

Exploring a...

BALANCED



CALENDAR

The Olympia School District is exploring a balanced calendar. Like a traditional calendar, a balanced one has the same number of school days (180). The difference is how the breaks are spread out. Instead of a calendar dominated by a very long summer break, students would have more periodic, longer breaks throughout the school year and a shorter summer break. There are potential benefits and challenges associated with a balanced calendar.

The following are some frequently mentioned pros and cons associated with a balanced calendar:

Pros: Less review time needed, so more time for new learning. Extra help when needed during the school year during the breaks or intersessions. Less burnout and fewer absences, more engaged students, better lesson retention, and more vacation options.

Cons: Finding child care during breaks, less time for summer jobs, impacts on school activities and lack of air conditioning.



If the school board did decide to move to a balanced calendar, the earliest would not be until at least the 2023-24 school year.

A short survey to gauge interest in a balanced calendar will be available to students, staff, families and the community after Spring Break 2022. This survey will be linked from our Balanced Calendar webpage on the district website (view our QR code). There will be a comments section to share feedback or questions, and we hope you will take it! We want to know how a balanced calendar would impact your family's child care, schedules and educational opportunities.

WHAT IS IT?



School In Session



School Break



Who "we" are: An OSD Citizens Advisory Committee has begun work on exploring what a balanced calendar would mean for our community. Part of the process will include engaging with community child care partners such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and City of Olympia.

For more information, visit the committee page on the OSD website: bit.ly/OSDBalancedCalendar.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Olympia School District is exploring the idea of a balanced calendar. Below is a list of frequently asked questions about balanced calendar. We also encourage you to email us questions you would like to see answered. You can email your questions to balancedcalendar@osd.wednet.edu.

What is a balanced calendar?

A balanced calendar would modify the traditional 180-day school calendar to keep the learning process more continuous. Instead of a calendar dominated by a very long summer break, students would have more periodic, longer breaks throughout the school year and a shorter summer break.

Students attending schools that follow a balanced calendar receive the same number of instructional days and hours as those who attend schools that follow a traditional calendar.

What is “intersession programming”?

Intersession programming is another way of describing learning opportunities, such as support/acceleration or enrichment activities, that could be offered during school breaks.

Why is Olympia School District exploring the idea of a balanced calendar?

In the 2021 Legislative Session, the Washington State Legislature directed \$200 million in a combination of state and federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) exclusively for learning recovery. The balanced calendar initiative is part of this overall \$200 million.

Olympia is one of dozens of school districts across the state that received a \$75,000 grant to assist in exploring a balanced calendar.

Are any other school districts in the region exploring balanced calendar?

Yes, neighboring North Thurston Public Schools is also exploring balanced calendar. Olympia has also been in close contact with other Thurston County school districts about the research underway on this topic.

Who is researching information about balanced calendar?

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of students, staff, families and community members is exploring balanced calendar. The CAC held its first meeting on balanced calendar in December 2021. Co-facilitators are Olympia School Board Director Scott Clifthorne and OSD parent Sandy Hallstrom.

CAC meeting agendas and summaries, as well as links to the committee’s research and frequently asked questions, is posted on the Balanced Calendar webpage: bit.ly/OSDBalancedCalendar.

The community is welcome to participate in CAC meetings. Meeting Zoom links are posted on the Balanced Calendar webpage.

How can I provide feedback about this idea?

The CAC on balanced calendar plans to survey OSD students, staff, families and the community about balanced calendar in spring 2022.

What is the implementation timeline if the district decides to move forward with Balanced Calendar?

If the school board did decide to move to a balanced calendar, the earliest would not be until at least the 2023-24 school year.