

Attachment 6

ACPS Parent

Please do not make the children go back to school before the labor day holiday !!!!!

1. Breaks are important, but keeping a "normal" schedule is important, too. Having election day off (Tuesday) and then an early dismissal on Friday is a terrible week. 2. Stop calling them Teacher Work Days. The name implies other days are not work days. In fact, Saturdays and Sundays are work days for most teachers. Call them Evaluation Days or Grading Days or even Records Days.

A bunch of comments - 1. Why do elementary schools have 3 early release days for conferences - can we just have 2? 2. Also, middle school should have conferences on BOTH early release days - not just one of the days. 3. I don't think we need the 22nd and 23rd off before Christmas. Maybe just the 23rd? As a working parent, I would not even take the 23rd off (but I think the teachers would want that) 4. Any way we can finish the school year on June 16th? Also, if we could have just one half day on the last day of school. THANKS!

Also please use the words "NO SCHOOL" on the calendar for parents. Currently the terms "work day" etc does not tell parents explicitly that there is no school. It is very frustrating and not at all helpful.

As an employee: the goals and guidelines for the "professional time" days need to be more clearly articulated. Are these days for faculty meetings? CLTs/PLCs? Division-wide PD that is content based? Who "owns" them -- schools or central office? Please work to communicate more clear expectations and standards regarding these days. Thanks!

As the parent of a Middle School Student, I think that the Parent Teacher Conferences should be soon after the Intern reports gets mailed home, even sending the sign up sheet with the First quarter intern. This way changes can beginner soon in the year andso that students can work to bring up their 1st quarter grade. With conferences only 5 days before the end of the quarter there is very little ability to bring up the grade for that quarter. Why can't the HS and MS have the same week of Conferences. The schools have the same start and end time and each has their own buses so why are the MS always a week later than the HS? The half days at the end of the year are truly annoying. Really dislike that the SOLs are at the end of May and beginning of June, leaving so much time left after the tests, which means all the required material had to be taught with over a month before the end of school, meaning the material is squished into a shortened timeline, seems counter productive to doing well on the SOL.

As things stand right now, barely any instruction happens in November. The younger children feel very rushed through early dismissal days and come home frustrated and confused because everything is so chaotic. While I can see having election day a holiday in years when there is a presidential election, there was absolutely no reason not to have had school yesterday.

-Begin Winter Break on December 26 -Resume school on January 2 -Move the Professional Time from March 10 to 3

Choices where I listed not important are days I would rather they be in school rather than off. Inauguration day seems like a good day to have off since most people probably cannot get downtown to work anyway.

Fairfax County seems to manage the holidays appropriately. ACPS should follow whatever their schedule may be. I know many of my son's teachers have lived in Fairfax and have to takeoff when their schedules do not match up. I am sick of him having subs all the time. 2 full weeks at Christmas would also be nice to travel with our family.

Having PT conferences in November provides added time for the teacher to get to know the student.

Honor what we teach our students and children by observing national holidays. Veterans Day should be a holiday for students and staff. Limit early release days to two days in the quarter for conferences. Consider moving conferences to the second and fourth quarter. This gives teachers adequate time to get to know students and also provides an opportunity to give parents valuable feedback before students leave for summer break. Consider two full weeks for winter break. Class routines are disrupted when there is a short week before a large holiday break. Leaving on a Friday minimizes disruptions for all students and presents an easy transition for the break for students, parents, and teachers. Reconsider the teacher work day after spring break. The additional day off created an awkward start to the week after the break and is not needed as teachers have been out of the classroom for a week. If teachers need the day, move the work day to the Friday before the break.

I am a working parent with kids in middle and elementary school. I get six Federal Holidays a year, not the 12 available. I do not wish for one more extra day off for the students. My middle schooler has no after care. So I really do not like 1/2 days where she is home for extended hours without me. I also wish that the professional time would be piled at the end of school. Getting out mid-week at the end of school is horrible because I have to take those days off, as there is no summer camp available yet. Getting out on the 16th or the 23rd would allow camps to be available for the week. For me, it is easier if they are in school continuously until the end of the year. Thank you for your consideration.

I am very concerned that the winter break has been reduced once again. Most families plan to take vacation during that time and by limiting it, it makes this more difficult. Winter break should be a full two weeks! Very disappointing.

I have a high school student as well and they do theirs before first quarter is over, I think it's good so parents can see early on if there are issues that need to be resolved and if any grades are low to be worked on and brought up before report cards come out. However for the elementary grade level, end of the first quarter has always worked well so either way is fine. For the question above about having the Monday off before Election Day, I think that is nice but only if the students are also off on Election Day. We've had times in the past where it's only a 2hour delayed opening, if that's the case then that Monday is no big deal. The end of the school year is the biggest deal, June is almost over by the time they get out now. However, it has been very nice to have a full 2 weeks off around the Christmas holiday so if that has to change to shorten the time in June then that's a different story. Every parent who I've spoken to said the two weeks at Christmas time is a deal breaker for them.

