

OPEN-ENDED ANALYSIS OF 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR SURVEY – PHASE 1 AND 2

Harford County Public Schools

Introduction

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) continues its dedication to involving parent, staff, and community feedback in its decision-making processes. As part of this commitment, HCPS has once again developed and launched its annual survey aimed at gathering insights to inform the establishment of the school calendar for the 2026-2027 school year. This initiative is a continuation of HCPS's efforts to ensure that the school calendar reflects the needs and preferences of its community partners.

To effectively analyze the parent/guardian and staff feedback collected through this survey, the HCPS Department of Research and Program Evaluation collaborated closely with the Department of Communications. This collaboration focuses on the analysis of responses to the survey's open-ended question, which are gathered and analyzed at different intervals during the survey's administration (two analysis phases). This report includes the analysis of survey responses from both Phase 1 and 2. The insights derived from this analysis are crucial for HCPS as they seek to create a school calendar that not only meets educational standards but also aligns with the community's expectations and requirements.

Methodology

This report provides a digestible summary of responses to the following open-ended question:

- **Q1: Additional comments about the 2026-2027 HCPS Draft School Calendar.**

Phase 1 of the analysis includes survey responses from September 23rd through October 9th. Phase 2 includes all the responses following this date until November 20th. Before analyzing the open-ended responses, blank, irrelevant, or repeated open-ended responses were removed during data cleaning. Inappropriate answers or answers that appeared redundant were also removed in favor of responses that share meaningful data and appropriately answer the survey question.

The analysis provides a depth of understanding about the particular question rather than statistical significance or generalizable conclusions. Utilizing both human and AI technologies, the top key themes were identified and summarized using cleaned, relevant response content. The analysis analyzes responses in two segments based on whether the respondent used an internal district email address (hcps.org) or an external/personal email address. The data does not identify respondents' specific roles (i.e., parent or staff member); therefore, the analysis infers that respondents using an internal email are staff members and most respondents using an external/personal email address are parents or guardians. The following figure details the total survey responses and the total cleaned survey responses included in each phase of the analysis. **The total number of survey responses included across both phases is 228.**

PHASE 1 (September 23 rd – October 9 th)		
RESPONDENT GROUP	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES
Internal to HCPS (Staff Member)	57	57
External to HCPS (Parent or Guardian)	107	106
Total	164	163

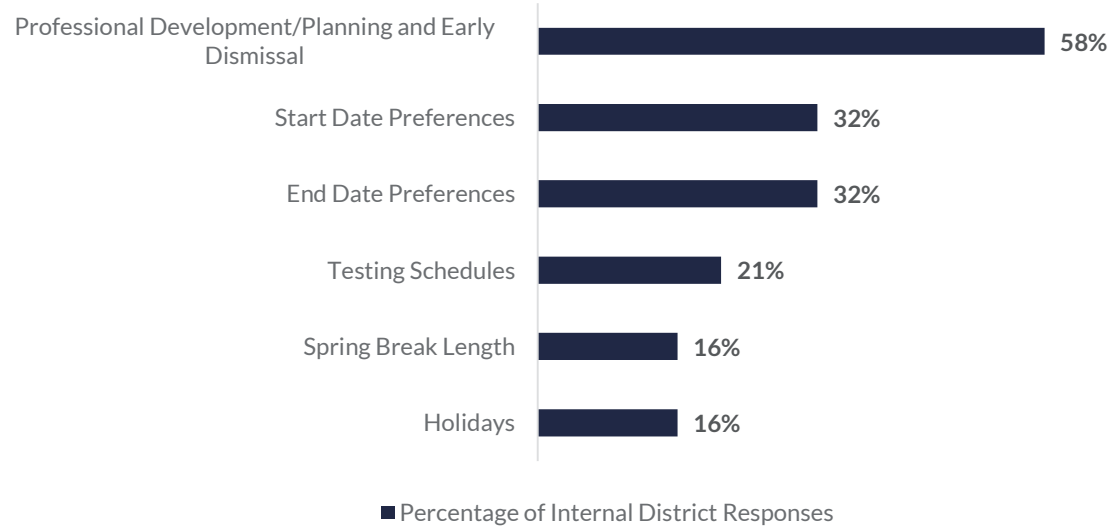
PHASE 2 (October 9 th – November 20 th)		
RESPONDENT GROUP	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES
Internal to HCPS (Staff Member)	27	25
External to HCPS (Parent or Guardian)	42	40
Total	69	65

The following sections outline the main themes that emerge from the open-ended responses regarding HCPS’s school calendar options. The accompanying data supplement provides the response counts for each theme, including those that are below the threshold of 9%. Only themes that meet the 9% threshold are described in depth in this report.

