

SY2020-23 DCPS Calendar FAQ

How does DCPS determine the calendar?

DCPS schedules a minimum of 180 instructional days as well as several out-of-school days during the academic year. Many of these days are mandatory due to provisions in the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) or the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). After accounting for these requirements, DCPS has limited flexibility over what types of days to place on the calendar but does have flexibility in when these days are scheduled. Based on DCMR and WTU CBA requirements as well as community feedback from prior school years, a committee of DCPS leaders creates a draft DCPS calendar proposal and solicits public input to make final adjustments. The committee works hard to balance the needs of different stakeholders to ensure all voices are given equal consideration.

What is required by DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR)?

DCMR requires 180-185 student days¹ and requires all government employees to receive a holiday on the following days:

- Labor Day, 1st Monday in September
- Columbus Day, 2nd Monday in October
- Veterans Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, 4th Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, December 25
- New Year's Day, January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 3rd Monday in January
- Inauguration Day, January 20 (every 4th year)
- President's Day, 3rd Monday in February
- District of Columbia Emancipation Day, April 16
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May
- Independence Day, July 4
- *Note: If a legal holiday occurs on Saturday, the Friday immediately before is a legal public holiday and if a legal holiday occurs on Sunday, the Monday immediately following is a legal public holiday.*²

DCMR also requires that students have a maximum of 185 regular instructional days that shall be at least 6 hours in length.³ Additionally, DCMR specifies Carnegie Unit requirements that require students to receive 120 hours of classroom instruction over the course of an academic year (or 60 hours for half-year courses).⁴ This requires DCPS to maintain balanced terms with a minimum of 44 days per term to achieve required instructional hours.

What is required by the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?

¹ DCMR Section 5-A 2806.1

² Title XII of the District of Columbia Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1978 (CMPA) Section 1220.1

³ DCMR Section 5-A 2806.2

⁴ DCMR Section 5-A 2299.1

The WTU CBA requires 10-month teachers to have a maximum of 196 work-days.⁵ It also requires a minimum of 10 Professional Development days⁶ and a half-day record-keeping day at the end of each term.⁷ The CBA allows for up to four parent-teacher conferences, including up to three (3) non-instructional days and one (1) Back-to-School night.⁸

Why is the first day of school the final Monday in August each year?

Stakeholder feedback on preferred start dates has been mixed over the past several years. Although many DCPS parents have advocated for an earlier start to the school year, many staff members have asked to push the start date back to after Labor Day to be consistent with the surrounding jurisdictions in which they live. For the current school year (SY19-20), DCPS began school on the last Monday in August to split the difference between these two key stakeholder groups, and DCPS is maintaining the final Monday in August as the start date over the next three years to create consistency over time.

How did DCPS solicit public feedback?

DCPS staff spent several weeks sharing the draft calendar proposal with various constituent groups, including the Chancellor's Principal and Teacher Advisory Boards. DCPS also invited feedback from all community members through an open survey on DCPS' website. DCPS asked principals to share the survey with their communities, and it was promoted through DCPS social media and other online platforms (e.g. NextDoor). Over 3,000 parents, teachers, and community members representing every school in DCPS shared feedback on the proposal.

What did the public feedback indicate?

DCPS is especially conscious of soliciting community feedback on specific changes where DCPS has freedom to act and on changes that would be a departure from past practice. Thus, the feedback survey targeted a few key themes: Election Days, Breaks, Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTC), and Professional Development (PD).

The key trends for each theme are as follows:

- **Election Days:** 85.7% of respondents prefer for DCPS to continue to treat Election Days as non-instructional days for students, and both parents and teachers prefer for it to be a holiday for students and teachers. However, most respondents (55.5%) prefer to continue instruction on primary election days rather than treating them the same as general election days.
- **Breaks:**
 - **Thanksgiving:** Respondents have a very strong preference (80%) for a three-day Thanksgiving holiday.
 - **Winter Break:** Nearly half of all respondents prefer the winter break lengths included in the proposal (eight days in SY20-21, seven days in SY21-22, and eight days in SY22-23).

⁵ Washington Teacher's Union, Collective Bargaining Agreement (Oct.1, 2016-September 30, 2019) Article 23, Section 23.1.1.2

⁶ Washington Teacher's Union, Collective Bargaining Agreement (Oct.1, 2016-September 30, 2019) Article 2, Section 2.6.1

⁷ Washington Teacher's Union, Collective Bargaining Agreement (Oct.1, 2016-September 30, 2019) Article 19, Section 19.3

⁸ Washington Teacher's Union, Collective Bargaining Agreement (Oct.1, 2016-September 30, 2019) Article 23, Section 23.9

- **February Break:** A slight majority (54.5%) advocate for the addition of February Break in SY20-21, and an even greater majority (68.2%) advocate for keeping February Break in SY21-22 and SY22-23. February Break was also the most cited topic in the open feedback with over 300 respondents advocating to keep the break and many explicitly advocating for a full week break.
- **Spring Break:** Nearly 65% of respondents prefer that DCPS keep spring break aligned with DC Emancipation Day as proposed.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTC):** Most respondents (65.1%) prefer that DCPS offers two PTCs each year. Several respondents also shared in the open feedback question that they would prefer for PTC before PD when the two are coupled to allow families to travel on the weekend and to give teachers a non-instructional day after PTC.
- **Professional Development:** 50% of respondents prefer that DCPS keep three district-wide PD Days during the year rather than extending pre-service.

What adjustments did DCPS make to the calendar based on public feedback?

Public feedback on the proposed calendar was generally in favor of the current calendar structure.

However, DCPS made the following revisions to the calendar proposal based on public feedback:

- DCPS kept the 6th day of pre-service outlined in the proposal. However, DCPS will provide clear guidance to schools that that this date should be used for classroom set-up for teachers.
- DCPS reduced the number of parent teacher conferences per year from three to two and changed the order of PTCs and PD such that PTCs will take place on Thursdays and PD will be on Fridays.
- DCPS created a brief February Break in SY20-21 and extended February Break to a full week in SY21-22 and SY22-23. This required slight adjustments to re-balance term days and one additional day for students at the end of each year.

Why does DCPS not include religious holidays as non-instructional days for students?

The DCPS community includes followers of many faith traditions, and it is not feasible to include all DCMR-required holidays and religious holidays as non-instructional days. That said, wherever possible, we seek to avoid scheduling critical days for staff or students (i.e. Testing, Parent-Teacher Conferences, PD days, etc.) on major religious holidays because we want students and staff to be able to take leave on these days without significant hardship. DCPS encourages students and staff in the exercise of their religion and respects students' and employees' leave requests for religious observances.

Did DCPS extend the school year?

No, DCPS students will continue to attend 180 instructional days per year. Given the start date at the end of August and the inclusion of the February Break, DCPS must end slightly later in June than surrounding districts. However, the total days for students and for 10-month employees is consistent with prior years.

When is the graduation window each year?

For SY20-21, seniors' last day will be Friday, June 11, and graduation ceremonies will take place between Saturday, June 19 and Thursday, June 24.

For SY 21-22, seniors' last day will be Friday, June 10, and graduation ceremonies will take place between Friday, June 17 and Wednesday, June 22.



For SY 22-23, seniors' last day will be Friday, June 9, and graduation ceremonies will take place between Saturday, June 17 and Thursday, June 22.

What are the first and last days for 11-month staff?

The first and last reporting dates for 11-month staff members during the upcoming three school years is still under review. Once the dates have been finalized, communication will be sent to staff directly and will be included in relevant newsletters.