I love the idea of having a snow make-up day the Monday after spring break.

I prefer to minimize holidays in the middle of the week as I find them disruptive. I do not know many people who have the Wednesday before Thanksgiving off of work, so I really don't like having kids off on the Wednesday. I think that makes sense only for people who travel for Thanksgiving. Early release days are also challenging for families that work outside of the home.

I think getting a good, long winter break is so important for everyone's mental health.

I think it is especially important to have Inauguration Day off in the DC area.

I think you should consider moving Kprep to the week of August 22nd. The Current schedule overlaps with the last week of camps that some students may be enrolled in for the summer and they miss out of activities and other programs that parents have already provided payment.

I wish the schedulers would be more mindful of single parents, or households with two parents that work. Synchronizing teacher work days with federal holidays (such as Columbus Day or Veterans Day) may minimize the vacation time working parents need to take to account for schools being closed.

I would like for Winter Break to begin on Wednesday, December 21, 2015 and school to reconvene on January 2, 2015.

I would like to see a shorter summer vacation and longer winter / Christmas vacation. Actually changing to an all round four term year would be awesome. Kids lose so much learning over a long drawn out summer. We need less teacher work days and less half days. Parent teacher conferences should happen after school. All federal holidays should be observed.

I would love for ACPS to join many other school districts across the country in giving families days off for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, (October 3 and 12 of 2016) possibly at the expense of Columbus Day.

I would prefer to have all federal holidays observed for example Veteran's Day and Columbus Day. I also do not like how the vacation days in December are very late, I would want to have last 2 weeks off and go back in January, it makes travel planning easier.

I would really just like the calendar to be easier to understand. Today is early release but nothing on the calendar (even the calendar item I can download to Outlook) actually gives me the time school lets out. I always run in to someone who doesn't realize we have an early release day or a day off. It just is confusing. I don't get the question about having the Monday before Election Day off. We should have election day off because the schools and community centers are used for voting and this is a presidential year. We don't need two days off in a row! We should also not have different early release days for conferences for elementary, middle and high school. I can understand wanting to do them on different days, but as a working parent, I would rather take a whole afternoon or day off and do them all at once. Then, I would also only have to figure out one or two early release dates instead of 4 when you have kids in elem and middle at the same time. Sometimes the early release and days off seem to stack up very close together and it would be great to spread them out more.

I would really like winter break to run December 19-30 instead of the dates in the current draft of the calendar.

If conferences are in October, I'd choose Veteran's Day over Columbus Day for the holiday, and pair it with a teacher work day, so the kids aren't out another day for the teacher work day. Conversely, if conferences are in November, I'd choose Columbus Day over Veteran's Day for a holiday. As it stands, it feels like the kids barely go to school in November, between conferences, teacher workdays, and Thanksgiving (for instance, this year they were out for election day and then a half day on Nov. 6, followed by three half days for conferences and Thanksgiving break). Better yet, if there are going to be days off, group them together so we can have a long weekend and actually maybe go somewhere, the way Fairfax County does. A winter break in late Feb. would also be a blessing for those of us who have a tough time going on vacation over Christmas or Easter.

It is disgraceful that ACPS does not honor those that fought for our country. With the large number of veterans in this area, ACPS should do a better job of recognizing their contributions. Sending students and staff to school on November 11 does not do this.

It isn't clear in the draft calendar what is going on for elementary schools the last week of school. If there are, in fact, three early release days and no school on Friday, it makes me wonder why we are there at all. Surely the teachers would rather have whole days to work and not have to deal with students who are completely checked out?

It would be great to have the Easter holiday in 2017 sync up with Passover. Easter is April 16. Passover begins April 11.

It would be nice to have Monday, Jan 2nd off.

Like the fact that you are giving Easter Monday off to students!!!! Teachers should get it, too!!!!

Monday, January 2 should not be a holiday. Students need a full week. Can we start the school year earlier and have an earlier release? There is no need for February conferences for the high school. The teacher work day should be Friday, April 7, instead of Monday, April 17.

No Staff development day in early December please. Already so many days off in November and December. Why not move to spring? Then it could be snow make up day too.

October seems a bit soon to really evaluate. However, I can see how parents of a student new to the school (transfer) or parents to a new kindergartner might appreciate having the opportunity sooner in the year. Only having a few travel days prior to Christmas is a bit tough. Seems that you could end up with a lot of absent children December 19-21, 2016.

Please consider changing the TWD in November to the 11th when a lot of the parents who work for the federal government are off. It will save us a day of leave.