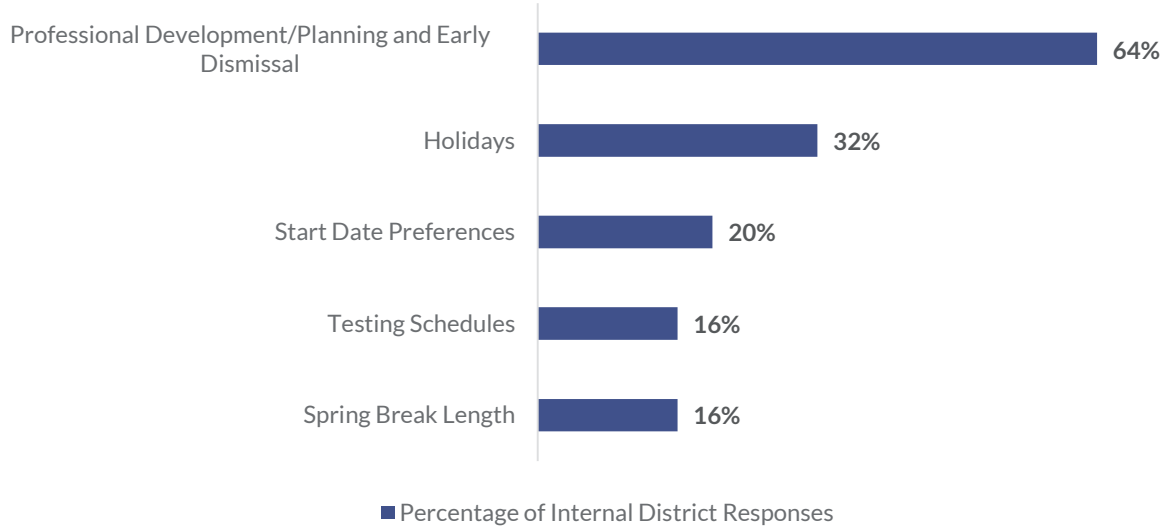
Key Themes for Internal District Respondents (Staff)

The themes from internal district responses are outlined in this section. The following charts highlight the frequency of each theme for Phases 1 and 2:

Phase 1: Internal District Responses - Theme Frequency



Phase 2: Internal District Responses - Theme Frequency



Professional Development/Planning and Early Dismissals

Phase 1

Internal district respondents (i.e., staff members) emphasize that professional development (PD) and early dismissal days are essential for maintaining high-quality instruction, collaboration, and teacher well-being. **Many express concern that the proposed reduction of these days and clustering during certain times of the year would lead to increased workload for teachers.** Respondents urge the district to provide more early dismissal/planning time for teachers or at least space out the early dismissal days more consistently across the year (e.g., X number every month). A portion of respondents specifically note the negative impact on elementary teachers, as they have less planning time than secondary teachers and rely on the early dismissal days to plan.

