

## **2023-24 Calendar Options FAQs from Port Townsend District**

The Port Townsend School District is exploring how to allocate our 180 instructional days in 2023-24. This work is funded by Washington's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In November, the school calendar working group presented ideas to the staff and shared a survey. Based on the results, the working group has created these FAQs.

### **What is a balanced calendar?**

- The following video explains the balanced calendar concept:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahhj3wxkdM>

### **Why do we want to make this change?**

- Continuous care, food, and socialization: About half of our students are experiencing poverty and over the summer may be missing school-provided meals and connecting with other students.
- Reducing learning loss: Teachers typically have to re-teach at the beginning of the year. Shortening the summer can reduce learning recovery needs.
- Reducing Burnout: longer and/or more frequent breaks during the year will help staff and students return with more energy.
- Options for Intervention: Instead of waiting until summer, breaks during the year can be used to prevent course failure and provide other interventions.

### **How short could the summer be?**

- In a balanced calendar, the summer break is never shorter than six weeks.
- In the past, PT Schools' summer break has been about 11 weeks. For next year, we will not propose a calendar with fewer than 8 weeks of summer break.

### **What is an intersession and when might it happen?**

- **Could there possibly be a link to a short informational article/video?)**
- Intersessions are one-week programs that would provide intervention and enrichment similar to our current Summer Blast program.
- Intersessions would not occur during Thanksgiving break or Winter break. For the 2023-34 school year, the district would work with staff and families to design no more than one intersession, most likely in February or April. If the intersession is successful, the district could add intersessions in future years.
- All students interested in intersession are welcome to attend. Students needing intervention will be strongly encouraged to attend.

### **How will intersession be staffed and funded?**

- Participation in intersession will be voluntary. Like our current summer programs, intersessions may include community partners to provide staffing for enrichment.
- Intersessions may be funded by shortening the current 4-week summer programs and reallocating that money to school-year interventions that we predict would have higher attendance.

### **How would a shorter summer impact maintenance and facilities?**

- Restorative cleaning and detail work would be distributed more evenly throughout the year during longer breaks.

- A shorter summer would mean less time to perform larger scale contracted projects that require the facilities to be unoccupied and exterior work/projects during times of fair weather. Currently, Port Townsend does not have any such capital projects planned. If a project is planned for future years, the maintenance director would coordinate with the calendar team.

#### **How will this impact athletics?**

- High school athletes are already accustomed to practicing over breaks. Transportation over breaks could become an issue. If so, vans and charter buses could be used.
- Starting school earlier will help middle school teams complete the number of practices required to engage in competition (in the past we've had to forfeit).
- Middle School athletics might be impacted by the Thanksgiving week break and the Presidents' week break as those fall right in the middle of boys' basketball season and coed wrestling season, respectively. In the past, middle school seasons have only had a max of 2 days off school during their particular sport.

#### **How will this impact Advanced Placement (AP) courses?**

- The College Board determines the schedule for AP Exams. AP exams are administered over the first two weeks in May. The number of school days from the start of the school year and the administration of the exams represents the amount of time available for student learning and exam preparation.

#### **How might changing the calendar impact attendance?**

- Student attendance is historically 4-8% lower than the annual average during the weeks of Thanksgiving and President's Day (details [here](#)). Transitioning these days to vacation may improve attendance.

#### **How will the final decision be made?**

- Build Options: The working group will use feedback from staff, students, and community to draft five calendar options. PTEA & SEIU Executive Boards will work with the district to finalize a staff survey.
- Staff Vote: The results of the student, staff, and community surveys will be shared with staff for their consideration. The current plan is for staff to use rank choice voting. Results of the staff will be shared.
- Recommendation: PTEA & SEIU Executive Boards will consult with the Superintendent to make a final recommendation to the school board.
- Final Decision: The school board will approve the 2023-24 calendar in their April meeting.