

2022-2023 Proposed Academic Calendar for Elementary and High Schools



Overview

Per last year's board recommendation and aligned to national and state level best practices¹, the district remains committed to exploring opportunities to strengthen the Academic Calendar.

To garner stakeholder input on the proposed calendars, potential calendars were posted on the Board website for public comment from February 10 - February 18, along with an associated survey. Stakeholders were asked to indicate their preference between two options.

- Calendar Option 1: A calendar that reflects a student's first day of instruction on August 29. This calendar has a Semester 1 end date in January and has a fairly even distribution of weeks and days across the four quarters.
- Calendar Option 2: A Calendar that reflects a student's first day of instruction one week earlier, on August 22. This calendar has a Semester 1 end date before Winter Break, and the weeks and days across the four quarters are less evenly distributed compared to Option 1.

These calendar options were informed from previous feedback received on the District's existing calendar, as well as feedback received in principal focus groups.

1. *P-20 Council Learning Renewal Resource Guide, 2021*. Retrieved from <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/P20/Documents/P-20-Learning-Renewal-Resource-Guide-March2021-v19.pdf>.



Responses by Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Option 1	Option 2	% of Majority
Educators and Students			
Student	1876	2381	55.94%
Principal/Administrator	198	450	69.44%
Teacher	5229	5319	50.43%
School-based Support Staff	1946	1914	50.41%
School Leader (APs, Coaches, Counselors)	352	578	62.15%
Central Office/Network Staff Member	250	353	58.54%
Community Based Stakeholders			
Parent/Guardian	13583	12125	52.83%
Local School Council Member	239	210	53.20%
Vendor/Partner	86	80	51.81%
Community Member	650	591	52.40%



Summary of Survey Responses

In line with the the district's Equity Framework and our commitment to inclusive partnerships, when analyzing this data we sought to prioritize the perspectives and voices of stakeholders most impacted by our decisions and those responsible for implementing and driving change.

- The survey did not yield an overwhelming majority for either calendar option. The difference between Option 1 and Option 2 was only 408 votes.
- Educators and students preferred option 2.
 - A majority of principals and school leaders preferred option 2, with 69% of principals supporting this option.
 - Students preferred this option by a 5% majority.
 - Teachers preferred this option by a slight majority.
- Parents, were very active in completing the survey, Option 1 was the preferred option by about 3% of parents.
- Of the 49,052 people who accessed the survey, Calendar Option 1 was the preferred option by 0.6%.



Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

Respondents who preferred Option 1 stated:

- It supports the continuity of this year's academic calendar
- Is better aligned with family vacation plans already made for Summer 2022
- Option 2 is too drastic a move and should be communicated to parents much earlier; ie, now for SY23-24.
- Concern that summer would be shortened a second year in a row.
- Concern about vacation planning in general.
- Concern that starting earlier in August would be troublesome as school buildings are hotter in August.

Respondents Preferred Option 2 stated:

- An earlier start would address unfinished learning due to the pandemic
- Allows for an earlier end to the school year
- Parents preferred an earlier start because of the advantage for high school students in AP/IB testing
- Parents noted they appreciated the alignment to the suburban, private, and collegiate calendars.
- Parents also stated that it gave their students the ability to participate in summer camps, job opportunities, and travel athletic teams.
- Educators valued ending the semester before winter break, which aligns to more typical collegiate practices.
- It allows for more time to prepare for exams. High school administrators specifically cited increased opportunities for SAT, AP, and IB equity as compared to the rest of the nation's students.



Recommendation

The district is proposing the adoption of Calendar Option 2, which stakeholders perceived as providing more academic benefits to students over Calendar Option 1. Teachers, principals, and school leaders supported Option 2 in large majority, while there were no large majorities for Option 1

Rationale:

- Overall the calendar is more balanced and will allow for more natural breaks in the school year to allow for teacher planning, reflection, and collaboration throughout the year
- Starting the school year earlier allows us to align our calendar with parochial, private, suburban and national calendars
 - Allows for many students to participate in extended learning activities throughout the summer that enhance their academic experience
 - Enables students to compete for internships, jobs, and on-campus university learning opportunities outside Chicago
 - Ensures CPS students receive similar amounts of instructional time as their state and national peers¹ in advance of national and statewide assessments
- Ending Semester 1 before Winter Break:
 - Provides a natural conclusion to learning before an extended break
 - Prepares students for a college or university calendar and allows students to enjoy their break without having to prepare for exams on their return
 - Allows for many of our high school students enrolled in dual credit/dual enrollment courses to align directly with the postsecondary institutions

1. *'Back to school' means anytime from late July to after Labor Day, depending on where in the U.S. you live, 2019.* Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/14/back-to-school-dates-u-s/>



Calendar Option 2 Features

- A school start date of Monday, August 22, 2022 and an end date of Wednesday, June 7, 2023
- Students complete their first semester prior to Winter Break on Friday, December 22, 2022
- 176 days of instruction for students
- 12 professional learning days for teachers and school-based staff (additional 2 days)
- One parent-teacher conference day for both high school (HS) and elementary school (ES) students in the fall of 2022 and one for both in the spring of 2023
- Two weeks of winter vacation and one week of spring vacation
- No student instruction during the entire week of Thanksgiving
- Veterans Day will not be an observed holiday for SY22-23. The district will encourage honoring veterans on Veterans Day with a moment of silence and instructional activities focused on veterans on November 11. This is necessary to maintain the 176 required student attendance days while also implementing the state's legislation that mandates that the 2022 general primary election on November 8, 2022 be a legal school holiday.



Next Steps

