

**Albemarle County Public Schools
School Calendar – Draft 1
Comments Received**

Employee

I think it would be a good idea to end the third marking period on April first, and to move the April 1 workday to Monday, April 12. I've found that having a staff workday when returning from a long break is both welcome by the staff and quite productive. I fear that by having the work day and the professional development day both occur prior to the break will see many staff members focusing on the upcoming holiday and not on growth and development. I realize that the Easter holiday may also be factoring into this decision.

Employee

Think this is a good calendar. Certainly did not need seven days to prepare for school opening-- five is more than enough. Not quite sure why two days without students at the end of each grading period is necessary. Otherwise, pleased with the draft.

Employee

I think it would be a good idea to end the third marking period on April first, and to move the April 1 workday to Monday, April 12. I've found that having a staff workday when returning from a long break is both welcome by the staff and quite productive. I fear that by having the work day and the professional development day both occur prior to the break will see many staff members focusing on the upcoming holiday and not on growth and development. I realize that the Easter holiday may also be factoring into this decision.

Employee

Calendar work is appreciated. Thank you for a later starting date.

One suggestion for professional development days - replace two professional development days with one and one half hour sessions one day a month after school. Teachers would be required to stay only until 5:30 in place of having to come in two of the professional development days. (Be sure to tell them why they would be required to stay) Having the buildings closed for two more days would produce additional savings in operating costs. End the school year two days earlier. Everybody wins. Thanks for your work.

Employee

The calendar looks good overall; however, I wish we could come earlier in August to avoid so many days in June once SOLs are over. While a later August start sounds nice, the time at the end of the year is typically hard to fill in once SOLs are done.

Employee

Would not like to be going till June 17 IF we have snow days. Maybe less winter vacation- two weeks is too long. Start vacation break on the 23rd of December instead and start school on the 19th or 20th of August. We started early this year, so we are already used to that anyway.

Employee

Why are we continuing to make up snow days when the state minimum is 165 days. Also, with the incredible budget shortfall and the state min. of 165 days, why would we continue to have 180 school days for students.

Employee

I also wonder about the possibility of using banked time which has now been adding up for a number of years. That way, make up days could be used during the year and parents would have a definite end date in order to plan their summer vacations.

Parent

thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

* Appreciate the year starting later in August!

*Do not like it going so late in June with the snow days going to the 17th. This will interfere with long-standing camp schedules.

* Liked this year having long weekends in Feb. and March. This new calendar only has one long weekend in Feb. and none in March. The first snow day eliminates the long weekend in Feb., effectively having no days scheduled off in Feb. or March. This is too long to go in the winter. Better to shorten the spring break by those 2 extra days, or shorten the long weekend in January.

Thank you.

Parent

I propose that we take the entire week of Thanksgiving off and add those 2 days to begin August 24th. Many families take off early on Tuesday (before Thanksgiving). Thank you

Parent

I really like the proposed 2009-2010 calendar. It's particularly nice to see the students going back to school a week later in the summer. There's ample time provided, too, for holidays which is great.

Parent

No later start date please. That would put Albemarle totally off from other adjacent counties (i teach in Madison county) and I would be hard pressed to find a decent place for my daughter and son for 2 weeks (from the moment I start as a teacher to the moment they would start as students).

Parent

Outstanding...finally...pushing the start of school closer to when it should be...after Labor Day! How about making the school day 10 or 15 minutes longer? Would that create enough instructional time to equal 180 days of academics between Labor Day and the first or second week of June? Just a thought...

Employee

Going until June 10 or potentially longer is too late in the school year. I would rather start up earlier in August as we have in the past. Also, staff should receive one holiday off a month instead of having such long breaks together. It would help with scheduling appointments and not having to use sick leave. It would also assist morale and give staff/students a much needed break throughout each month.

Employee

I heard that some time ago, schools "banked" time for additional inclement weather days. It seems that it would be a good policy to use those days within the year already designated snow make-up days and use the banked time for the additional days in June. That way, there would be a definite end date so that families could make their summer plans. I know there is a high absenteeism after the stated end of school date.

Employee

Just wondering where the advantages are in this calendar.. if we go back later and get out later, where have we saved economically?

Employee

I appreciate having more time to review and consider comments.

I am glad to have less days at the beginning-7 days is too long for teachers, especially when you don't get any more time actually preparing for kids anyway.

I think that 2 days no students before spring break is a waste of educational time. so the 3 days before spring break will be broken up because some kids will be taken out of school even earlier. why do we need 2 teacher work days there? If you use april 1 as a snow makeup day, people would have already

scheduled their travel plans and that will be a wasted educational.
why isn't January 19th a snow make up day? Do we really need an entire day at the end of each quarter?

Community Member

Dear County School Committee:

As a high school senior in your system, many years have passed when I have been required to watch movies, play games and basically do nothing once exams or SOL 's are given. I have also experienced many days within my 90 minute classes that used for non-academic fillers. This was very true for my middle school classes. If the county is looking to really cut costs, then you must look at the time wasted in the student classrooms.

Employee

Draft Option #1 appears to be the better of the two calendars. The 2 additional teacher preparation days in August were used for more meeting times in and outside of the building. A full two weeks during winter break is much needed for staff and students. Attending school for such a long period after SOL's is extremely difficult. Students are past ready for Summer break

Parent

Thank you for considering delaying the start of school by one week! I have been hoping for this change for many years, and I know many other parents who feel the same way. I encourage you to leave this in place for the final version of the calendar.

Parent

At the high school level we have two periods that prove to be a waste of time. The last two weeks of the first semester which come right after winter break. They become the first two weeks of the second semester. The two to four weeks after the AP tests are also wasteful. We have so many students taking those tests that the entire calendar for all students revolve around those tests. The Solution - Start the first semester 8/17 (eliminate two teacher prep days) and end it 12/23 (like many other divisions). This picks up ten instructional days before winter break and allows the first semester to be completed before the new year. Second semester starts 1/4 and runs through 5/28. This decreases the number of days following AP tests. The missed teacher workdays would be made up during the first week of June, planning for NEXT year. It would start a new expectation and allow teacher's to make changes while they are still fresh in their minds and eliminate some of the hurried planning that occurs in August. 180 days is 180 days, but they can be used more effectively.
Thanks for your time.

