




PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227
Telephone: (503) 916-3200 / Fax: (503) 916-3110
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3107 / 97208-3107

Date: January 18, 2020
To: Board of Education
From: Guadalupe Guerrero 
Superintendent
Subject: 2020-21 School District Calendar Update & Recommendation

Staff has continued gathering and considering feedback from a cross-section of stakeholders in preparing this school calendar formal recommendation, per Board Policy 3.20.010-P Annual Calendar. Based on some feedback from both teachers and parents, we are making an adjustment to the 2020-21 draft recommendation calendar shared previously to alternatively reflect a Wednesday, September 2nd start of school for students.

There was some level of debate regarding whether students' start of the school year should be a full week or whether there would be an experienced benefit from a mid-week start. A number of parents and teachers suggested that a shorter week and return-to-school might better permit younger children to ease back into the routine of school. Given that Labor Day actually appears on September 7th during the second week of the month, we agreed in discussion with PAT leadership, to try the later mid-week start this school year -with an understanding that we would evaluate afterwards how it goes as compared to this past year's full-week start. This still permits the district to frontload several instructional days, which also better ensures high school seniors have a margin or cushion of days to meet instructional time requirements prior to scheduled graduation ceremonies at the close of the school year (with the exception of a more severe winter that could result in canceled classes and where other measures would need to be implemented for seniors specifically).

Visually, the Communications and Language Access Departments created a new-look calendar intended to make it easier for families to navigate. Besides this revised appearance, the draft calendar for next year includes in a consistent manner many of the features and considerations that were factored into the school calendar the past two years:

- Maintain the start of the school year on a date prior to Labor Day; this proposed 2020-21 calendar starts on Wednesday September 2nd and ends on Friday, June 11th. As a reference point compared to other local school districts: Lake Oswego has published a start date of August 31st; Beaverton has published a start date of September 8th.
- Goal of ensuring semesters and quarters have a balanced number of instructional days; attempt to balance length of quarters: Q1 = 45 days; Q2 = 45 days; Q3 = 43 days; Q4 = 44 days
- Attempt to create a more student-focused, family-friendly school calendar, per input received; this recommended calendar continues to eliminate school late starts and early

dismissals for next school year and attempts to preserve five full uninterrupted instructional days in a typical week where possible.

- No scheduled classes are proposed during Thanksgiving week to: support family childcare planning, permit parent-teacher conferences to take place, and minimize the short weeks in the month of November.
- Effort to keep teacher planning days on Mondays or Fridays to avoid district-identified student breaks in the middle of the week (the exception is Federal holiday of Veteran's Day on Wed., Nov. 11th).
- Ensure calendar follows all bargaining units' contracts, including agreed upon provisions per the ratified PAT contract (there remains the task of identifying the thirty specific dates designated for staff meetings)
- Coordination of spring break with local university calendars, to align with schedules of older siblings and university student interns who work in our classrooms (PSU and Concordia also have spring break scheduled for the week of March 22nd-26th)
- Desire to maximize instructional days prior to Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and other end-of-year summative assessments taking place
- Ensure enough instructional hours for seniors. The last day for 12th graders will be June 2nd, and graduations will start on June 6th.
- Avoidance of having school end for students on a Monday or Tuesday in June

Again, staff sought out feedback from a broad array and representation of stakeholders, including PAT, PFSP, PAPSA, several district departments, and representatives from numerous school PTAs. These responses have been considered prior to this formal school calendar recommendation to the Board for its consideration on the January 21st regular meeting agenda.

*A more specific PPS work-year calendar(s) that builds on this student calendar and identifies work day and professional development day expectations for PAPSA, PAT, & PFSP members, will be shared broadly so that there is clarity and advance notice communicated to our various employee groups. This PPS educator calendar(s) will be produced and posted upon completion of current professional development planning and discussions with our labor partners.