Please match federal holidays, i.e. Veteran's day and Columbus day. No teacher work days in middle of week, they should be on Mondays or Fridays so families can schedule weekend trips.

Please minimize days off on non-federal holidays. When the children are out of school for days like Election Day or Inauguration Day, one of us has to take a day off from work to be home with the children. The only exception is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as having that day off permits travel before the holiday. Also, it is extremely difficult to find camps or child care the week before Labor Day. We would really like to start school before the Labor Day holiday.

Please schedule the teacher work day planned for Tuesday, November 8 on Friday, November 11. Having a teacher work day in the middle of a week doesn't help parents and it would be nice to have a 3-day weekend. Federal workers have Nov. 11 as a holiday.

Please, please, please eliminate the excessive teacher work days and other days off and early dismissals for no apparent reason so that our kids can get out of school and participate in activities with extended family members (vacations, reunions-our families in other locales can't believe how late our kids go to school each year), go to camp (each year our denomination offers 3 weeks of camp for junior and high schoolers and our only option is always the 3rd week or nothing since the other 2 weeks occur before we get out of school) and attend some of the local programs (such as at St. Stephen/St. Agnes) that are offered but that start near the beginning of June each year. They miss so many opportunities because they are sitting in school those days in June and unfortunately, they really aren't doing anything constructive. The books, computers and other materials have already been collected weeks before, the required tests have been taken and much time is spent watching movies which have no educational value. Their minds leave the classroom every year as soon as the SOLs have been taken because the teachers stop teaching. This has been very frustrating for us as a family. ACPS could do a lot better for families on the calendar issue. Thank you for allowing us to comment.

Strongly disagree with the notion of shortening winter break. For my family, it is a far greater priority to have time during the beginning of the break as opposed to having the Monday after New Year's off. Would also rather see the 9 December day off added to the first week of winter break. Should the first week of winter break be shortened, suspect the result will be a large number of absences due to family travel plans. Should the first week of break be shortened as proposed, my three children will simply have to miss those days of school.

Student-led conferences are ridiculous.

Students and families need two weeks off at winter break to recharge and be united as a family. I think it is critical that this happens.

Students having December 9th off seems odd. There are so many other days of importance to our families, why not make Dec 9 a normal day and let students and their families have a more meaningful day off? Instead of picking the top vote getter from the ranking question above, make Dec 9 a normal day and give us the top two selections. Or something else of value, like Dec 21. Also, the draft calendar is very tough to read onscreen -- too much crammed on one page (why are the two Julys even shown??), and some of the colors are too similar.

The Christmas break is problematic for families that travel. By only giving 2 days off before Christmas Eve, it forces us to travel at greater expense and also reduces the time we have with our family before Christmas. There are currently 8 days off for Christmas this year, but we don't end any earlier in June. How is that? I would much rather sacrifice one of the minor days off (Columbus Day) for extra time at Christmas. Even getting that Wednesday off before Christmas would help. Thanks for your difficult job of balancing all these factors!

The school year starts too late and goes too long into June. It seems like lots of people have wrapped up summer activities well before school starts, while going so late into June is very close to Fourth of July.

Three days are allotted for parent/teacher conferences and yet, every year, our school only allows two of those days to be used for conferences. Why have early release for three days when only two are used for conferences? I also don't understand the need to have a full day off before Thanksgiving. Parents still have to work most of that day, so why create childcare issues by keeping kids out of school for the full day while parents still have to work? Why not make it an early release day instead? I'd prefer to see more time allotted for winter break...Monday 12/19-Wednesday 12/21 should be student holidays. Otherwise they become glorified babysitting days for the teachers. Nothing is being taught on those three days that has any relevance to our students' academic achievement--from what I've seen, it's all craft fluff and Disney videos to waste time since many classrooms have already lost a handful of their students to winter vacations anyway. Make those three days part of the winter holiday so families and teachers can get away. And make January 2nd a school day instead of a holiday. Parents have to be back to work on January 2nd, so kids should be back in school. Otherwise you're creating another headache for having to find childcare on the 2nd.

To deny Veterans Day in this region sounds especially insensitive. Alexandria already attends far more than the minimum. Unless Sols are moved to mid-June, there is no reason to stay in school that long.

Very important - 2 weeks for winter break

We would also suggest student holidays for the first day of Rosh Hashanah (October 3) and Yom Kippur (October 12), as observed in many other local jurisdictions. Thank you for your consideration.

With the thanksgiving break and winter break we should remove the TWD in December. Move it to the Columbus day holiday for a 4 day weekend instead- many private schools do this as does Arlington County.

You should make election day as a student holiday.

