Community Surveys
- **Calendar Analysis** of Marion County & Surrounding School Districts: Spring - Fall 2018
- **Administrative Research & Review** (Transportation Dept., Supt. Cabinet & Teaching/Learning Division) 2016-Present

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL HOURS REVIEW

- 1. Maintain a 3 Tier Bus System** – Moving to a 2 tier busing system would have a multi million dollar impact with ongoing costs that simply are not in the budget including additional busses (approx. 40-45) , bus drivers, maintenance and fuel
- 2. Minimum 40 Minutes Between Bus Tiers** – This is currently being analyzed by our routing consultant
- 3. Alignment with Current Research** – Secondary schools (middle & high school) would fall in the 2nd and 3rd arrival tiers
- 4. Desired Start/End Times** (based on research & feedback)
 - 7:25-7:30 AM Earliest Desired Start Time For Tier 1 Arrival
 - 4:20-4:25PM Latest Desired End Time For Tier 3 Dismissal

OPTION #1 (CURRENT):
1ST TIER - HIGH SCHOOL
2ND TIER - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
3RD TIER - MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROS

- Aligned with research for MS start time
- Allows for after school late bus runs for all levels
- Elementary students are not being picked up in darkness most of the year
- MS students at home when elementary siblings board bus in the AM

CONS

- Not aligned with research for HS start time
- Lack of after school access to teachers for high school (teaches with after school coaching assignments)
- High school teachers have limited PD opportunities

OPTION #2:
1ST TIER - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2ND TIER - HIGH SCHOOL
3RD TIER - MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROS

- Aligns with research for both middle school and high school
- No changes for middle school
- Secondary school students home when elementary siblings board bus
- After school programming & enrichment opportunities for elementary students
- Extended AYS services for elementary students after school

CONS

- Potential challenging traffic time and dismissal staging between Tiers 2 and 3
- Elementary students board busses in the AM in darkness most of the year
- May restrict after school buses at elementary without extending elementary after school hours
- Potential shortening of at least one level's instructional day by 10-15 min.

OPTION #3 (PER BOARD REQUEST):
1ST TIER - MIDDLE SCHOOL
2ND TIER - HIGH SCHOOL
3RD TIER - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROS

- Aligns with research for HS start time
- Elementary students would not board busses in darkness for entire year
- Secondary siblings would be home for elementary students in PM
- Allows for after school elementary tutoring

See Supplement Documentation on Implications for this Option

CONS

- Would not align with research for MS start time
- Supervision for MS after school programs would be a significant budget impact (up to 2 ½ hrs. per day for extra-curricular)
- Potential challenging traffic time and dismissal staging between Tiers 2 and 3
- Restricts MS athletics ability to compete with schools outside of the district (significant disadvantage for students & impact to HS feeder programs)
- MS teachers who coach would either miss their athletic/club students or valuable professional learning
- ES or HS staff that currently coach MS would not be able to continue
- MS supervisors and coaches would be at the school from 6:45 AM to 9:00 PM daily on many occasions (e.g. athletic game days due to supervision)
- Lack of availability of busses for MS late runs and away events
- Secondary students would not be home when EL students board the bus in the AM
- Would lose the before school resources and help for students at MS
- Result in elementary students arriving home from after school opportunities at approximately 6:15 PM
- Potential shortening of at least one level's instructional day 10-15 min.

TIMELINE FOR CALENDAR & SCHOOL HOURS APPROVAL

Board Meeting Date:

September 26th

Review:

Draft School Hours from Consultant & Calendar Update

October 17th

Refined Draft of School Hours & Calendar Update

November 14th

Administrative Recommendation for Calendar & School Hours

November 28th

School Board Vote on School Hours & School Calendar (Effective Aug. 2019)