Community Member

Given the state of the looming budget shortfall, and the fact that our state requires 160 school days and this calendar provides 180 with this current calendar. To save money something needs to be cut, the extra twenty days need to be address by the school board. Weeks with 3 or 2 days are a waste for teachers and students. The goals of your school system need to be "about the students". Your school system that pays for teacher professional learning days may benfit the students add almost 2 weeks to the calendar. Additonally, working within the school I have noted that many teachers who want professional learning days, do this not during the scheudled days but call in a substitute, to cover the day. The fact that the costs related to the hiring of a substitue needs to be disclosed and reviewed. Most of the school parking lots are empty by noon on these professional development days, indicating to me that the entire day is not being used. Please go to the schools and see what is actually scheduled on these days and cut these from the school budget and keep the budget cuts away from the students. I also find the calendar concerning because the last two weeks of school the Jefferson Swim League with its 15,000 local swimmer will hold meets until 10pm on June, 9th and 16th during the school week.
Thirteen (13) total professional learning days: 5 prior to students returning to school in the fall (as compared to 7 in 2008-09), and 2 days per quarter

Professional responsibilities days increased to 4 (as compared to 2 in 2008-09)
Two professional learning days per quarter, one of which is a teacher work day
NO NO NO NO – Keeping students in school to MID JUNE IS INSANE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
They stop working the first of June – this calendar stinks. SOUND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE should be determining this NOT PARENT VACATION schedules!!!!~
This idea that PARENTS know best educationally has to stop.
AT LEAST start August 24 !!
This is a disaster calendar. Any teacher who approves this can teach ALL MY CLASSES IN JUNE.
I REPEAT....THIS TOTALLY IGNORES THE REALITY OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL IN JUNE – IT IS A DISASTER

Parent

I would like to see school start earlier.

Parent

Why not shift spring break back one week, to cover Passover? You could make the professional learning days April 5 and 6, to allow some families to travel back from Easter vacations on Monday or Tuesday. That would allow some people to celebrate Passover seders, and others Easter, with out-of-town families. This way no one can go out of town for Passover.

Employee

June 17th!!!! Why can't we just have a reasonable end date and stay with it? Making up snow days at the end of the year is a total waste of time because not all days in the school year are equal. I would rather have fewer work days in the year and more time with the kids before the SOL tests. The days after we have given the SOL tests are just baby sitting; no matter how hard we try, the kids are checked out. It came out this year that we have met our time requirements by day 165. Why do we have to make the snow days up? Can't we compress the school year, end student contact after the SOL tests, and then have our professional development (PLC time, CAI, short mini-classes in literacy etc.) during the days after the kids leave? This is a great time to build common assessments, look at data, write curriculum maps etc. when it is all fresh in our minds. We have a much better sense about what worked and what didn't right after the school year ends. We won't get a raise next year, but you can give us time to do our jobs. Begin asked to do more and more without giving us more time to do these things in, is causing tremendous stress and discontent among the teaching staff.

Employee

Having less professional learning days prior to students returning is an improvement. Those days are more valuable throughout the school year. However, what is the reason to start a week later? F I cannot see any advantage from an instructional point of view.

Employee

If I am working for the exact same salary as 08-09 school year, then I would like to see my 200 day contract DECREASE by at least 10 to 15 days. Working the same 200 days contract without a raise is not fair. Can't you come up with a better solution to offset not getting an increase in salaries?

Employee

Please consider the Friday of the first week of school as a teacher workday. Having your students for 3-4 days then having time to prepare once you get to know them better is a real bonus for teachers. Schedule could have school starting on Monday, Aug 24 or Tuesday, August 25. Friday, August 28 could be a teacher workday.

Parent

Going to June 10 does not allow enough time in the summer for break. Less than a month and a half off during the summer is close to having year round school. Students and staff need more time off for

vacation, especially if you are not going to give raises this year. It allows them to get temporary summer jobs to compensate their wages. We may lose good teachers for my child because of this.

Employee

I like this draft.

Employee

Wouldn't it make more sense to start school earlier and start Summer Break right after the SOL cut off date? This would allow for at least two days of extra learning of each topic covered in a course. This would have a great impact on our SOL scores and student learning.

Employee

I like the proposed length of holidays and 5 teacher preparation days. One professional development day and one teacher workday per quarter seems about right. However, given that SOL's are in May, I would prefer to start at the same time as this year and get out earlier in June. Then, we would have more instructional days prior to the SOL's.

Employee

I have an issue with a lot of days after SOL's. I understand you need to have some days, but it seems to turn more into babysitting than teaching when the SOL's are over. The students have taken their tests for the year and really aren't interested in putting in a whole lot more effort. If the SOL window is moved, I think this calendar would work well, but right now it's difficult for some teachers to fill a few weeks after SOL's; I couldn't imagine a lot of quality educational opportunities with this calendar.

Parent

I think that it would be much more productive to work towards starting the school year earlier and finishing the semester before the winter break. It makes much more sense academically. To be honest, I don't personally like starting earlier, people resist change, but I just feel the academic benefits are too clear to ignore. Before long everyone would get used to it and stop complaining...OK, Someone will Always complain :-)

Employee

Please continue to give a full two weeks for Winter Break. Students and teachers need it to recover from exam pressures and recharge for the new semester. Thank you.

Parent

This calendar looks great! I believe school has started too early the past couple years, and this is a more appropriate start date. In addition, the extra work days abutting Spring Break are a good idea. I hope this start date will not be changed to be earlier.

Employee

Starting later makes too long in June especially if it is a bad winter

Employee

I like the draft calendar a lot! I especially appreciate starting the year later and having 10 days off at Xmas. The long winter break is necessary for me to return from trips to relatives and for me to relax and recover from the holiday and from the previous months of school. Great work!

