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**What is the process our district goes through to create a calendar?**

- Review the survey sent to all district staff - a variety of topics related to the calendar.
- Form a district calendar advisory committee represented by staff from all four buildings, including teachers, support staff, and building and district administrators.
- Seek input from district administrators.
- Seek input from the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).
- Seek input from the Gilbert Education Association (GEA).
- Calendar drafts by the calendar advisory committee are submitted to the district superintendent for review.
- A calendar draft is selected by the superintendent and presented to the school board for review. Adjustments can be made based on feedback from the school board.
- A public hearing is held to give community members the opportunity to voice their opinions on the calendar prior to its approval.
- The school board will then vote on the calendar. If the calendar is approved, it will be adopted for the upcoming school year. If the calendar is not approved, then adjustments will be made to the calendar and it will be reviewed by the board at a future school board meeting for approval.

**Regarding the 2023-24 calendar, is this the same process we used in the past?**

- This process is consistent with what we have done in the past. The only thing we have done differently this year is to seek out input from the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

**What feedback did you receive from staff that is reflected in the proposed calendar?**

- Staff members preferred the first day of school as close to August 23rd as possible.
- Staff members preferred 3-4 professional development/work days prior to the start of the school year.
- Staff members preferred 1-2 professional development/work days following the final day of the school year.
- Staff members preferred two weeks off for winter break.
- Staff members preferred the schedule to align with the Board of Regents spring break schedule for state universities.
- Staff members preferred a 2:30/2:45 p.m. dismissal on Wednesdays for professional development/collaboration.

### **What feedback did you receive from the PTO that is reflected in the proposed calendar?**

- There were three items raised at the meeting:
  - Calendar consistency - The PTO preferred half-day professional development days on the same Wednesday each month (i.e., the first Wednesday each month, or the second Wednesday each month, etc.). We have done our best to reflect this in the upcoming calendar. It wasn't always possible due to a variety of factors, but we attempted to be as consistent as possible.
  - Length of Winter Break - One PTO member felt winter break was too long.
  - Preschool - How will an early release on Wednesdays impact preschool?

### **How will a Wednesday early release impact Preschool?**

- If this calendar is approved, our preschool will not have school on Wednesdays. We will continue to have a four-day schedule, but it will change to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

### **What are the requirements under Iowa code that we must follow when developing a calendar?**

- All school districts must have a minimum of 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction. As a district, we chose 1,080 hours as it allows more flexibility. We have always had more instructional hours scheduled than required by the state of Iowa to account for late starts, early dismissals, or weather-related cancellations.
  - Our draft calendar reflects 1,123.5 hours of instruction, which is an increase from the past two years.
- The first day of school cannot be before August 23rd.
- The calendar must reflect the required number of contracted days for teachers.

### **What are the changes added to the 2023-2024 calendar?**

- An early release at all four school buildings on the first, second and third Wednesday of each month for teacher collaboration.
  - 2:30 p.m. - Gilbert Intermediate (current dismissal at 3:05 p.m.).
  - 2:30 p.m. - Middle School (current dismissal at 3:05 p.m.).
  - 2:30 p.m. - High School (current dismissal at 2:30 p.m.).
  - 2:40 p.m. - Gilbert Elementary (current dismissal at 3:15 p.m.).
- The fourth Wednesday of the month will be a 12:30 p.m. early dismissal for district professional development. This is the current practice and has occurred for many years.
- Graduation was moved back to Memorial Day Weekend due to a state requirement related to the number of days seniors must attend.

### **Why wasn't Friday suggested as an early release day instead of the selected Wednesday?**

- As in past years, school activities are typically not planned on Wednesdays. This ensures we should have all teaching staff available for collaboration at the end of the school day. For example, coaches will not be absent due to scheduled events.

### **What will teachers do during the early release time?**

- On days with a 2:30/2:40 p.m. dismissal, staff members will have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues on a variety of topics including looking at student achievement data to determine next steps for their classrooms to keep students' learning at high levels.
  - Teachers working together in Professional Learning Communities will be a required, structured time for staff.
- On days with a 12:30 p.m. dismissal, staff members will engage in building-level professional development.
- On days where there is no school due to professional development, staff members will be engaged in district-wide learning.

### **High school has had the 2:30 p.m. early release for over 10 years. So this will only be new for Middle School, Intermediate, and Elementary?**

- Yes.
  - In order to create a more equitable system for staff in all buildings, we are recommending an early dismissal every Wednesday to match what has been done at the high school for a number of years.

### **Do other districts have an early release to help teachers collaborate?**

- Yes.
  - Ballard - dismissal at 1:30 p.m. in all buildings every Wednesday.
  - Roland-Story - dismissal at 1:30/1:45 p.m. in all buildings every Wednesday.
  - Nevada - 90-minute late start every Monday.
  - Ames - elects to have more full days off for professional development throughout the school year.

### **Did we consider a late start on one day each week?**

- Yes.
  - We have done this in the past, but administrators and staff members didn't feel this was the most productive time for professional development/collaboration. Staff members were more focused on preparing for the upcoming school day.

**Will Kids Club be available at an earlier time for students who need after-school care?**

- Kids Club has been made aware of the proposed calendar change. Educational Coordinator Julianna McKim has confirmed Kids Club will be open by the time classes are dismissed on early-out days.
- Currently, both Kids Club sites have openings for enrollment. However, the schedule and availability may change for the 2023-24 school year depending on staff availability. For more information, contact Kids Club.

**How do I contact Kid's Club so I can check with them?**

- Phone: (515) 233-3141.
- [Kids Club - \(yess.org\)](https://yess.org)

**How can I give feedback to the district?**

- [Feedback on 2023-24 District Calendar Draft](#)