Phase 2

Professional Development/Planning and Early Dismissals remains a frequent theme among Phase 2 survey respondents, with 64% of staff responses falling under this theme. Many teachers strongly advocate for reinstating regular early dismissal days and additional planning time throughout the school year, emphasizing that the current calendar does not provide sufficient opportunities for preparation, grading, and collaboration. Similar to Phase 1, respondents advocate for spaced-out planning days throughout the year. However, **Phase 2 respondents more frequently emphasize that the lack of these breaks contributes to increased workload outside contract hours, teacher burnout, and diminished instructional quality,** urging the district to prioritize consistent planning time to support both staff well-being and student success.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>"The early dismissal professional development days were originally designed to help make planning time more equitable for elementary teachers. Currently, elementary teachers receive significantly less planning time built into their schedule compared to middle school teachers. Protecting these early dismissal PD days is one way to help close that gap and ensure elementary staff have the time they need to prepare high-quality instruction for students."</i></p> <p><i>"Teachers need more early dismissal planning days. Having one day a month (and sometimes none) is not enough for grading, planning, and all the other tasks we have. More frequent early dismissal days are better than a full day of teacher planning because there are some periods of time that there is a lot to do and some where there is not as much, so having more frequent but smaller chunks of time is better."</i></p> <p><i>"I completely understand the concerns families have about early dismissals and the challenges they can create. At the same time, I want to highlight how valuable those shorter, regular chunks of time are for teachers. They allow us to plan, collaborate, and provide timely feedback to students in a way that full-day work sessions, scheduled less frequently, simply cannot. Having smaller blocks of time spread throughout the year helps us stay organized, respond quickly to student needs, and prevent work from piling up outside of school hours. This consistency not only supports teacher wellbeing but also improves the quality of instruction students receive day to day. I believe there's a balance to be found that respects both families and educators. I encourage the board to consider maintaining some form of periodic early release days so that teachers can continue giving their best to students all year long."</i></p>	<p><i>"Also, using early dismissal days for PD or Teacher work time is very beneficial. It allows us to have days count for the 180 days, but at the same time gives teachers time to reset, recharge, and use that time to handle everything that is required. Please consider input from teachers! There is a teacher shortage, so it makes sense to invest in our teachers and their mental health. Giving us time to reset and recharge will pay off in the long run. Thanks for your consideration!"</i></p> <p><i>"I am concerned about the removal of the monthly early dismissal days. While I understand that we would be swapping early dismissal days for 3 full planning days, I don't feel that this best meets the needs of teachers and staff. It is so incredibly helpful to have small chunks of time each month to catch up on grading and plan for the upcoming month. I especially rely on the early dismissal days before report cards are due to analyze data and input report cards for my 400 students. I also believe that early dismissal days positively impact staff morale and mental health. They give teachers and staff a chance to "breathe" and get caught up in areas where they have fallen behind. I know that I personally leave at the end of the early dismissal days feeling refreshed, accomplished, and prepared going into the upcoming week. Without this extra time every month, I know that I will be putting in extra hours outside of my duty day to ensure that all tasks are completed."</i></p>

Start Date Preferences

Phase 1

Although a few respondents agree with the current start day or suggest a later start date, **most internal district respondents favor starting the school year earlier and before Labor Day.** These comments share various reasons for early start date preferences, including more instructional time before testing, vacation planning, and the logistics of school starting on specific days of the week. In particular, many also prefer beginning school on a Monday rather than a Tuesday, stating it provides smoother transitions and avoids attendance issues.

Phase 2

Phase 2 responses less frequently cite Start Date Preferences (20% compared to 32% in Phase 1); however, the responses share a similar sentiment. **Most of these comments advocate for starting school earlier in August,** arguing that it provides more instructional time for AP exams, standardized testing, and alignment with college calendars, which benefits academic performance.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>"I believe it would make more sense to have the school year start on MONDAY, August 31, 2025, and end on FRIDAY, June 11, 2026."</i></p> <p><i>"Start before Labor Day so we get out before mid-June. It feels like every other county starts before Labor Day!"</i></p> <p><i>"I advocate for the school year to start prior to Labor Day. This provides students with more classroom time for AP testing in May. There is an increasing trend for colleges/universities/internship/apprenticeship opportunities to begin in June. More students are asking to miss school days in June due to these opportunities or vacation."</i></p>	<p><i>"If we really had the best academic interest of our students in mind, it would be no question to start school earlier in August, aligned with other districts that surround us. Don't you want students to have the best opportunity to score well on AP exams and other standardized tests? More seat time in classes equates to higher scores. "</i></p> <p><i>"Starting the school year after Labor Day leaves our students behind when it comes to AP testing."</i></p>

End Date Preferences

Phase 1

Most internal district **respondents prefer that the school year end on a Friday rather than a Monday,** citing poor attendance, lack of productivity, and logistical challenges associated with returning for a single day at the start of a new week. Many **suggest ending earlier in June** as well to avoid conflicts with summer camps, rising temperatures, and declining student engagement. Overall, most staff respondents agree that finishing the school year by mid-June on a Friday would be more efficient, beneficial for families, and supportive of higher attendance and instructional value.