ACPS Employee

1. Breaks are important, but keeping a "normal" schedule is important, too. Having election day off (Tuesday) and then an early dismissal on Friday is a terrible week. 2. Stop calling them Teacher Work Days. The name implies other days are not work days. In fact, Saturdays and Sundays are work days for most teachers. Call them Evaluation Days or Grading Days or even Records Days.

2 full weeks off for winter break is also very important. Thank you!

2 weeks off for winter break would be really helpful for travel and to refresh and catch up on work.

A full two weeks for Winter break... VERY VERY important! We have been given that the last two school years. I'm happy to return to school on January 2 if I can have the 2 weeks prior off.

After interim's.

As a new teacher I would find more value meeting with parents after an entire first quarter instead of halfway through first quarter. Thanks.

As an ACPS Teacher, I feel that the holidays that have been provided to students in the past, particularly the day before Thanksgiving, are days in which a minimal amount of positive instruction could take place. Many students will take this time away from school anyways as they prepare for the holiday. This in turn means that meaningful instruction cannot take place that day. If at best a minimal amount of meaningful instruction will take place on that day, it is best to just continue allowing it to be a holiday. June is in essence a "wasted" month of education for our students. The students have completed SOL exams, and no longer care about school, many of which have 'shut it down' for summer already. As a result it is again difficult to have meaningful instruction for students, making the overall point of those days of school limited at best. As a teacher, I am well aware that the best parts of an education come when there is no test to teach to. However, many students don't attend regularly in June, and those that do have little to no interest in giving effort towards furthering their education. As a result, meaningful instruction and meaningful learning doesn't take place during this time. Due to this it is my opinion that we need to maximize instructional days prior to the SOL exams and minimize post-SOL school days in June.

As an employee: the goals and guidelines for the "professional time" days need to be more clearly articulated. Are these days for faculty meetings? CLTs/PLCs? Division-wide PD that is content based? Who "owns" them -- schools or central office? Please work to communicate more clear expectations and standards regarding these days. Thanks!

Being right outside of the Nation's Capital, and where many of our students' families are military, we should be observing Veteran's Day. Secondly, if we are Alexandria City Public Schools, we should align our school holiday calendars with the city's calendar. Why are there so many days that teachers have to work? This year, it feels like we are grasping for PD straws at the school level to fit in the required amount of days. School needs to end earlier in June. Students are tapped out by the end of June.

Being the spouse of an Army Officer I take it as an insult that Columbus Day is an observed holiday by ACPS, but not Veteran's Day.

Can we just copy the DCPS school calendar? They have managed to have every holiday off, two weeks off during Christmas AND end the school year around the 3rd week in June every year.

Change the PD day on December 9th to November 7th. Give us two full weeks off for winter break. Revert back to the 292 day calendar.

Christmas break should be a full two weeks off like it was this traditional calendar year, 2015-1016. Having the first week of break be half a week does not help students learn when many students will be taking off early and missing valuable instruction.

Conferences at the end of 1st quarter and 3rd quarter

Days when teachers must work and students do not come to school should be either Professional Development OR workdays. A number of trainings for teachers require all day; what still happens is that the training is done on a school (student) day, and subs are used to cover the classrooms. Instead, try harder to have central office or school-based trainings scheduled for the PD days, in order to minimize sub coverage of classes. Example: today many Science teachers are attending an all-day training, with sub coverage- one day before the split pd/work day, which falls on Election Day. Give teachers a full work day at the end of each quarter for the first three quarters. Minimize PD on student days which requires a large number of teachers to be OUT from any one school.

Due to the high rate at which employees take off before Thanksgiving, it would behoove us to observe the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a holiday. Additionally, many travel during the winter break and the proposed calendar would not allow for traveling without employees having to take extra leave (which is very difficult for some of us due to our responsibilities) and student's missing school.

Earlier release in June and the full two weeks off for Christmas is my vote, if we can take days from elsewhere. Thank you!

