

SY 2019-20 Calendar: What's New This Year?

- **Options for Election Day.** Election Day will continue to be a holiday for all students. Many of our school sites serve as polling centers, and keeping students out of school buildings during voting ensures student safety and provides better access for voters. However, we still have options in how we could use this day, and we invite the community to weigh in on whether this day should be used for Professional Development, Parent-Teacher Conferences, or a holiday for teachers.
- **Options for Thanksgiving, Winter Break, February Recess, and Spring Break.** We want teachers and families to have sufficient time for restful holidays. In the past, we have had many community members advocate for vacation on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the full week of New Year's Day. Many have also expressed appreciation for the February Recess that was introduced in the SY 2018-19 calendar. However, we must limit the total number of holidays and breaks incorporated into the school year to ensure we are also able to provide an ample summer break for students and staff. Community members can help us decide on the best combination of breaks, and we are eager for your feedback.
- **Non-instructional days clustered around the change of term.** Teachers have shared that it's easier to conduct PD at the change of term. This is a natural pause in the school year and a time of transition between instructional units. PD Days are also cluster together to provide teachers more time to engage deeply and to minimize the number of separate non-instructional days for students.
- **More 5-day weeks.** Two years ago, many parents expressed displeasure around the number of Fridays off, citing missed instructional opportunities and difficulties with regularly securing childcare. In SY 2018-19, we attempted to make more 5-day weeks by clustering non-instructional days, and we will continue this practice in SY 2019-20.
- **Respecting Religious Holidays.** The DCPS community includes followers of many faiths. We want students and staff to be able to take an absence on religious holidays without significant hardship. To that end, we seek to avoid scheduling any important days (for example, Parent-Teacher Conferences, PD days, etc.) on any of the following holidays: Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Easter, Christmas Eve, Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukhot, Passover, First Day of Muharram, Ashura, First Day of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha.
- **No half-days for students.** Two years ago, we heard that it was hard for parents to plan around student half-days, where students would attend from 8:30am-12:00pm. This year we fully eliminated all student half-days by tweaking our model for Professional Development.