Phase 2

The theme "End Date Preferences" is not as frequent in Phase 2, as only 8 percent of internal responses are coded under this theme. These comments argue that the time at the end of the year is less productive following testing, therefore school should end earlier.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2

"High school and rec. sports start at the beginning the August, so students are already in and out of the buildings. Children are ready to go back before September. By the end of May, students are drained and done with school. MCAP and other **state tests start in May, which means by Memorial Day, there is very little new education happening.**"

"I suggest making the spring break during the end of March into April two days shorter. This will make the **end of the school year a littler earlier** for everyone and not have us going too far into June, especially if we end up having multiple snow days."

"**I do not think that student attendance will be good on the last day of school, 6/14/26, considering that it is a Monday.** I do not think that it is productive to have the students report for the last day of school on a Monday."

"We do start athletics in August as well. Regardless of sport, if a student is an athlete in the fall, families will lose time in August. It would be more beneficial to high school families to have time in June with their families than the extra week in August. MCAPS are given through MSDE in April. This also means that **our curriculum in specific content areas needs to be completed at this time, leaving a large gap at the end of the year.**"

Testing Schedules

Phase 1

Many staff respondents express strong concern that the proposed calendar starts too late in the year, putting HCPS students, especially those enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment courses, at a disadvantage compared to other Maryland counties and states that begin earlier. Teachers emphasize that **AP and state testing occur in April and May, and later start dates reduce valuable instructional time needed to prepare students for these nationally scheduled exams.** Several note that most of June offers little academic value after testing concludes, with students disengaged and attendance dropping.

Phase 2

Internal district respondents highlight reasoning related to testing schedules at a similar rate in Phase 2 (16%) compared to Phase 1 (21%). **Phase 2 comments argue that the calendar should be based on improving student success** by providing more instructional time before standardized testing, and therefore starting the school year earlier.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p>"I hope that you will reconsider starting the school year before September 1st. As an AP teacher, I see the disadvantage that my students have compared to other counties in Maryland that begin in August, and even other states that begin in early August. Having even an extra week will be so beneficial to AP students, and I hope you will reconsider our start date."</p> <p>"I cannot stress enough how important it is to go back to school for students in August versus September, AP and IB exams, and Dual enrollment courses and their final exams all end in May. High schoolers need more time up front preparing for EOY exams and less time at the end of the year."</p>	<p>"As we continue to review and refine the proposed school calendar, I encourage us to keep one priority at the forefront — our students. The calendar should first and foremost reflect what best supports their learning, growth, and overall success. Both the past two Student Board members and our current representative have consistently advocated for an earlier start date, noting that it provides valuable additional time to prepare for AP testing. Those six extra instructional days may seem small, but for our students, they make a meaningful difference. If our goal is to set students up for success, we should provide the time and structure that allow them to achieve it."</p>

Spring Break Length

Phase 1

Internal district respondents share mixed opinions about the length of Spring Break, though most favor shortening it to prevent the school year from extending too far into June. Many feel that a full week off disrupts instructional continuity,

particularly before state and AP testing, and suggest reducing the break by two or three days to end the year earlier and conserve district resources. Others, however, support maintaining a full week of Spring Break to allow students and teachers time to rest and recharge for the final months of school.