Parent

The proposed school start date for 2009 is excellent in that it allows families greater flexibility in vacation planning while still permitting teachers ample opportunity to reach SOL standards. However, inserting professional days into the calendar seems unnecessary in that teachers are or should be perfectly capable of scheduling their own professional days.

Employee

I do like the uninterrupted instruction months. What is the justification and compensation offered for the extra two professional responsibility days next year?

Employee

I am extremely satisfied with the draft of the 09/10 calendar.

Parent

I don't like how late in June we are going. I would prefer to start a week earlier - or eliminate some of those teacher workdays / professional days to shorten the school year (as it extends into June). I question the two days off prior to the start of spring break - maybe those could be eliminated. An 11 day spring break is nice, but a little over the top.

Employee

I do like the uninterrupted instruction months. What is the justification and compensation offered for the extra two professional responsibility days next year?

Employee

The delay of the start of school by a week will enable both students and instructional staff to enjoy time spent with their families and is a desirable aspect of the calendar. I appreciate the reduction of teacher pre-school work days back to 5 days. That acknowledges that teachers will be ready for the opening of school because that is what they do as professionals, but it allows teachers more flexibility to schedule vacations and summer professional development. The allowance of one teacher work day a quarter is minimal. It would be great if there were some acknowledgment of the time that teachers need to spend in planning for instruction. Additional unencumbered planning and collaborative time would result in payoffs in improved implementation of county initiatives, as well as teacher morale.

Employee

Addendum to previously submitted comments: Banked time could be used to reduce student contact days to provide additional unencumbered planning time or, alternatively, to make up for snow days at the end of the calendar, ensuring a predictable end to the school year--a benefit for families seeking to plan vacation times in June. Thank you for your consideration of diverse perspectives.

Employee

Why not start school on a Monday instead the middle of the week.
These two days could be used as banked days in case of bad weather.

Employee

5 Days in the front end seems like a lot. I suggest evaluating whether those days are "essential" to the start of school. There are no planning days in Sept, Oct, dec, mar, or may. Seems we might be better served to spread them out a bit.

I like the 2 days before spring break but what will we be "doing" during those days. Would it make more sense to have the Mon tues after spring break for planning?

I guess it is Ok and never feel the county cares what I think anyway...

Parent

I like this calendar!

Parent

Why in the world would you delay the start of school and at the same time consider ending school earlier to save money? How long might the summer become? It seems that with the opportunity afforded to start school earlier, you should seize the initiative. Splitting the first semester with a two week break after final exams in high schools is obviously ridiculous, and yet it continues. How? Move the start of school

forward and end the semester at the winter holiday. Other local districts have already begun this rational approach and it will probably help raise SOL scores as more instruction will take place before the SOL tests. In fact, the time in school spent after the SOL tests is perhaps even more absurd than the end of the first semester. Please reconsider this whole draft. The schedule as developed continues the fraud on the tax payer with wasted instructional time after exams for both semesters. Most importantly, it is bad for children who need the best education possible in the new century. Please do right by the kids and consider real and substantive change. Thanks.

Employee

One week at Spring Break is enough time to be out of school. Let's not add April 1st & 2nd to our time out of school. Let's end the year 2 days earlier, and leave Spring Break at 5 days.

Employee

Looks good!!!!

Parent

June 10th is too late for end date with SOL testing in May. Based on past history with Elementary school, little instruction happens after SOLs occur in May (grades 3, 4, and 5). SOLs appear to be treated like finals in High School and signal the end of the year. Due to the expected revenue shortfall and lack of instruction after SOLs, I suggest ending school a week earlier.

Employee

My only concern is with June 14-17 being scheduled as snow make-up days. Families and school personnel should know what the last day of school will be so that plans can be made for summer jobs, day care, summer camps, summer family time, summer school, etc. I think it's very important to know when school will end, regardless of snowy days in the winter (or other circumstances that could occur even after winter weather ends). If we absolutely must make up each and every inclement weather day (must we really?), find time in the scheduled school year to do it. I think that having the last day of school be a "mystery" right up to April (or later) is an unnecessary inconvenience to all concerned. Please find a way to set a last day, at least within a day (June 10 or 11).

Employee

Hello,

Why not save money by cutting out the excessive teacher work days? I think five all year would be reasonable.

I know of not a single teacher that feels the number of days we have carved out for workdays is reasonable. We are professionals! We will get prepared for our students as we see necessary. This "work from home" approach would save you all money and increase our morale. It could be a win-win situation.

Thanks for listening,

Employee

There are no evident changes to compensate for our lack of increased compensation for school year 2009-10! For the past month we have heard about potential carrots that would soften the blow of no raises, and further cuts. We are still working 200 days, teach students for 180, and have no promise of snow days being eliminated at the end of the school year.

How does this present itself as a compromise, and tool to retain the best work force?

Employee

How will this late start affect the number of seat hours AP students will get prior to the AP testing window opening?

Employee
I like the calendar

Employee
looks okay to me!

Employee
Right now you can't view the options. I am very discouraged to see that once again you used color coding. This means that anyone who doesn't have a color copier needs to try and decipher what is what....this has been the case for many years now...in this age of computer graphics, why can't you find a way to illustrate the calendar without the necessity of having a color printer? This makes it so user unfriendly. Why can't you change this? Parents are constantly complaining about it. And it couldn't be more frustrating for teachers.

Employee
i CANNOT OPEN THEM !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Employee
Fewer interruptions to instruction w/ Prof. Learning Days in Oct & Feb dropped.
Make 1/19 the first snow makeup day -- that gets in three make-up days before SOL testing in may.
Make-up days after SOLs are not productive.

Employee
In general I like Option 1 better. I don't like getting out later in June.

