

To: All CSD Employees, Parents, and School Council Members
From: Sherri Breunig, Director of Community and Public Relations
Date: December 2006
Re: Proposed Calendars for 2007-2008

The CSD calendar development committee has drafted three possible calendars for the 2007-2008 school year for your review. The calendars are available on the district Web site at www.decalur-city.k12.ga.us and in the principal's office at each school.

Calendar A is very similar to the 2006-2007 school year calendar with a start date of August 13, 2007. Calendars B and C were developed in anticipation of legislative action which would mandate a later start date for school districts state-wide. Both B and C offer a start date of August 20, 2007. A list of pros and cons for each calendar is included below.

Comments on the proposed calendars will be heard from employees, parents, and school councils during the months of December and January. Based on the feedback that is received, the committee will recommend a preferred calendar to the Board of Education for approval in February, 2007.

After reviewing the proposed calendars, comments and suggestions should be made by January 12, 2007, in the following manner:

- Parents may submit their comments in writing to the principal's office at each school or via e-mail to: sbreunig@csdecalur.org
- Faculty and staff at each school will discuss the calendars during a designated faculty meeting and will reach a consensus on the preferred calendar. Each principal will report the decision and any pertinent comments from his/her staff members to the calendar committee.
- School Council members may submit their comments in writing to the principal's office at each school.

When reviewing the calendars, please keep the following information in mind:

- 180 days are required for students and 191 contract days are required for teachers.
- The number of days in each of the two semesters must be as balanced as possible.
- For instructional purposes, teachers (especially at the high school level) have asked that first semester end before winter holidays and second semester end before Memorial Day, if possible. This is not possible with a later start date.
- With block scheduling at the high school level, students complete an entire course of study in one semester and final exams are often comprehensive. Student performance on these final exams is greatly diminished when final exams are held immediately following a two week winter break.
- All metro-area school districts have an agreement to schedule spring break for the week following the first Sunday in April.
- FTE count days and testing dates must be considered.
- Professional Learning opportunities for staff members are included in the school year calendar at the request of instructional leaders throughout the district.
- Teacher work days are placed at strategic points in the calendar to assist teachers with the work associated with grade reporting.
- If the school year ends on a Friday, Georgia law [O.C.G.A. 20-2-168 (c)(3)] allows a school system to "forgive" up to four (4) school days missed due to inclement weather. At this time, every other metro school district ends the school year on a Friday, and we choose to do the same so that this "forgiveness" is available to us should we need it.

- DeKalb, Fulton, Atlanta and Gwinnett school systems currently plan to begin school on August 13, 2007.

The three calendar options that are being placed before the public for review and feedback provide possible solutions to concerns that have been voiced by parents and faculty members.

2007-2008 Calendar Option A –

Pros

- A more traditional calendar
- offers Columbus Day (fed. Holiday) as a holiday like our neighbors in DeKalb Co.
- winter break includes one more day before Christmas (Dec. 21)

Cons

- Oct. work day falls before actual mid-term point
- offers fewer breaks throughout the school year
- offers only one professional learning day for teachers during the actual school year.

2007-2008 Calendar Option B–

Pros

- starts school one week later
- offers a fall break coinciding with Columbus Day (a full week)
- regular breaks are offered for longer periods of time throughout the school year
- families receive an extended MLK weekend
- families and teachers receive an extended President's Day weekend
- families and teachers receive an extended Memorial Day weekend
- two back-to-back professional learning days are offered for teachers at mid-year.

Cons

- Oct. work day does not follow actual mid-term point
- winter break does not begin until December 22
- high school students must conclude their first semester after the two week winter break.
- school ends mid-June after many universities have already begun their summer semester

2007-2008 Calendar Option C –

Pros

- starts school one week later
- offers a fall break coinciding with Columbus Day
- Oct. work day immediately follows mid-term
- Winter break begins early on December 15
- regular breaks are offered for longer periods of time throughout the school year
- families receive an extended MLK weekend
- families and teachers receive an extended President's Day weekend
- families and teachers receive an extended Memorial Day weekend

Cons

- winter break is 18 days long.
- students and employees return to work on Jan. 2
- high school students must conclude their first semester after the two week winter break.
- school ends mid-June after many universities have already begun their summer semester
- offers only one professional learning day for teachers during the actual school year.