Phase 2

Sixteen percent of internal district respondents mention Spring Break Length, matching the frequency reported in Phase 1. However, **Phase 2 comments are more in favor of the long Spring Break compared to Phase 1.** Most comments in Phase 2 express appreciation for the full week off in the Spring, with few advocating for shortening the duration.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>"I approve of the proposed calendar. Like this year, it continues the goal of having more 5-day weeks 1st quarter to help give staff and students a longer Spring Break. For years, Spring Break was only a long weekend, so seeing this is refreshing."</i></p> <p><i>"I do not feel Spring break needs to be an entire week so close to the end of the school year when we could just get out a few days earlier and have a shorter Spring break."</i></p> <p><i>"We don't need such a long break in March. That's just another time where the kids slip. They need consistent instruction as much as possible. Especially right before state testing. Perhaps a day or two could be added to the December break so we aren't going to school right up to Christmas Eve."</i></p>	<p><i>"I love the long spring break. I think it's a solid calendar, and I'm happy about the proposed changes."</i></p> <p><i>"I appreciate the full week for spring break. This is needed at this time of the year. Thank you."</i></p> <p><i>"Spring Break could be slightly shortened from Thursday, March 25th-Friday, April 2nd to Thursday, March 25th-Tuesday, March 30th, with March 25th serving as a professional development day."</i></p>

Holidays

Phase 1

Internal district respondents express concerns about how holidays are recognized in the proposed calendar based on priorities related to equity, consistency, and respect for diverse religious and family needs. Many Jewish staff voice disappointment that Jewish holidays were removed in the proposed calendar, describing the change as exclusionary and contrary to HCPS's stated commitment to equity. Several comments suggest that if the district schedules professional development or planning days on religious observances, it should fully close schools for all staff and students instead of requiring some to miss important PD sessions. Others raise concerns about aligning the calendar with federal and military holidays to better support families and reduce childcare challenges. A few also recommend adding days to winter break, arguing that teaching until December 23rd is too taxing for students and teachers.

Phase 2

Thirty-two percent of internal district responses in Phase 2 mention holidays compared to just 16 percent in Phase 1. In **Phase 2 comments highlight concerns about the removal of traditional holidays, particularly Jewish observances**, from the proposed calendar. There is strong advocacy for reinstating these holidays to respect cultural and religious diversity. Additionally, several comments emphasize the **importance of honoring Veterans Day as a day off** for both students and staff, and some suggest aligning breaks with major holidays to ease travel and family commitments.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>"As a teacher who observes the Jewish holidays, I'm wondering about the rationale for scheduling a professional development day on a day when students already have time off. For those of</i></p>	<p><i>"Veterans Day should be a holiday for both students and staff! As a veteran and a member of HCPS, I feel very strongly about the need to honor this day for those who served. Thank you."</i></p>

us who celebrate these holidays, this setup means we miss out on the PD content, and we then have to catch up later. It also impacts our ability to earn PD points. If equity is truly a priority in the county, it seems counterproductive to schedule important PD when some staff cannot attend due to religious observances. Could you clarify the reasoning behind this decision?"

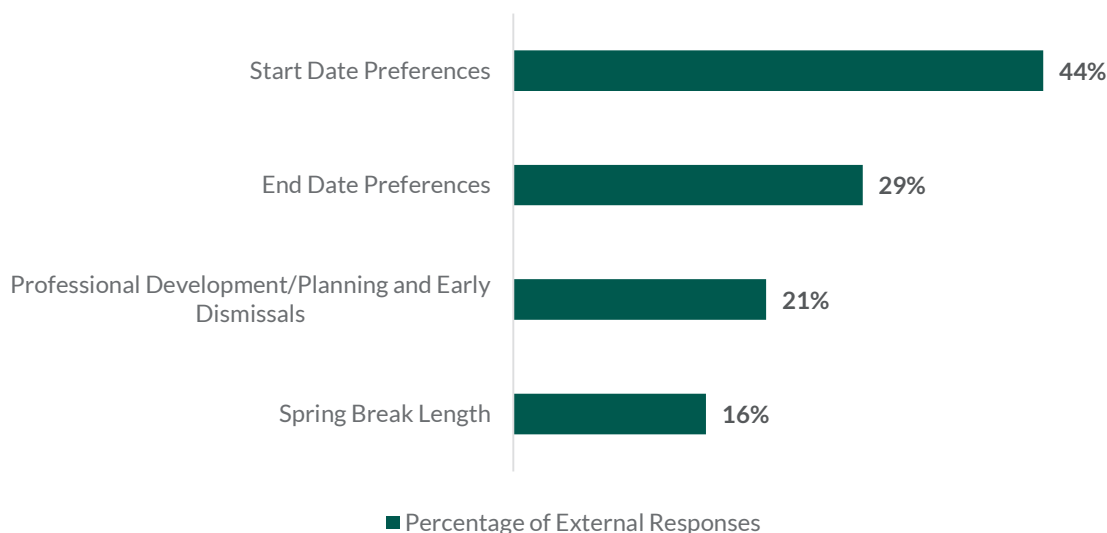
"I do not think students or teachers need a full week of spring break in March. Take away the full week and give 3 of those days to winter break. **Teaching until December 23rd is brutal. Schools should close for the day, the Friday before Christmas.** If the days are not added on to winter break, at least we will get out earlier in June."