Employee
I prefer Option #1
change professional days to 10/29 and 30 instead of 11/2 and 3
make 1/19 a snow makeup day

Employee
I do not like the additional 2 days prior to Spring Break. I feel that this places an additional burden on parents to provide childcare. It also poses additional break in instruction so close to the SOL testing. I feel that the students loose so much of what they have learned prior to testing. Our students need as much uninterrupted times as possible. I also do not like starting a week earlier and possibility of ending on June 17th.

Employee
I prefer option 1; as a teacher, it is very easy to accomplish the staff development and professional development outside of contracted school time given all the opportunities that are made available to us.

Employee
I prefer Option 1.

Employee
I vote for option 1. I do not believe that 7 professional days prior to the first day back for students is necessary.

Parent
I cannot open the calendar drafts.
Thanks!

Employee
I clicked to see the drafts and they did not open. I would like to see them.

Parent
Agree

Employee

Could you please build in one or two inclement weather days that DO NOT need to be made up? IF we didn't miss any school we could get out earlier or just have the extra days of extra learning! How wonderful!

Parent

I like the proposed 1 week delay to start the year. Bravo!

Parent

Our family would love to see the days in mid-February really used as a break for the students, NOT possible (actually PROBABLE) snow make-up days. Keep all snow make-ups at the end of the year. The break is much needed by everyone, and we usually plan a short mid-winter vacation then.

Parent

The tentative calendar looks good, would prefer to have school year end no later than the first week of June.

Parent

Starting earlier in August (as in past years) to maximize instructional time prior to SOLs and AP Exams in May has to be a priority. Very little, if any, real instruction takes place in late May or early June. I also think we should condense the school year by changing some of the holidays to professional development days - e.g. make Jan 18, Apr. 5-6 professional development days and have school in session on Jan. 19, Apr. 1-2. Students don't need 7 school days off in April. Once warm weather arrives, parents, students, and teachers seem to count the days until school is out; this calendar just prolongs the last day of school with additional days off during the year. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Employee

I think we should move to a four day week.

Employee

It is not clear from the draft whether or not teachers will have a report card workday for the end of the first quarter. I don't see the two 'non student' days in November as designated for schools yet or not. If only one is a school planning day, and one is a central development day, is the school planning day automatically a teacher workday for report cards? What are the expectations for when teachers will have time to complete parent conferences? The designation for those days should be clearer and should take into account the need for completing parent conferences and completing report cards. Thank you.

Parent

Would prefer that the 2 days in April before Spring Break be somewhere else. Silly to have 7 days off in a row. Would prefer to start earlier in Aug, end earlier in June to having those days off.

Parent

This is a perfect school calendar, with the start of school a week later and winter break with ten days! I approve!!!!

Parent

I think the calendar is great! I love the later start date in August!!!

Parent

I like the 10 day holiday break; I would prefer that students start school a week earlier in August to get

out a week earlier in June. My children, and many children in Albemarle County Schools swim on a swim team. The Jefferson Area Swim Teams compete in June and July, and children practice daily. It's more difficult to organize enough practices after the school day because of limited pool space.

Parent

School starts too late and ends too late. Kids are ready to go back to school by the middle of August. If we have bad weather during the winter, kids won't get out of school until the middle of June. BAD IDEA

Parent

I really like the new calendar. It gives families more time off at spring break which is nice. I think starting later would save money on air conditioning. Then extending the date for release til later in June would also help electric bills. I also like less interruptions during the school year.

Parent

I like the starting date being later. I like the holidays and teacher workday schedule. I don't know why we have to add make up days at the end. I understand that students have the required amount of contact time without making those days up. I have one child in high school and one in elementary school. In high school, instruction is basically over when SOL's start (they count as the exam) so why add on days at the end. It is not quite so bad at elementary level, but still, we could do without those tacked on days.

Parent

Please include Labor Day 9/7 and Memorial Day 5/31 under Other Observances.

Employee

Please consider starting school earlier.

Parent

I wish that school would start after the labor day holiday. There are other localities in the state that don't start until then, and yet they don't seem to get out any later than Albemarle.

Parent

I understand the point made about possibly cutting days in June due to budgets, but the calendar as proposed starts a week too late and ends a week too late. We are all accustomed to beginning around the 19th of August and nobody wants to be in school beyond June 4. Please adjust one week earlier.

Parent

This year some Middle Schools adopted the half-day schedule during exam week as the High Schools. Is there any way something like this would be adopted for the elementary schedule? Could this be fiscally advantageous? Just a thought...

Parent

Pushing the start date back a week is a tremendous help for those of us trying to juggle summer camps for our children. This would allow my son to attend a fine arts camp, on a scholarship, and still be back in time to start marching band camp at Monticello High School which begins two weeks prior to the official first day of school. It also more closely aligns our academic calendar with those of other states and therefore facilitates being able to vacation with friends and family.

Parent

I would rather the start of the school year not be delayed. 2nd week of August would be great.

Parent

I LOVE having a two week winter break, even if it means that we have to start earlier or go later at the end of the year.

Parent

I agree with starting the school year for 2009 a week later.

Employee

I like the calendar draft. I especially like the (10)-day winter break.

Parent

Please keep the two week winter break. Two full weeks is important for the high school students who have a heavy work load and a two week break is essential for teachers at all grade levels. The teachers need time to rest and get invigorated for the remainder of the year.

Parent

Love starting later in August. Nice two weeks at Christmas again is GREAT. Seems like a long time to go from Feb-April 1st with no breaks for teachers or kids. The school year is long if we need snow days added on...can't the days be put into the calendar like they do in areas where it snows a lot. For instance, Fairport, NY or Pittsford NY?

Parent

PLEASE consider Fluvanna's calendar. It was a tough first year for them to start but now it all makes sense... timelines, SOL Testing maximizing instructional time before testing and summer time right after it is over!

Parent

I really like this calendar! I appreciate starting later in the summer. It makes a lot of sense to save \$\$ on air conditioning costs, by not cooling the schools as much in late summer. Also, I really think the 10-day break for the December holidays is wonderful and gives families time to be together, and everyone a well deserved break. I like how spring break is still set for the first week of April. And I think the increased uninterrupted time in several months will benefit the students, as well. Thanks!