<p>Early release days don't do much. I don't mind teacher work days on holidays - I get a lot done those days. It would be really nice to get out earlier in June. It seems like we spent more time in school than surrounding districts.</p>
<p>Election day off good. Don't need the Monday before it, though!</p>
<p>For Christmas Holiday we should still have 2 weeks. Columbus Day is not important not a lot of celebrate that holiday so we could use that day for Christmas. I work the Election Polls every year. The day before Election is not effective. Maybe the day of and the day after is.</p>
<p>Having a full two weeks for winter break is very important to me. I would prefer to have Dec. 19th - 30th as the winter break rather than having off on January 2nd.</p>
<p>Having a Teacher work day AFTER spring break is odd--I honestly think most people will take that day off or "work from home" rather than utilizing that time productively.</p>
<p>Having different holidays than the surrounding schools causes a great deal of childcare issues for the staff. Please remember that not all ACPS employees live in Alexandria. Many of us have been put in a position where we have to take Columbus Day and Veteran's Day off in order to take care of our children who have those days off.</p>
<p>I am an ACPS employee but I do not live in the city of Alexandria. My children attend a local school system where they observe Columbus & Veteran's Day, as well as the day before Election day. So it would be optimal if our system did too!</p>
<p>I am wondering why the holiday break is cut 2 days shorter? The holiday break should start on December 20th.</p>
<p>I do not support moving conferences earlier in the school year for elementary students. As a former ACPS parent and current teacher, I understand the pressures on elementary teachers at the beginning of the school year, as well as the need to get to know our students thoroughly, both from an academic sense as well as an interpersonal sense, before meeting with parents.</p>
<p>I don't think it is necessary to have 7 work days prior to the start of school. 2 flex days and 3 PD days are enough. If ACPS could retain teachers & Administrators, and stop changing programs/curriculum, etc., this would be sufficient time to get ready for the school year. 2 weeks of for winter break is necessary. Thank you</p>
<p>I like having the later spring break. I prefer to have two weeks at Christmas, even if it means no Columbus day or Veteran's day.</p>
<p>I love having January 2nd off. Thank you! Great schedule for next year!</p>
<p>I really LOVE the idea of keeping TWD completely and totally separate from PD's. We end up with less than half a day to work after a grueling morning of PD. Please leave this as it is in the draft. It would be nice if TWD were the immediate day after the EOQ so that I can actually use it to enter grades. For example, Nov. 8 will be no good as a TWD since grades are likely due the 7th.</p>
<p>I think it is better to conference after grades since that is when most questions arise.</p>
<p>I think it is important to keep a two week Winter Break over the Christmas Holidays as the MOST important calendar planning aspect. Our surrounding school districts operate on a calendar with the 10 day winter break and it certainly helps so many employees with children in other school districts.</p>
<p>I think it is more important that students are not in the buildings on the actual election day since there are so many people coming in and out of the school buildings, it is best to keep students away from so much traffic with so many strangers in one day.</p>
<p>I think that Christmas Break should be a full two weeks. Some families go out of town on the holidays to spend time with other family members.</p>

I think the first quarter conferences in November do not need to be 3 days; 2 days are plenty, with one of those days being a late day to accommodate working parents. So instead of 3 half days of school, there only need to be 2 half days. The February conferences should be the same or have one full day of conferences, with no school on that day. Conference days could also be on an as needed basis in February and those days could be used as snow make-up days, instead of the teacher work day.

I think the last two years we did a service to the staff by offering two weeks during the winter holidays. This draft calendar reverts to cutting that break short again which will only lead to people taking more days off at that time. I think we should maintain the full two week winter break.

I think the October teacher work day/PD day is important- gives the teachers a chance to get on top of things, plus gives everyone a break. I think the Monday after spring break should just be a day off and not a work day. It gives those spending the holiday with family a chance to travel, and not on the holiday. We used to have this schedule. Basically, I think we should switch the October and day after spring break day off/work day. I think we should look very closely at Fairfax's calendar. They are continuing to propose a two full weeks off at winter break. If they can do this, we should be able to as well. This also helps for our large amount of staff that lives in Fairfax, or has children in Fairfax and other NOVA schools that follow the Fairfax schedule.

I think we got it right during 2015-16 with having the student holidays and teacher work days on Columbus Day and election day. Keep up the good work...and thanks!

I think we should have 2 full weeks for winter break. Thank you!

I understand the desire to have high school conferences early in case there are any concerns that need to be addressed, but the reality is that we end up having a lot of informal conferences as we get closer to the end of the first report card because the honeymoon phase is over and reality is setting in. The conference held in October aren't always as meaningful, and don't bring out the parents we most need to see. If we moved conferences closer to the end of the first quarter, then we could just have informal conferences closer to interims for students of concern, and have more in depth conversations with a full quarter of grades and behaviors to discuss and address.

I urge you to give us the 19th, 20th, 21st of December back. That is an invaluable break and I, for one, would be willing to forego some of the other days off in order to have a generous amount of time to recoup energy over the holidays and enjoy the time with family and seasonal festivities.

I would prefer a continuous 2 weeks for the winter break with a return date of Monday 1/2/2017

I would prefer not to have Parent teacher conferences after a 2/3 day of teaching. Almost immediately after the early release, we are supposed to be ready for parents showing up for conferences. Then, we work until after 7pm and have to get up less than 11 hours later to be ready for work the next day. Early release days are not throw away days; we are still working hard to teach our students. If you want us to be our best at teaching, we need to change this schedule. Also, we are not always the most happy and prepared teachers for conferences, as we are working a 12 hour day that day with only 2 30 minute breaks. This is a day that all teachers dread, and that should not be the case on the only days that we get to meet our wonderful parents. This schedule problem is almost the same with back to school night. Can we please look at these? Thank you.