"The lack of half days on the new calendar is very concerning. I also find it **very sad that all of the Jewish Holidays have been removed from the calendar.** As an educator, it is very easy to get burned out when you are working without a day off until mid-November."

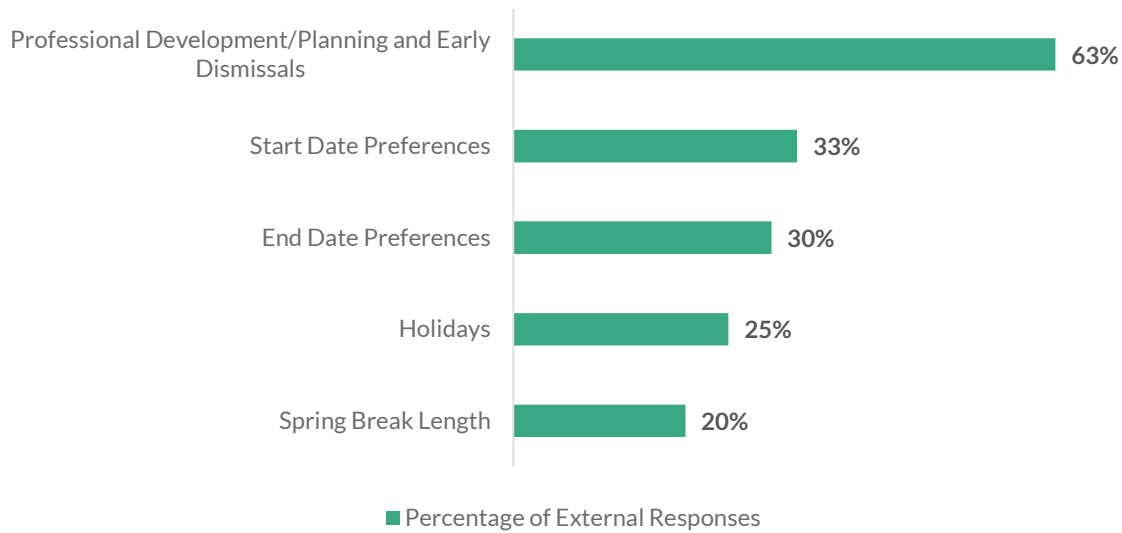
Key Themes for External Respondents (Parents and Guardians)

The themes from external responses are outlined in this section. The following charts highlight the frequency of each theme for Phases 1 and 2:

Phase 1: External Responses - Theme Frequency



Phase 2: External Responses - Theme Frequency



Start Date Preferences

Phase 1

External respondent feedback on the proposed 2026–2027 HCPS calendar reveals divided opinions **about when the school year should begin**. Many parents support starting after Labor Day, citing family vacations, summer childcare schedules, and the need for a smooth transition between camps and school. Others strongly favor an earlier start in late August, arguing that it allows the school year to end earlier in June, aligns with neighboring districts and college schedules, and provides more instructional time before state and AP testing. Several also suggest that the first day should fall on a Monday, rather than midweek, to establish routine and avoid unnecessary disruption.