Parent

I'm a teacher as well as a parent of a ninth grader at Albemarle High School. I'd like to suggest that the winter break be 2 weeks no matter when the major holidays occur. With all the stress students are under, they need a time to recover and be ready for the next semester

Parent

Not crazy about later school start and students getting out later in June.

Parent

I believe that having one(1) day off in October and one(1) day off in March, because of no holidays, etc. in those months, would be conducive to more productive learning. Because children have shorter attention spans than adults, I believe these 'breaks' would provide the necessary time to allow them to recharge and be refreshed in their willingness to be taught, and not show signs of 'burn-out'. Those 2 days could be shaved off the first 2 days of the winter break, as to not allow a long stretch in-between teaching/learning times. Thank you for the opportunity to share my input.

Employee

As a teacher and a parent, I love the 2009/2010 calendar. It allows for adequate breaks and large learning chunks when needed. The committee has termed it. "limited interruption in student learning." As a teacher that excites me. I know that my students will have heavy doses of instruction, and I won't have to struggle over and over to get them back after days off. Thanks

Community Member

I tutor math now and have taught math in the past in both the city and county school system. I also have four children who have gone through the county school system, so I am speaking as a past teacher, as a present tutor, and from a past parent's position. It is ridiculous when make-up days are added at the end

of the school year. The days need to be made up before AP exams are administered. For those students in AP classes who will be taking the AP exams, those make-up days after AP exams are pointless!

Parent

Love the delay in the start of school in August!

Employee

I like this school calendar. This way we don't feel rush with going back to school it gives me longer time to spend with the children.

Parent

Winter Break is too long.. Most parents will only get Dec 24th/25th, Dec 31st/Jan 1st off next year. Causing many parents to find day care (expensive at that) for elementary and middle school students. Go the three days (use it as High School mid-terms) until the 23rd and get out three days earlier. It will be easier on parents and students. Going abruptly so much longer into June will set summer schedules on end. Most camps start 1st full week in June, plus you give no break for summer school preparations if school gets extended due to weather - that isn't fair to teachers either that need to prepare. I do not understand the two day extension at spring break - that hasn't been there before. Again, don't understand the purpose other than trying to elongate the school year. Don't do those two days and get out two days earlier in June. That means there are 5 unnecessary days off. I didn't see when graduation would be. With a 2010 graduate it would be nice to see how graduation fits in with this longer school year schedule.

I like the fewer long weekends as a working parent. Makes it easier to deal with elementary aged students and finding day care which can be as much as \$50+ a day per student + transportation and awkward hours.

Not sure why the departure so much from past calendars - some good and some bad moves in my opinion - but without understanding more why - its hard to comment other than I have.

Employee

A teaching contract of 185 days would be a great way to compensate that no pay raise for next school year!

Parent

As working parents, we need to send our children to camp during the summer. Due to the limited number of camps available in the month of August our preference is for school to begin earlier rather than a week later as proposed in next year's calendar.

Parent

I love the starting date, the Christmas break..thank you. I do feel like we could trim a few days of the end of the year, after all teachers are not getting pay increases and SOLS are finished by the end of May. It would also save a weeks or so's work of fuel...a money savers.

Employee

Let me clarify a couple of money-saving options I see as potentially viable:

Give teachers the option to work from home for a certain number of teacher work days while participating in discussion forums, PLC meetings, etc. via cyberspace mediums such as Blackboard. I really feel utilizing technology more could be this county's saving grace in regards to the extremely tight budget. You could justify a small teacher pay cut to save precious budget money and, in turn, cut out a number of teacher work days from the calendar (six total would be adequate. One or two (at most!) on the front and back ends of the calendar would be sufficient. Also, it is useful to have one teacher work day at the end of grading periods but beyond that, in my opinion, it's overkill. In NY state, for example, teachers have a total of three teacher work days per year. From anecdotal evidence, I hear it is an optimal set-up.

Trust us as professionals who will get our work done on our own time and we will make you proud (and less stressed about the budget)!

Again, thanks for listening. In the past few months, I've noticed an increase in communication opportunities between downtown staff and teachers. We appreciate being heard and hope you will take our opinions to heart.

Employee

1) I would like to start the school year around Aug 19 so that the semester could end BEFORE the winter break. It is hard to give a final exam to students who still have 2 weeks of class when we return from break.

2) Consider the long stretches that students are in school about 6 weeks at time. You will see an increase in discipline referrals and students in OSS.

3) Also consider that AP testing and SOL testing occur during May, and having school end 2 or 3 weeks later is a loss in educational time.

Employee

I like this calendar.

Parent

I am very happy that you have delayed the opening of school. I would think that starting on the Monday rather than the Wednesday could give a day off in October at the end of the nine weeks. Please do not start on the 19th of August- it is way too early!

Parent

I really like the later start in August. The longer 3rd quarter makes a lot of sense also since this is important time to learn the heart of the curriculum. Putting the professional learning days right before Spring Break also is a great idea so as not to break up instruction at other times. Looks great!

Parent

I am very pleased with the proposed schedule, especially the later starting date and 10 day winter holiday.

Parent

Love it! The calendar is perfect. School starting a week later is great, so the kids can enjoy another week at the pool, and having a few extra days for spring break is great too. Don't change a thing!

Employee

Positive aspects of the calendar:

Limited days in the classroom at the beginning of the year and a delayed start to the school year are ideal. It is important to be prepared, but our true work begins when the students arrive.

Two full weeks of winter break are necessary to rejuvenating students and teachers for the rest of the year. It is a welcome and restorative break.

Additional time in the classroom without students is essential to being prepared, and the placement of these days in conjunction with other responsibilities, is thoughtful. The months with limited interruptions allow for regularity of schedule and established routines to be effective in our school.