I would prefer to minimize days off during the school year to preserve two full weeks of time off for Winter/Christmas Break. It's important for families traveling and provides a decent amount of time off. Thank you!

I would prefer to see Veteran's day as a holiday if I had to choice between that and Columbus day. Many of our families, both students and staff are active duty or retired Veterans.

I would rather have a half day after Back to School night than parent-teacher conferences. Back to School night is a longer night than conferences.

I would really like to see you work harder to get us more time during Winter Break. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is not necessary so you can make that a school day. It's a shame that we don't show our Veterans the respect they deserve by not observing Veteran's Day. Schools need to be closed on Election Day. The entire block (both sides of the street) are blocked as well as some of the parking lot for voters. There is no parking for staff especially since parking is already so limited at all schools.

I would strongly suggest you switch the December 9 professional development day to be the Monday, November 6 before election day. That would be A LOT less disruptive to instruction. Fairfax County will most likely be out both those days as well so it would make child care a lot easier for your employees. Keep Columbus Day! We need the break and so do the kids. Fairfax will be off that day as well. Keep the Wednesday before Thanksgiving!

I would suggest having the Professional Day on Columbus Day (instead of day off). I think it's important to provide these opportunities early in the school year. I would move the day off to Winter Break, Dec. 21.

If our school is being measured by the SOLs, then it makes no sense to continue to go to school for 3 weeks after the test. The students and staff are mentally drained and no learning takes place. Staff is not allowed to take students on field trips so there is no outlet for lesson planning. Alexandria already goes to school more than the state mandated time so this shouldn't be an issue. The last three weeks of school are a colossal waste of time and money to residents of Alexandria. There should be a plan set in place to provide additional meals for those that are on free and reduced lunch or programs students can join in place of those days, much like an early summer camp.

In a former school district, our spring break fell on the second week of April as it does on the proposed academic calendar. This fell closer to SOL review time than many teachers were comfortable with and was a difficult adjustment as it had been much earlier the year before (much like in this scenario).

It doesn't make sense to have parent-teacher conferences until after the first grade cards.

It is crucial to provide teacher work time, especially if the community expects teachers to support student growth through Policy IFA. Students (and adults in the building) tend to perform better when there is one free week day per month to rest and refresh.

It is very important to me to allow a full two weeks of for the "Winter" holiday. Many of our students and families travel internationally for these holidays and this time is very important. There will be lots of absenteeism among students and teachers without the full two weeks off.

It is very nice to have 3 days designated for parent/teacher conferences. However, is it a possibility to make it one full day and a half day instead of 3 half days? It really throws the kids off of their schedule for 3 days. Also, it is already a really long 3 days for teachers and even longer teaching for half a day and then having conferences until 7 at night. It would be very nice to just have one whole day for conferences then only one half day.

It seems egregious to me to honor a holiday for a person whose actions led to a systematic abuse of indigenous peoples and perpetuated a genocide. Very few people support honoring Columbus with a holiday. Then we do not have a day to honor the veterans? Unbelievable. So many of our staff are veterans themselves and it sends a very poor message that we are more inclined to honor genocidal actions than to honor veterans who have given, and continue to give, their utmost. Veterans' Day should be a holiday. Why do we pick and choose which federal holidays to take? If it is a federal holiday, that should be true for students and staff. In other words, don't make Veterans' Day a PD day for staff, but a federal holiday for students. Other school districts have federal holidays off. We either do not have them off, or they are PD days. We already go over the state's required days, so just let the division have the federal holidays.

It was nice to start later in August, but I know we would have to come earlier if we do not want to end the last week in June. Thanks for asking for comments from us.

It would be preferred to have Monday November 7 a TWD/PD and allow students a four day weekend. This could replace the Friday December 9 PD.

It would be very difficult for teachers to give valid and ample information about students after only a couple weeks. It makes much more sense, in my opinion, to have conferences at the end of the first quarter. If there is a specific issue or concern with a child, teachers would inform parents before the scheduled conference. I know I am in contact with my students' parents often.

It's crazy to me that an area so full of Veterans (and a school system with many Veterans on staff) currently work on the Federal Holiday dedicated to their honor. I think we should ditch Columbus Day and ensure Vets get their day off

It's hard when the winter break is so short. Students and teachers don't get enough recuperation time, especially those taking high level classes and writing college essays. I'd rather go an extra day or two in June, and get the rest when it can most benefit instruction.

just do what fairfax does...i live in fairfax, have kids in fairfax and work in Alexandria.

Living in such close proximity to the nation's capital, we should not have school scheduled on inauguration day.