Phase 2

Thirty-three percent of external responses highlight Start Date Preferences in Phase 2, compared to 44 percent in Phase 1. **Similar to Phase 1, parents express mixed preferences regarding the start date** for the 2026–2027 HCPS calendar. Some respondents support an earlier start in late August to maximize instructional time and align with college schedules, while others strongly favor starting after Labor Day to preserve summer activities and students participating in local agricultural fairs.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p>"Thank you for continuing to start after Labor Day."</p> <p>"I feel that starting school before Labor Day is not a good thing. I don't understand why the parameter relies on starting on the closest Tuesday to Sept 1st when Labor Day shifts from year to year."</p> <p>"The first day of school should be on Aug 31 (Monday) and the last day of school on June 10 (Friday)."</p> <p>"Please start after Labor Day. Many families use this week as a transition week between camps & school starting."</p>	<p>"This calendar will affect so many Ag students trying to still participate in the local fairs. Starting after Labor Day has been most beneficial."</p> <p>"Please consider having students return in August and aligning the calendar with college calendars. Our students need more time before testing to receive instruction."</p>

End Date Preferences

Phase 1

External survey respondents express a desire for the school year to end earlier in June, ideally by June 10–11, instead of continuing into mid- or late June. Many also feel that holding the last day of school on a Monday is unnecessary and unproductive, as attendance is typically poor and families often schedule vacations by that point. Another recurring suggestion is to shorten spring break by several days to allow for an earlier end date while still maintaining a balanced schedule. Parents cite challenges with childcare, summer camps, and the heat of late June, and acknowledge that most surrounding districts end school earlier.

Phase 2

Thirty percent of external responses mention End Date Preferences in Phase 2, up just one percent from Phase 1 (29%). **Like in Phase 1, parents express a strong preference for ending the school year earlier**, suggesting dates between late May and mid-June to allow for longer summer breaks. Many respondents emphasize avoiding a last day on a Monday, preferring the school year to conclude toward the end of a week.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>“Students are burnt out by mid-June, as are the teachers. Little productive learning occurs that late into June.”</i></p> <p><i>“Please reconsider the LAST DAY OF SCHOOL. Currently, the last date of school is on a MONDAY....I can imagine this day will be incredibly unproductive.”</i></p> <p><i>“Can we take out 2 of the half days so that the last day of school is potentially not on a Monday? It seems odd to start before Labor Day and still go through mid-June (even though Labor Day is late - so I do agree with the 9/1 start date).”</i></p>	<p><i>“I suggest that the first day of school be moved up one day to Monday, August 31, so that the last day of school falls on a Friday rather than a Monday. In that case, the last day of school would be Friday, June 11. Thank you for allowing parents to provide feedback.”</i></p> <p><i>“Please let the kids be kids and have summers like we used to have. School should start after Labor Day and end the end of May/ beginning of June.”</i></p>

Professional Development/Planning and Early Dismissals

Phase 1

As with the internal district respondents, external respondents also express significant concern over the reduction of professional development and early dismissal days, emphasizing that these are essential for teacher planning, grading, collaboration, and maintaining instructional quality. They note that the current calendar front-loads PD days at the start of the year, leaving little structured time for planning during the second semester when workload is highest. This results in teachers working beyond contractual hours. While some parents appreciate fewer half-days for the sake of childcare consistency, others recognize that regular early dismissals support both teacher preparation and student wellbeing by offering time for catch-up and mental health breaks.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, most external comments—63 percent—express concerns about professional development and planning time for educators during Early Dismissal days, whereas only 21 percent of responses raised this issue in Phase 1. Teachers worry that the proposed calendar eliminates early dismissal days, which are important for their planning, grading, and collaboration. Many suggest reinstating at least one early dismissal per month to support instructional quality and reduce burnout.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>“I do not believe we need an entire week of Spring Break; one PD day and 3 days would be more than sufficient. In addition, the</i></p>	<p><i>“Please reconsider the elimination of teacher work days as half days spread throughout the calendar year. Teachers rely on</i></p>

front-loading of Professional Development without any except 1 from December through June will definitely lead to teacher burnout much faster. I'd reconsider having the early dismissal days and PD days spaced out, or **at least provide an explanation behind the rationale for this.**"

