

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Randall Booker, Superintendent
DATE: November 8, 2017
RE: **APPROVE 2018-19 AND 2019-20 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDARS**

I. SUPPORT INFORMATION

The Instructional Calendar is a negotiated “working condition” as included in the collective bargaining process between the District and Association of Piedmont Teachers (APT). As part of the Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) process the calendar is negotiated separately from the annual openers each year. The current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is in force through June 30, 2020.

Process to Determine Recommended Calendar

As part of the calendar development process, APT membership and District representatives developed a variety of Instructional Calendar options: a parallel of this year’s calendar, opening school in the second week of August, calendars with the end the first semester prior to winter break, opening school in the last week of August, and a calendar with the first day of school beginning in the third week of August. All of these options had differing vacation breaks as well.

During APT’s election process, option B which is similar to the current instructional calendar was approved after receiving more than 63% of the votes.

Recommended Calendar

The recommended calendar highlights are as follows:

- School begins during the 3rd week of August.
- Places the end of the first semester prior to the Winter Break.
- Incorporates a Flexible Professional Development Schedule.
- School is OUT of session on Thanksgiving Week.
- Schools are closed during the February President’s Week.
- Last day of School is May 31
- Summer is extended (from the typical 9 weeks) to 10 weeks.

The Board will be requested to approve the calendar as presented since the Board reviewed the options as part of the negotiations process with the assumption that the options were acceptable.

Surveys

Although subject to negotiations, the District and APT gives consideration to input from CSEA and parents. Parents and students (grades 6-12) were an opportunity to provide input on the 18-19 Instructional Calendar by participating in a separate student and parent survey.

Over the last seven years, the District has conducted several surveys of parents and middle and high school students (in 2011, 2012, 2015, and 2017) concerning the school calendar. One of the District's goals is to support the social and emotional needs of students by reducing unnecessary student stress. One way to reduce unnecessary stress is to ensure that school vacations are in fact vacations from school. The survey results continue to indicate strong support for ending the first semester before the Winter break because this is believed to be in the best interest of students.

- Under the District's current instructional calendar, middle and high school students take exams after the winter break and then almost immediately start the second semester. Students now have an opportunity to spend their vacation time relaxing and recharging, and start the second semester rested and refreshed.
- Surveys of District students and families continue to show strong support for ending the first semester before the Winter break. In the most recent survey, 70% of District parents indicated that their "strongest preference for the timing of first semester finals" is before the break. Similarly, in the 2015 and 2012 surveys, 63% of parents and 62% of parents respectively indicated that their "strongest preference for the timing of first semester finals" was before the break (the calendar survey administered in 2011 did not address the timing of first semester finals).

Calendar Requirements

The Instructional Calendar includes setting the first and last day of school for students, non-school days for students that are either vacation or designated professional development days for staff. The setting of the semester length, report card grading periods, minimum days, conference days, and testing schedules are not subject to negotiations and are set after the Instructional Calendar is voted and approved by the APT membership and the Board of Education.

The Instructional Calendar has strict requirements from the State that must be addressed:

- 180 school attendance days – a day must be at least 325 minutes to count as a day. Funding from the State is calculated based on the attendance rate of students on the designated 180 student days in the calendar.
- Each grade level must also offer a specified total minimum number of minutes in the 180 days.

- Each grade level at each school must offer the equal amount of total minutes in the school/District (e.g., all third grades in each of the three elementary schools must offer same total minutes per year).
- Prescribed holidays included as part of the calendar with some flexibility when scheduled, except November 11, which is an “immovable holiday” and must be a non-school day if falls between Monday and Friday.
- Per local agreement, the APT base work year of 185 days that includes 180 student days, 3 professional development days and 2 work days.
- The start and end of the school year varies in districts throughout the State. Recent discussions have included the possibility of setting a calendar that allows for the semester to end prior to the traditional winter break at the end of December that goes through the beginning of the New Year.

The start and end of the school year has a direct effect on the schedule of holiday/breaks through out the school year to meet State requirements and District agreements. In addition to the State and local requirements, the Instructional Calendar is designed to support students by considering the following factors that affect all:

- A schedule that supports optimal learning and long-term retention of academic material for students in grades pre-K through grade 12.
- Balance of student workload and high stakes stressors (e.g., testing and college applications).
- Balance of work/school/family time for students, parents, and staff.
- Decision timeline that allows for planning for staff and families.
- Professional development schedule that supports teaching and learning.

II. **RECOMMENDATION: REVIEW**

Review the 2018-19 and 2019-20 Instructional Calendars and Approve as presented.