Make Veterans Day a school holiday for students and staff. Many students have parents who are veterans and many staff are veterans. Honor their service the same way other districts, local governments, and the federal government honor Veterans Day, with a day off. Keep the current two weeks for winter break. Remove many unneeded half days and teacher work days.

Minimize the individual holidays in order to have 2 weeks for Winter break.

Monday after Easter off would be great. Many people are not from the area and travel.

Monday, January 2 should not be a holiday. Students need a full week. Can we start the school year earlier and have an earlier release? There is no need for February conferences for the high school. The teacher work day should be Friday, April 7, instead of Monday, April 17.

Most important for me is full two weeks Dow winter break.

My most important consideration would be to have a long winter holiday break to spend with our families. I don't care about Christopher Columbus but I do care that my three children do not have child care on Columbus Day and Veterans Day. I also feel that it is disrespectful for all of our staff who are veterans or married to veterans to work on that holiday.

Need more time for winter break!

no comments, just make-it happen.

Out earlier in June would be great! A day off after Labor Day and between thanksgiving break would be awesome. Having the Wednesday off before Thanksgiving allows so many of us to travel home to our families!

Please build in more snow makeup days. Every year we see our Teacher Work Days and Professional Development days taken away because not enough snow days are built in. This means we have to stay late and donate more of our unpaid time to enter grades, and often that we lose precious professional development time. Teachers donate enough of their time, for free. We don't need to do it because ACPS refuses to admit that we need more snow days. If we don't use them, we get out a few days earlier. No big deal.

Please consider granting religious holidays for all students and faculty for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Please consider having Veteran's Day off as many staff members need to take the day off because their own children's schools/daycares are closed.

Please consider making quarter one longer than 9 weeks. The beginning of the school year is vital for procedural and behavioral development, which takes time, yet there are many standards, across subjects, that are expected to be taught and assessed during the quarter. 9 weeks is not adequate for meeting the expectations set out in the ACPS curriculum guides. Thank you!

Please continue to give two weeks for winter break, regardless when Christmas falls.

Please ensure that 260-day employees receive a 2-week winter break. This will ensure that employees do not have to arrange for childcare during the days which their children are home (whether in ACPS or neighboring school districts) and will also lend to cultural competence by allowing employees enough time to travel to their home countries for the religious holiday.

Please keep Christmas vacation as close to 2 weeks as possible. It allows travel, rest and a break from the cold/flu germs we all pass around in winter. Thanks.

Please keep in mind that several employees do not necessarily live in Virginia and have children in school in other districts. Certain federal holidays should be observed as most other districts are out on those days and it would minimize the poor attendance of teachers on those days such as Veteran's Day and Columbus Day. Also, many students request to take finals early in June as they may start their summer holiday during Father's Day weekend. We are scheduled to be in school very close to the July 4th holiday. Please keep that in mind for next year because we do not have 2 full weeks for the Winter Holiday, when once again, instruction is minimized due to poor attendance by students who start their holiday usually by the 20th of December.

Prefer a two week Christmas break.

Prefer greatest number of days off to be during Winter Break and Thanksgiving holidays due to family out of town and it's the only time of year we spend quality time together.

Recognizing our national observance of Veterans Day should be more important than Columbus Day. Veterans Day happens to fall on a Friday in 2016, so families will be able to have an extended time to observe Vets Day.

Return to 194 days for staff; some extra for brand new teachers. Make teacher work days ONLY teacher work days, not half and half.

Second conferences would be better off after third quarter instead of second. Also, many area daycares and preschools close on federal holidays. Making teachers work on those days means that we have to use our leave and we miss out on professional development and team-building opportunities because we must stay home with our own children.

Since the March Professional Day seems to be an arbitrary date in March, why not move it one week later (March 17)...Would split the time from the holiday in February to Spring Break.

Spring break is way too late.

Spring break should always include the days of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. (March 24- April 4, 2016). Those two religious Christian days are traditional for most Americans. It is long overdue that Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday (White House Easter Roll) be a part of the spring vacation for families of Christian faith. The week before puts stress on families to return to school on Easter Monday. Also, Easter Monday student attendance is always low.. Check the data on attendance over the years.

Start school BEFORE Labor Day. Starting school after Labor Day is simply too long. Adjust the academic calendar so school can begin around mid August instead, and end the school year much earlier in June (within the first week of June).

Teachers need to have full-day teacher work days not just two hours. Elementary schools should have the same number of early dismissals as secondary schools at the end of the year. It's not fair that elementary teachers have less time when they have to do grades for 50-60 students in three subjects plus end of year paper work and close down classrooms.

Thanksgiving is one of the most traveled holidays. Often teachers and administrators have to take off that Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving so that they don't have to take an expensive flight out. If a lot of teachers take off on that day, it can cause chaos in the school.

