



Wall Township Public Schools 2016-2017 School Calendar

Considerations and Development

Cheryl Dyer, Superintendent

Presentation to the BOE 3/22/16



Overall Parameters

- 180 required days of instruction
- 3 days built in for students and teachers for weather related closings
- Additional days off in the spring built in that could be reclaimed as instructional days if weather related closings exceed 3 days
- 3 additional days for teachers for in-service training

Other Considerations

- Date of Monday, Labor Day- (September 5th)
- Day of the week of September 1st (Thursday)
- Staff and community input- survey from the fall, over 1,000 responses
- Educational goals- continuity of instruction, alignment with county vocational schools
- Date and day of last day of school- graduation, Project Graduation

Input from Stakeholders

- Survey sent on October 1st
 - Delivered to 3,071 contacts (email)
 - 861 responses received by October 15
- Reminder sent on October 15th
 - Delivered to 4,327 contacts (email and phone)
 - Additional 165 responses received on October 16th
- Survey closed on October 16th at end of day

Survey questions were developed by the Superintendents' Cabinet: Cheryl Dyer, Jill Dobrowansky, Brian Smyth, Carol Duffy and Kim Gentilcore

Questions Posed in the Survey

1. How important is it to you to school end by June 15?
2. Which of the following holidays should WTPS observe by closing schools? (8 possible and could write one or more in)
3. How important is to you to have a week off in February?
4. How important is it to have additional days built into the calendar as potential “re-claim” days?
5. If the district continues February break, would you prefer the week that includes President’s Day?
6. If you are opposed to the February break, would you like to see a long weekend (Friday and Monday off)?
7. We are considering options for Spring break... week before Easter or week after?
8. Are you a parent/guardian, staff member, or staff member with children in the district?
9. Comments?

Survey Participation: 1,026 total

- 622 parents/guardians
 - 61% of the total respondents
 - 26% of the families (includes staff with children in district)
 - A sample size as low as 534 would have a confidence level of 99%
- 404 staff members
 - 68 staff members who have children in WTPS
 - 336 staff members w/o children in WTPS
 - 39% of the total respondents
 - 51% of the staff responded (792 total staff not including substitutes)
 - A sample size as low as 362 would have a confidence level of 99%

*<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

Survey Input

- Which of the following holidays should WTPS observe by closing schools for staff and students?
 - Rosh Hashanah: 6.3%
 - **Columbus Day: 38.7%**
 - Yom Kippur: 7.3%
 - Election Day: 9.6%
 - **Martin Luther King Day: 39.1%**
 - **President's Day: 54.6%**
 - 1st day of Passover: 5.6%
 - **Good Friday: 78.3%**

Survey Input

- How important is it to end school by June 15th?
 - Parents: 40.5%
 - Staff: 43.5%
- How important is it to have a week off in February?
 - Parents: 45.4%
 - Staff: 60.1%
- How important are re-claim days?
 - Parents: 60.6%
 - Staff: 71.7%
- If you are opposed to the February break, would you like to see a long weekend (Friday and Monday)?
 - Parents: 50.9%
 - Staff: 75.6%

Survey Comments from Parents

- 54 comments in favor of the February break (8.6% of parent respondents)
 - Less expensive time to travel if the week before
 - Often snows that week anyway
 - Traditional break in Wall
- 73 comments opposed to the February break (11.7% of parent respondents)
 - Too many breaks- loss of instructional time and continuity
 - Can't afford to take time off from work and go on vacation
 - Child care is difficult to arrange and expensive
 - Parents are off on President's Day and kids are back in school!
 - Eliminate this break and end earlier in June when it's hot

Survey Comments

- Other comments from parents
 - Too many half-days, hard for working parents
 - Disrespectful that schools do not close for Jewish High Holy days
- Other comments from staff members
 - We need an in-service mid-year (MLK day) instead of in the fall (Columbus Day)
 - Please try to end school earlier in June
 - Like the February break instead of sporadic days off
 - Should not have to use personal days to observe my religion
 - It's wrong that we don't close on Federal holidays
 - Please keep half-days before Thanksgiving and Christmas

Development

- Survey results shared with BOE in October, input from BOE requested
- Discussed with BOE during Curriculum Committee- input received
- Discussed with administrative cabinet- input received
- Shared with WTEA as per contract in January- input received
- Adjustments made based on input from WTEA and BOE
- Confirmed availability of Atlantic Club for Project Graduation

Input on first draft

- Teachers return for in-service after Labor Day (September 6th)
- Students return on Thursday, September 8th
- No fall in-service, but close schools on November 8th for Presidential Election (schools used as polling places, security and parking concerns)
- Eliminate ½ day before Thanksgiving, reduce ½ days for conferences in the fall from 4 to 3, require evening conferences
- Eliminate the week off in February- schedule a long weekend, include President's Day as a day off
- Schedule the spring break to include Passover and Good Friday since it is possible this year
- Build in two re-claim days if possible- April 17th (Monday after Easter) and May 26th (Friday before Memorial Day)
- Last day of school and graduations would be June 21st (Wednesday)

Results- Draft Recommended

- Teachers return for in-service before Labor Day (September 1)
- Students return on Tuesday, September 6th
- No fall in-service
- Eliminate ½ day before Thanksgiving, reduce ½ days for conferences in the fall from 4 to 3, require evening conferences
- Eliminate the week off in February- four day weekend for students, three day weekend for staff, include the winter in-service on the day that students are off but staff is not
- Schedule the spring break to include Passover and Good Friday since it is possible this year
- Build in two re-claim days if possible- May 26 (Friday) and April 17 (Monday)
- End school on June 16th (Friday) rather than bringing staff and students in for Monday and possibly Tuesday (June 19th and 20th)