The considerations posted at the top of the web page regarding snow days and the end of the student year is also an important and I'm pleased that they have been included. Since we already attend school beyond the state requirements in days and hours, this consideration can be very valuable. Because the SOLs are in May, this leaves two to three weeks following the end of coursework that may turn into less meaningful projects and less than quality teaching.

Please consider the non-monetary compensation that can be built into a meaningful calendar. Complete with work days, days without students, and responsible planning time, teachers value the built-in breaks in a school calendar.

Employee

Cut 10 teacher Professional Development days to allow us the flexibility to work from home if we choose to save childcare costs since we won't be getting any raise, step or cost of living increase. After all, time is money and if we're not getting any increase in \$\$ it is effectively a decrease. Due to the severity of the economic situation, the county should decrease our contract time and allow us to save \$\$ where ever we can or even convert some of that time to income producing possibilities.

Employee

Since we are getting in fact a pay cut by not getting the cost of living increase or step increase (I understand and support the idea of preserving jobs rather than get those increases). However, I strongly urge the school board and superintendent to consider decreasing the staff 200 day contract to 190 days. That would effect the proposed calendar by subtracting some of the staff reporting days. Thank you for considering this comment.

Employee

Could you please build in one or two inclement weather days that DO NOT need to be made up? IF we didn't miss any school we could get out earlier or just have the extra days of extra learning! How wonderful!

Employee

I don't see any "draft" to discuss. However, here are my comments on some issues that are floating around. In my opinion, it is detrimental to reduce the school year in any way. Therefore, the amount to reduce it should be determined by what satisfies the budget.

The SOLs should be thrown out now that there is not enough budget to fund their attainment, and certainly not enough budget for the marginal populations to attain the standards. Then no one will question the necessity of days of school after SOL testing.

Staff development days often impede the work that staff members really need to do on those days, so in order to spend funds well on this, staff should define what they need input on, and funds should be spent to do exactly that for only the people who want that development.

Five paid holidays would bring Albemarle County staff to the same number as most other school systems.

Employee

Please provide your comments about the calendar draft: Please do not shorten the school year. We need time to teach the kids!

Employee

One of the additions I would like to see to the calendar for next year is additional time built in for teachers to analyze test data and work in their PLCs. An additional planning day at the end of the nine weeks would provide this opportunity at the appropriate time. Most teachers are giving assessments near the end of the nine weeks and an additionally planning day would allow not only time for data analysis but adjustment to instruction. This opportunity could directly impacting student achievement. The time could be taken from the number of days we are provided before school starts for professional development.

We often spend the days before school starts in meetings. While some of the meetings are very productive, they often lead to frustration. Teachers come back from the break ready to get started and most often want to be in their rooms getting ready for their students- planning curriculum, and establishing a positive learning environment. Often the momentum the first day back to work brings is lost within the first three days of the work week because teachers perceive they aren't being allowed to do their "work".

Another change that would be welcome to the school calendar is to end the semester before winter break. Most of the high schools and a couple of middle schools are giving their midterm assessments before winter break already. I believe that one middle school gives their semester SOLs before the break. Ending the semester before this break would have a positive impact for both students and teachers by providing a true break in the middle of the school year. Teachers would have more time in

the first half of the year to cover curriculum and students would have the appropriate amount of instruction before the midterm assessments/SOLs.

Employee

As a teacher I feel like we have too much time before school starts. I would prefer to have these extra days spread through the year as days where I can make adjustments or come up with strategies to meet the needs of students being currently served.

Employee

1. Aug. 20th is too early, Aug. 31st makes sense
2. All of the school planning days are ridiculous. I work as a substitute teacher in Alb. Co. There is plenty of time to work on grades during the work week. It may require staying until 5:00 some days, but that type of thing is expected in workplaces when there is a project with a deadline.
3. Pick one-- Martin Luther King Day OR President's Day. I vote for Feb.
4. Spring Break - I prefer with UVA, the second week in March or so.
5. NO school planning day in June before the students are released. It's almost impossible to plan for summer vacation as it is with the possibility of snow days.

Thank you for your consideration.

Parent

I have 2 primary comments: 1. S.O.S ---Save Our Summers! Please be sensitive to our children's ever-shrinking weeks of summer vacation. This is one of the few times of the year for our children to spend time with their families--mid-year school holidays are rarely conducive to travelling or visiting with out-of-town family. 2. It would be helpful to not have all of the teacher work-days or long-weekend holidays scheduled on the same days of the week. ie. have a mix of Fridays vs Mondays as the day scheduled for no students or holiday when it is not tied to a national holiday. Having a variety of weekdays would be less damaging to working- parent calendars.

Comments

Please consider a start date that has the last day of school as close to the end of May as possible. The days of instruction after SOL and AP testing are not as valuable as those that take place before testing. I know that many people do not like starting before Labor Day but academically the earlier start makes more sense.

Comments

Comments: Labor Day will be one week later in 2009. Therefore, I would urge the Calendar Committee to make the start of school one week later as well. This will allow families better planning for the summer vacation period and still not detract from the instructional needs of students in meeting the proscribed Standards of Learning.

Parent

We'll have two kids at SRE and two kids at Burley.
We hope they can once again have two full weeks off for Christmas.
Attend on Friday 18th and again on Monday 4th.

Parent

It is very nice to have joint holiday and work day schedules as my children attend Stone Robinson ES and I work with students at Charlottesville HS. Please incorporate that same element for the 2009-2010 schedule. Thanks for your work on this project.

Comments

Hi--

I think school should start the last week of August and have two weeks for the winter break. The school system could save money by not cooling the building for so long in August (it will be cooler in June and not require as much energy). In December, we could save heating costs by closing for two weeks. If you want to save money, this is an easy way to do it.

Employee

I would like to see a draft of the calendar in order to make comments. I have searched the site and can't find it. I was told there was a copy that went out and school is possibly going to be starting later and we will finish later in June. I am not in favor of that change.

When the new draft is available tomorrow I would like a copy sent to me.