The calendar should additionally be adjusted to have teacher work day and professional development days separate. There should be more professional development days than what exist now.

<p>The Dec. 9 PD day doesn't make sense because it's right before break as it is and we have a lot of work we are trying to get done right at that moment before break starts (in school). I think it makes sense to combine it with the TWD in November to give students a 4-day weekend and utilize our school time efficiently. Thanks for making Columbus day a holiday - teachers and students need one day off during first quarter!</p>
<p>There are a lot of distractions during the first quarter (fire drills, class meetings, pictures, etc.) some of the extra days scheduled for 2nd quarter should be given to the first quarter.</p>
<p>There are too many school holidays for students in November, not enough instructional time.</p>
<p>There is not enough data collected to make an accurate, well-informed assessment of each student by the middle of the first quarter.</p>
<p>this drifting to school ending later and later in June, I hope will balance out. Would rather come back earlier than stay later.</p>
<p>This is the best calendar in the ten years I have been employed by ACPS! Having no day off until the end of November leads to burnout, fatigue, and negative attitudes. So I am relieved to see Columbus Day listed as a holiday. The only thing I would change is more of a policy issue regarding conferences. I find that having one or two whole days of conferences rather than three early dismissal days is much more effective. Shifting gears midday from teaching to conferencing is difficult and the early days are not very effective academically. And, I do not think a second quarter conference is necessary for every child. Second quarter conferences should be offered as an option rather than a requirement.</p>
<p>To deny Veterans Day in this region sounds especially insensitive. Alexandria already attends far more than the minimum. Unless Sols are moved to mid June, there is no reason to stay in school that long.</p>
<p>Two full weeks for Winter break is very important.</p>
<p>VERY unhappy with winter break. I'm all for having Columbus Day off but not at the expense of winter break. Ditto for putting that December PD day back. Like many other people living in this area, I'm not from here. Flights are expensive and winter break is the one opportunity I have to go home and see my family. Don't be so shortsighted to think that we all have the luxury of driving down the road for the holidays. As one of your overworked teachers it's also a very crucial time for me to reset my mental health. Figure out how to give us our 2 weeks.</p>
<p>Veterans' Day is far more deserving of honor than Columbus Day. We have veterans in our families and on staff. That day should be fully observed as a matter of respect. It is insulting to make it a work day or professional development day. Please consider returning to our practice of observing the holiday in ACPS.</p>
<p>We could maximize instructional days by taking the day before Thanksgiving as an early release day and be able to end a bit earlier in June. Also, I think it is crucial that we are off for Inauguration day as traffic in the region is going to be a nightmare; many staff will have great difficulty getting to and home from work.</p>
<p>We need more PD days! There are not enough.</p>
<p>We need more than two professional learning days that are spread throughout the year. Although the week teachers report is noted as professional learning time, it's truly not used in that way all five days. Perhaps we can put 2-3 PD days during that week as well as 1-2 teacher work days.</p>
<p>We need more time to evaluate the students, especially for Special Education teachers, October is too early.</p>
<p>We need time to assess the kids and really have a good understanding of where they stand before having a conference with parents. I fear if they are moved to October, I will be discussing mostly behavior instead of academics.</p>
<p>We should have a full two week break in December. Many of us need the full two weeks to recharge and get ready for the remainder of the school year. The two week break is not only for staff but for students as well.</p>
<p>We should not have Columbus Day as a holiday and not honor our veterans in November. There is no comparison.</p>
<p>What happened to 2 weeks at Christmas?!</p>

Why is the holiday break shorter for the 16-17 school year? We have 2 full weeks this year. Waiting until November for conferences makes more sense because then there's a whole marking period worth of grades/data. Parents typically want to discuss the report cards so meeting prior to report card time doesn't seem to make sense.

Winter break seems kind of short. I'd rather throw in an extra day by NOT having Columbus day off and Inauguration Day off. We can also do without a holiday for Veterans day.

ACPS Other

I am a parent of a future student.

It is disgraceful that ACPS does not honor those that fought for our country. With the large number of veterans in this area, ACPS should do a better job of recognizing their contributions. Sending students and staff to school on November 11 does not do this.

Planning for 2016/2017 academic year as an ACPS parent. Most private sector employees do not have every federal holiday off such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day and President's Day. Those days couples with early dismissal and teacher workdays cause childcare problems for parents with younger school age children.

Spring break should always include the days of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. (March 24- April 4, 2016). Those two religious Christian days are traditional for most Americans. It is long overdue that Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday (White House Easter Roll) be a part of the spring vacation for families of Christian faith. The week before puts stress on families to return to school on Easter Monday. Also, Easter Monday student attendance is always low.. Check the data on attendance over the years.