"I think it looks good! My only suggestion would be to continue the (approximate) **once a month three-hour early dismissal days.** It really has helped my sons get through a long week with something to look forward to. They really enjoy those, especially on a Friday to get a longer weekend. Thank you for your consideration!"

those days to plan, grade, and prepare for upcoming lessons and assignments, and if the half days are eliminated and replaced with large chunks of full days off that are spread far apart on the calendar, both teachers and students will suffer. Teachers will get burned out faster, and students will not receive as high-quality instruction and feedback as they do when teachers have more time to prepare. Planning minutes allotted during the school day are already not enough time to do all of the things teachers are required to do, so taking away those half days would be detrimental to them and their teaching."

Spring Break Length

Phase 1

External respondent feedback on the proposed calendar indicates disagreement about the length and timing of Spring Break, with the majority favoring a shorter break to allow the school year to end earlier. Many felt that a full week or longer break in late March and early April unnecessarily extends the calendar into mid-June, when attendance and engagement drop. Several parents suggest limiting the break to a long weekend around Easter or four to five days total, arguing that this balance would preserve family time while reducing schedule disruptions and summer overlap with camps or vacations. A smaller portion of parents, however, support maintaining a full week after Easter, noting that it provides families with sufficient time for travel and rest during a long stretch between winter and spring.

Phase 2

As with Phase 1, respondents share mixed opinions regarding the proposed length of Spring Break. This theme appears in 20 percent of Phase 2 comments compared to 16 percent of Phase 1 comments. Several external respondents argue that spring break is too long and recommend shortening it by a few days to allow the school year to end earlier, making summer break easier to manage for families. Others appreciate the extended spring break as valuable time for family travel and rest without missing school days.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p>"I think April 1 and 2 should be school days. Shorten spring break so the last day of school is June 10. Or even just shorten spring break by one day and the last day is June 11. No reason for the last day of school to be a Monday. Also, allow for virtual snow days so the kids aren't going until June 17."</p> <p>"I am not in favor of such a lengthy easter/Spring break. It is over a week long. I think Thursday - Monday is more than enough to celebrate the Easter holiday. I would much rather the kids get out of school earlier for summer than have over a week off in April.</p> <p>"I approve of the calendar and appreciate the September start and a full spring and winter break."</p>	<p>"I appreciate blocking time for spring break. This is a valuable time for parents and families to opt to spend time for early vacations and long distance family visits, without requiring students to miss valuable school time. Much appreciated!"</p> <p>"The kids do not need a week and a half for Spring break- PLEASE remove some of the days off during the year so they can get out before June 14th!"</p>

Holidays

Phase 1

This theme was not included in the report for Phase 1, as the theme frequency is 7 percent, which is below the threshold of 9 percent. However, the few comments mention similar opinions to Phase 2, with concerns around why certain holidays, particularly Jewish holidays and Veterans' Day, are not recognized.

Phase 2

Twenty-five percent of responses in Phase 2 mention changes to how holidays are represented in the proposed calendar, significantly more than 7 percent in Phase 1. Respondents are concerned about holiday observances in the proposed calendar, urging respect for cultural and religious diversity (e.g., Jewish holidays) and alignment with federal holidays for childcare relief. Many oppose adding new holidays due to challenges for working parents.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES	
PHASE 1	PHASE 2
<p><i>"I am surprised that there is no longer any recognition for Jewish holidays. This year, the kids got off half a day (no mention of Rosh Hashanah). Tomorrow there isn't any school, but it was labeled "professional development" when it is the holiest Jewish Holiday. There must be some connection between having off of school and to a group of people who are in observance of holidays."</i></p>	<p><i>"I recommend shifting the Planning Day on Friday, 16OCT to Monday, 12OCT so it coincides with the federal holiday (Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day). Having the children home from school on a common day off for the general workforce would alleviate additional childcare costs for many families."</i></p> <p><i>"As a Jewish educator, it is unacceptable that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are not days when schools are closed. Jewish students have the privilege to participate in their religious holidays, but not educators. I have to miss professional development or precious planning time when I honor my religion."</i></p>