Thank you

Employee

Build in more makeup days into the calendar for inclement weather, use staff development days and MLJ Day the day after along with Presidents Day and day after as makeup days. Adding days onto the end of the school year is tough on the students and teachers with no break from spring break to middle of June. Makeup days earlier in the year will allow for instruction to stay on track for SOL testings and student assessments. Also add early release days for staff development to be held those afternoons.

Why not save money by cutting out the excessive teacher work days? I think five all year would be reasonable.

I know of not a single teacher that feels the number of days we have carved out for workdays is reasonable. We are professionals! We will get prepared for our students as we see necessary. This "work from home" approach would save you all money and increase our morale. It could be a win-win situation.

A longer winter holiday break is much appreciated! I am more than willing to stay a few days later in June in order to have a 2-week break in December-January.

Comments

The calendar this year is great. However, I think the board should very seriously look into a 4 day school week with longer school days in an effort to save energy and personnel costs for next year. However, if teachers will be putting in the same amount of contracted time (with longer days), their salaries should remain competitive so to not lose them to surrounding counties.

Comments

City teachers have FIVE paid holidays. The county teachers have ZERO. Please consider making that the same in both calendars.

Comments

1. Retain the current Wed-Fri break for Thanksgiving. 11/25/09 through 11/27/09 This enables families to travel.
2. Retain the current, full two week, Winter/Christmas break which includes New Year's day. For 2009-2010 the time would be 12/21/09 through 1/1/10 with school resuming on 1/4/10.
3. Retain a full spring break week that cannot be lost due to snow days. Dates 4/5/10 through 4/9/10.
4. Cut down on the number of teacher workdays prior to the beginning of school. A week (5 days) is more than adequate.
5. Retain the January Martin Luther King holiday.

Comments

I like this year's calendar. I especially like the day of planning after each marking period and the set spring break.

Comments

Why do we keep starting earlier and earlier? We started ridiculously early so more meetings could be dictated. They make us completely tear our rooms down at the end of the year. We need time to put it all back together. Why can we be trusted to be doing our PLC's on our own without it being dictated? We are professionals! I need time at the beginning to put my room back in order and begin planning out the beginning of the year with my PLC. I want to be able to do that when it works best for me not around meetings. There is too much interrupted time with meetings that are poorly run and a waste of time. Furthermore, those of us who take classes in the summer for licensure or a masters were not done with the summer classes before we had to start. Therefore, I had to miss either the last class or a day of work. This penalizes me for trying to better myself as an educator.

Employee

I am the teacher rep to the Advisory Committee and have received the following:

1. If we maybe losing 15 days next year, wouldn't it be better to have that determined before doing the calendar...such as where, not just at the beginning or end, but throughout the year.
2. Not all workdays or inservice days should be on a Monday, as it means the same classes are missed. Some Fridays would work as well. (In elementary schools, specials are usually one day a week.)
3. The two week Christmas break scheduled for this year, should be kept for next year.
4. An actual person to contact about this calendar would be helpful. (Who are the teacher, administrative reps on this committee?)

Employee

I do like the uninterrupted instruction months. What is the justification and compensation offered for the extra two professional responsibility days next year?

Albemarle County Public Schools School Calendar – Draft 2 Comments Received

Parent

Please consider giving the students the whole week of Thanksgiving off to ease the rush in traveling to visit family at that time. Those two days could be added to the beginning of the year since you are planning such a late start anyway.

Parent

The two extended breaks is still very difficult on working families. It is extremely difficult to get the time off or find reasonably affordable care for school age children for such an extended time. Most professionals only get 10-11 holidays off a year. I see no need to have the winter break be two weeks given how the holidays and new year fall in 2009. Given the late start and long break - midterm exams should not be moved to after the break and not squeezed into December. Not shown on here is graduation dates for 2010 - how are they affected by this extended into June schedule?

Employee

This draft balances instructional needs of students and promotes family time around holidays. I prefer the later start in August and hope that this will take place next year and beyond.

Parent

Please provide your comments about the calendar drafts: Last year, my child had no class work for the last two weeks of school. WHY ARE WE WASTING MONEY, OUR TIME, AND OUR CHILD'S SUMMER LIKE THIS??? These kids are finished with instructional time after the SOL's. Let us get these kids out of school before Memorial day.

You all are going to drive more and more parents into home-schooling or private schools and LOOSE YOUR GOVERNMENT FUNDING for lack of enrollment, if you keep adopting ridiculous policies like 'the more hours spent in the classroom, the brighter the students will be'.

Please think long and hard about your decisions...they have great effect on more than you think.

Employee

This draft balances instructional needs of students and promotes family time around holidays. I prefer the later start in August and hope that this will take place next year and beyond.

Parent

Hi there, could you please explain the rationale for going later in June? We are starting earlier and going later? I don't recall having days before and after Spring break without students? Thank you.

Parent

Thank you all for putting in great effort to make a calendar that is thoughtful, streamlined, and provides some breaks of good length that allow families to spend time together. The Winter Break being 2 full weeks is especially nice when a family has older children in college, as this two weeks allows the school age children a good amount of time with those older siblings while they're home.

That said, would you all consider moving the staff development days scheduled for April 1&2 to mid-October for a Fall break? There is a long stretch from Sept 7 - Nov 2 with no break.

I think the idea mentioned above of considering not making up snow days or shortening the time in June to help save money should be strongly considered. The last week of school is often really wasted time, as far as the kids report, and if they already have the required hours, it seems prudent to do all we can to save wherever it's possible during these tight economic times.

Parent

Hi there, could you please explain the rationale for going later in June? We are starting earlier and going later? I don't recall having days before and after Spring break without students? thank you.

Parent

Please provide your comments about the calendar drafts: While I am a parent of a high school student, I am also an HR professional in the area. Ten days off for the winter break can be difficult for employees and employers to juggle.

