

How DCPS Schedules the Calendar

Step 1: Days that Must Be Placed on the Calendar

DCPS schedules several different types of days during the academic year. Many of these days are mandatory due to provisions in the DCMR or WTU agreement. In total, we need 45 weeks to accommodate all days on the calendar.¹

Days	Event	Reason
180	Student days	DCMR requires 180-185 student days
10	DC government holidays	DCMR requires all government employees to receive a holiday on specific days (ex. Christmas Day)
16	Student breaks (excluding DC government holidays)	At the discretion of DCPS (ex. Winter Break, Spring Break)
10	PD days (including pre-service week)	WTU requires a minimum of 10 PD days
3	Parent-Teacher Conferences	WTU requires a non-instructional day for teachers if we choose to host Parent-Teacher Conferences. DCPS can host 0-3 Parent-Teacher Conferences at its discretion
2	Term record-keeping days	WTU requires a half-day record-keeping day at the end of each term
3	Back-up days reserved for snow-day make-ups	At the discretion of DCPS. This helps to ensure we don't have to cancel Parent-Teacher Conferences or extend the year an additional week into June to meet the 180 requirement in the event of snow days
224	Total days (Mon-Fri)	
45	Total weeks	

Sometimes we split these days into half-days. For example, there are actually 4 half-day record-keeping days that are equivalent to 2 full-days. We pair a half-day record-keeping day with a half-day of PD or a half-day of instruction to preserve the accounting.

Finally, we are constrained by a WTU provision that requires teachers to have a maximum of 196 work-days.² This restriction, in addition to the requirements above, means that DCPS has limited flexibility over **what** types of days to place on the calendar. Our only flexibility comes from **when** these days are scheduled.

¹ For traditional schools. Extended Year schools must include all of these days too, but may add additional days to the calendar for instruction, intersession, student breaks, or other purposes.

² This requirement only applies to employees on a 10-month salary contract, which is the vast majority of our teachers.

Step 2: Reserve Religious Holidays

The DCPS community includes followers of many faiths. Wherever possible, we seek to avoid scheduling any important days (i.e. Parent-Teacher Conferences, PD days, etc.) on the following holidays. We want students and staff to be able to take vacation on these days without a significant hardship.

Christian:

- Ash Wednesday
- Good Friday
- Easter
- Christmas
- Christmas Eve

Jewish:

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Sukhot
- Passover

Muslim:

- First Day of Muharram
- Ashura
- First Day of Ramadan
- Eid al-Fitr
- Eid al-Adha

Step 3: Decide on Strategic Priorities with Calendaring Implications

Every year, DCPS seeks to improve our education model through new initiatives and options for schools. These changes often have calendaring implications. Here's some examples of past strategic priorities that impacted the calendar:

- In SY 16-17, we began the Extended Year model at 11 schools. The Extended Year (EY) Calendar had to be developed in coordination with the Traditional Calendar.
- In SY 16-17, we also split some of our PD days into half-days and combined them with the half-day term record-keeping days. We did this in response to community feedback that it was difficult to find child-care on a half-day for students. We also did this to allow more frequent touch-points with teachers consistent with the new LEAP model of PD.
- For SY 18-19, we maintained the combination of half-day record-keeping and PD days at the end of each term and introduced the February Recess.
- For SY 19-20, we will continue to hold Election Day as a holiday for students and to combine half-day record-keeping and PD days.

Step 4: Create a Draft Calendar for Public Feedback

After considering the constraints and goals for the calendar, we gather a committee of DCPS leaders to create a draft of the calendar. The committee includes representatives from every office and program affected by the calendar. We also incorporate family and school feedback by including representatives from the Office of Family and Public Engagement and by reviewing community feedback from prior years. This committee works to balance the needs of different stakeholders and to ensure all voices are given equal weight. The committee finishes its discussions by recommending a draft calendar(s) to present to the public for feedback.

Step 5: Collect Public Feedback

We want to ensure that the calendar represents the desires of all members of our community. The Chancellor and DCPS staff present the draft calendar to various constituent groups and invite feedback from any community member through an open survey on our website. Because of the complexities of the calendaring process, we feel it's best to solicit public feedback after there is a tangible draft to react to. We are especially conscious of targeting feedback opportunities toward the specific changes where DCPS has freedom to act and on any changes that would be a departure from past practice.

Step 6: Final Decision by the Chancellor

After collecting community feedback, the Chancellor will review the desires of various stakeholders and make a final decision on the calendar.