Community Member:

Today I counted the number of cars at my middle school and elementary school in my development. If it is a teacher work day and there are 60 or so teachers in the middle school why were there only 31 cars. I was there at 10am to 11am and again at 1pm to 2pm. The elementary only had 17 cars. Is it possible to again look at the teacher work days, replace them with student days and reduce the number of days on your calendar. On the last work day there were even less cars. Are we just paying teachers to work from home on report cards? Be more conservative in your spending and keep the students in school for 13 more days during the year and start school after labor day, and end before it get too hot in June.

Parent

I think having two teacher work days on either side of Spring break in April Should not be done. That makes working parents have to find care or take off for too long - 7 work days. Not everyone jets off on vacation.

Parent

I'm pleased with the changes to the calendar. I really like the fact that you moved one of the professional days surrounding Spring Break to AFTER the break instead of having both before the break.

I strongly encourage the Board to keep the 180 instructional days for student's. The US seems to lag behind many other developed countries in the world and keeping the 180 instructional days seems to me to be absolutely essential.

Parent

Why not stick the professional day on April 12th in March. That way the kids are not off another day during spring break, but are given a 3-day weekend in March, which otherwise has no days off.

Please identify how you are affiliated with Albemarle County Schools: Parent

Please provide your comments about the calendar drafts: The 11 day spring break is way too long for students. Take a couple of those days and end the school year sooner - June 10 is way too late, especially when compared to other school systems AND the fact that we started in August. Would still rather start Aug 24, or even earlier.

Employee

I am concerned that the SOL testing dates have been starting earlier than in prior years. We are starting to test this year on April 27th. If the last day of school next year is June 10th, I am hoping that end-of-course SOL testing will NOT begin in April. Is there anyway to find out the SOL testing window for next year before the calendar is approved.

Parent

June 10 (without snow days) is too late to end the school year. Push back the start date so we don't potentially lose most of June next year!

Parent

My primary complaint, once again, is the fact that students start school absurdly early, during the month of August. This is out of sync with how the rest of the academic and work world functions, denying families two weeks of summer vacation. I can guarantee that my children will not be attending school during several of those days prior to Labor Day, as we will have vacation plans.

My second complaint is the equally absurd amount of time during the school year that school is not in session due to breaks, teacher "work days", etc. Why you think that Christmas break should be 16 days long and Spring break should be 11 days long is beyond me. These long breaks put a real burden on families that must arrange for child care. Not all of us live in the fantasy world that teachers and school board members do, and we must work for a living on a normal work schedule.

Lastly, the 'teacher work days' that litter the schedule need to be reduced. Why can't teachers attend work shops, etc after school, on weekends, or during those long breaks when students do not attend? I have to maintain my professional development and studies on my own time with my own money, and it can be done. It is yet another example of the way the parents, students, and taxpayers are taken advantage of by the public school system.

Employee

There are too many days for spring break. I realize one of those days is a make-up day. However, I think that is too many days for students to be off for spring break. It is a busy time of year at the schools for both staff and students.

Community Member

The calendar generally looks good. However, in considering starting later, all the committee did was start one week later but then added the week to the end of school. That doesn't help. One way to save overhead and operational costs is to take away professional development days 8/18, 11/3, 2/16, and 4/12. Then you can end the school year on 6/4. The professional development time could be handled by having teachers stay after school twice a month for 1 and 1/2 hours. It will still be the same number of professional development contact hours. BE SURE TO TELL THEM THAT IS WHY the after school

hours, or you know they will not be happy. Everyone would be happy to end the year a little earlier. You save operating costs by not using the buildings extra days.

Parent

It is extremely disruptive to parent's work schedules to be off 2 days (one the Fri. prior and one the Mon. after) in ADDITION to the week of spring break. Most families are not going on vacation that week (or not the entire week) because they cannot afford it, and many work places only allow a week off at a time. Adding one day prior and one day after will be very difficult for many to manage.

Employee

Please provide your comments about the calendar drafts: Two "Professional Learning Days" around spring break?

WHY?

Teachers WILL SKIP one . . . or BOTH!

Students/families do not need!

This just DRAGS out school year unnecessarily.

Community Member:

Has consideration been given to using "Bank Time" for snow makeup days? This is done in several of the surrounding school systems and does not seem to effect their overall student learning curve. It also saves the County money by not having to run the buses later on in the year when student productivity is low. Time in school after the week of Memorial Day is not truly very productive with the students, no matter how creative your staff may be.

Parent

Early drafts are very helpful as parents plan their work calendars early for the following year. Thanks for making these available by the new year.

Parent

The potential last day of school is so late which will have a huge negative impact with those who need summer jobs; summer school(1st session) give the students NO break between regular calendar school & summer school; some colleges have summer orientation for incoming Freshman in June & they might not be out of school.

STUPID to have 6 school days off breaking up 2 weeks for spring break; Begin August 19th to help eliminate lateness in June; Use Both Feb days as snow days. This is one of the worst calendars developed in a long time!! PLEASE GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Parent

Would it be possible to have some Fridays for student holidays? I know several years ago, there were some Mondays and some Fridays . THis year and the tentative schedule for next year show the majority of the holidays on Mondays and Tuesdays. I believe it would benefit a lot of families who could more easily take off on a Friday to go on a trip or just to be home with students. Thanks for your hard work and your consideration.

Parent

Would it be possible to have some Fridays for student holidays? I know several years ago, there were some Mondays and some Fridays . This year and the tentative schedule for next year show the majority of the holidays on Mondays and Tuesdays. I believe it would benefit a lot of families who could more easily take off on a Friday to go on a trip or just to be home with students. Thanks for your hard work and your consideration.

Parent

The total of 7 days off at Spring Break (5 break days and 2 professional learning days) will be difficult for working parents. Please consider moving those 2 professional learning days to times not running into such a long break.

Parent

No...Please don't start that late! I start work in another county on August 11th. When the children start around the 20th of August, it's already difficult enough to get child care (both my husband and I work outside the home). You are adding almost an entire week to our plight. And I am sure I am not the only one in this situation!!!